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# **‘Becoming somebody’: Youth transitions through education and migration – evidence from Young Lives, Peru**

February 2009

Gina Crivello





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# Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between migration and educational aspirations among young people growing up in contexts of poverty in Peru. It draws on a mixed survey and qualitative data set collected by Young Lives (YL), an international fifteen-year study of childhood poverty. The focus is on data generated with the older of two cohorts of YL children being studied in Peru. They were around eight years old when the study began in 2002 and were twelve years old at the last point of data collection in 2007. This paper provides evidence to suggest that young people and their caregivers connect migration with the process of 'becoming somebody in life' (*ser algo o alguien en la vida*). This entails making successful transitions to adulthood and out of poverty. Their educational aspirations and expectations are at the core of their view of their future; these are generated against a country backdrop of economic and social inequalities, a recent history of political violence and resulting mass displacement, and established and diverse patterns of internal and international migration.

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The views expressed here are those of the author(s). They are not necessarily those of the Young Lives project, the University of Oxford, DFID or other funders.

# 1. Introduction

'Because with her studies, she can go anywhere and get any job, you know...also, you see they're studying, later they say 'I'm going someplace else', to study.'

(Mother of girl, Rioja community)

The link between migration and education is gaining increasing attention in the literature on children's and young people's migration (e.g., Adams and Kirova 2006; Hashim 2005). In part, this is fuelled by international pressure over the past decade to get more children educated, for longer, as exemplified by such related initiatives as the Dakar EFA (Education for All) Goals (UNESCO, April 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, September 2000). Education has become one of the defining features of modern childhood, including in Peru, within the context of what has been described as the global rise of the 'knowledge economy' (UNESCO 2007). The latter requires, for example, a 'skilled' labour force and favours the service sector over the agricultural sector. For many young people growing up in resource-poor communities, education has become their main hope for escaping poverty, especially rural poverty. However, growing expectations and aspirations for education are often not matched by access to good quality local schools, particularly at the secondary level and beyond, and especially in resource-poor contexts. Migration-for-education is therefore proving an increasingly common response to this gap.

'Migration' is conceptualised here in broad terms, encompassing movement across any 'meaningful' border, not limited to geo-political boundaries. Migration is more than an act or event of relocation that produces definable outcomes; it is above all a process. The term 'mobility' may be more useful in this respect, as it is more inclusive and captures daily and seasonal movements across any number of domains (for example, daily movement between home, school, the market and through the streets). Mobility also implies a certain capacity to 'move' or be mobile and, unlike migration, is not defined by border-crossing. Both terms are relevant for the discussion that follows.

The approach I take in this paper is to situate migration in relation to other youth transitions, as the reasons why young people migrate or why they aspire to do so are often multiple, interrelated and interdependent. In other words, their aspirations are sometimes 'bundled' in such a way as to make it difficult to separate out what is 'individual' from what is 'collective'; what is for education from what is for work; what is aspiration from what is expectation; and so on. Similarly, aspirations for migration are rarely solely about economics or any other singular domain. They are often intertwined with other aspects of transition and intersect with changes in one's developmental sense of personal life trajectories. This paper draws on evidence produced by Young Lives, a long-term study of childhood poverty, to show how young people's aspirations reflect complex processes of intergenerational dependence, continuity and change. At the same time, their aspirations point to the hopes, concerns and strategies that they and their families have for moving out of poverty. In this way, the paper highlights education as the main strategy and hope for interrupting the intergenerational transfer of poverty (e.g., Bird 2007; Moore 2001, 2004).

The paper is organised as follows: in the next section, I introduce some of the main concepts that guided analysis and interpretation. I then provide background information on migration, young people and Peru, followed by a brief description of Young Lives' design and sample. Two case studies of recently migrated young people offer an introduction to the main analysis section and finally to the concluding section.

## 2. Transitions through education and migration: key concepts

The paired concepts of 'transitions' and 'trajectories' were defined by the developmental psychologist Rudolph Schaffer (2006) in a way that accounts both for young people's experiences of change now (transitions) and how these relate to their life course patterns (trajectories). Transitions are therefore defined as 'the choice confronting an individual in the course of development as to which of several alternative pathways to follow, resulting in some instances in a radical alteration of life circumstances' (p. 13). When children and young people migrate, it is potentially a pathway-altering experience with repercussions on other life course transitions. Trajectories, on the other hand, are:

the paths that individuals follow in the course of development, including the long-term patterns of behaviour adopted, the challenges encountered and the manner of meeting them, and the implications that particular courses have for long-term adjustment. (p. 13)

Thus, a transition point involves choice and the possibility of change of trajectory. Rachel Thomson et al. (2002: 335) have also shown through their research on 'Inventing Adulthood' in the UK how 'choice, chance and opportunity' interact in shaping young people's transitions. They highlight the notion of 'critical moments' to analyse 'biographical accounts and their relationships with social structures and process' (p. 351).

Other concepts for transitions highlight the role of aspirations in shaping trajectories and the ways in which transitions are inter-related (both within and across lives). The relational character of transitions may be especially evident in 'collective' societies that value interdependence of individuals within groups (e.g., members of a household or peer group) (Punch 2001, 2002). In those contexts, critical decisions about young people's lives are rarely made alone (e.g., the decision to leave school, to marry, to leave the community). As the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (2004: 67) maintained, 'Aspirations are never simply individual...[t]hey are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life'.

In their report on changing transitions to adulthood in developing countries (*Growing up Global*), Lloyd et al. (2005) asserted that 'poverty is the greatest enemy of successful transitions'. Likewise, based on his work in the late 1980s with a group of disadvantaged young people growing up on an urban housing estate in the US, sociologist Jay MacLeod maintained that 'poverty circumscribes the horizons of young people' in such a way that reproduces social inequalities through a 'levelling' or 'depressing' of their aspirations (MacLeod 1987: 8). He introduced the notion of 'levelled aspirations' to refer to the mechanism for producing class inequality from one generation to the next, in that young people aspire in such a way that reproduces or reinforces their class disadvantage (MacLeod 1987: 3).

Aspirations are central to transitions research, as they represent young people's orientations for their lives and indicate desired trajectories, regardless of whether or not these are enduring, 'realistic' or achievable. A study of aspirations can potentially tell us just as much about young people's experiences 'now' (children as 'beings') as it can about their visions for the future (children as 'becomings'), and can capture the extent to which they feel they can



influence the direction of their lives (i.e., their self-efficacy). Although aspirations are future-oriented they are also historical. Aspirations reflect and are shaped by the contexts of young people's lives, and they require certain practices and resources now if they are to be achieved. Aspirations also offer a conceptual bridge connecting structure and agency, mediating the link between socioeconomic structures (what society has to offer) and individuals at the cultural level (what one wants) (MacLeod 1987: 20). MacLeod makes a useful analytic distinction between 'aspirations' and 'expectations', with the former expressing preferences and desires with little consideration of constraints (including personal skills or knowledge, opportunity structures, etc.). 'Aspirations reflect an individual's view of his or her own chances for getting ahead and are an internalisation of objective possibilities', but don't necessarily consciously take the latter into account (*ibid*: 13). Expectations, on the other hand, take constraints into consideration.

Appadurai (2004) has elaborated on the constraints on aspirations in terms of inequalities in the 'capacity to aspire'. He drew on his ethnographic research with a pro-poor alliance of housing activists in Mumbai, India to explore the relationship between culture and development and how this particular group mobilised their 'capacity to aspire'. He explained that the 'capacity to aspire' is a cultural capacity which often gets expressed in specific wants, preferences and choices but reflects general norms and presumptions about 'the good life' (*ibid*: 68). His framework for understanding aspirations is conceptualised along three levels (*ibid*: 67-68): the *higher order normative context* encompasses local ideas and beliefs about the nature of life and death, peace and warfare, material possessions, social relations, and so on. The *intermediate order normative context* encompasses local ideas about such things as marriage, work, leisure, friendships and respectability. Beliefs at these two levels are often expressed in terms of *immediate and concrete* wants and choices (e.g. this spouse and not that one; this piece of land or that car). Appadurai argues that, although this third level context appears idiosyncratic, it reflects broader conceptions of the 'good life' or well-being. He adds that the rich and powerful have greater capacity to aspire because they have the resources to map out and produce the pathways to get where they want to be (*ibid*: 68).

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has also written about the way young people's aspirations reflect structural differences, particularly inequalities in cultural capital (e.g., Bourdieu 1986). The latter encompasses such things as the cultural goods, dispositions, qualifications, language skills and education which are valued by the dominant society and which are learned and acquired inter-generationally. Bourdieu was influenced by Marcel Mauss's (1934) usage of the concept of 'body techniques' (*techniques du corps*) which referred to those aspects of the social world that are reflected in the body and daily practice (for example, in ways of speaking, moving, eating, and being with others, which varies according to the social context). In this vein, Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* to capture the learned tastes, habits, dispositions, styles and bodily skills shared by groups of social actors (whom he considered practical strategists) (e.g., Bourdieu 1975, 1979). The *habitus* is a set of internalised principles which generate and organise practices and representations, including the generation of aspirations.

### 3. Young people on the move

'Adolescence' and 'youth' are problematic categories because, as Bourdieu (1993: 95) asserted, 'divisions, whether into age-groups or into generations, are entirely variable and subject to manipulation'. The relationship between biological age and social age is complex and is produced and practiced in culturally-specific ways, yet embedded in both local and global systems of power and hierarchy. The young Peruvians highlighted in this paper see themselves in differing ways: some as children (e.g., *niños/niñas*), others as young people (e.g., *jóven*) and others in more biological terms related to puberty (e.g., *púber*). As a cohort they are transitioning out of childhood and into early adulthood, acknowledging variations in their self-identity. This phase is marked by several potential 'critical moments' (Thomson et al. 2002) centring on education, health, work, family formation, residential change, and the associated shifts in roles, responsibilities, status and identities. The global context of their experiences is shaped by the increasing interconnectedness of societies, due to migration and to flows of capital, information, values and new communication technologies across borders. These processes influence aspirations and expectations but also highlight inequalities in opportunities for differing groups of young people.

Uneven processes of globalisation mediate the priorities, aspirations and expectations of young people and shape current forms of migration. It is widely recognised that internal migration and migration within regions are the most important forms of migration among people living in poverty, with rural to rural migration the most common form of movement globally (DfID 2007: 1). Barriers to migration include lack of resources and social networks, policy conditions and legal constraints, as well as socio-cultural barriers favouring some groups of young people over others, based for example on gender, birth order, ethnicity, etc. Young people are nonetheless more likely than any other age group to migrate, due to a range of individual, family and community factors (Lloyd 2005: 313; WDR 2007: 189).

The reasons why young people migrate are often multiple and interrelated. Economic motives may be one of many potential drivers. Poverty also comprises more than economic deprivation, and is increasingly conceptualised as multidimensional, encompassing multiple deprivations, risks and vulnerabilities (e.g., Bourguignon and Chakravarty 2003; Dercon 2008; Sen 1999). The relation between migration and poverty is complex, as migration can alleviate or exacerbate risks and deprivations and can increase or decrease social inequalities (DFID 2007: 10). Migration has been considered a source of threat to local customs and ways of life, and alternatively as a welcomed source of positive change and improvement for individuals and communities. Migration has also been identified as a potential aid to development (e.g. through material and 'social' remittances) and contributor to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly those targeting poverty reduction, gender equality, health, education and the improvement of the lives of so-called 'slum dwellers' (IOM 2005).

In Peru, inequalities between regions and groups strengthen the importance of social networks to facilitate migration and the flow of remittances. For example, what has been referred to as 'child circulation' (a particular form of child migration) has historically been an important family strategy that creates and mobilises kinship networks in order to relocate children and young people (particularly girls) in better-off households (Fonseca 1986; Leinaweaver 2007b). In Peru, the practice is especially predominant in Quechua-speaking highland Andean communities where poverty rates are reportedly highest for the country. Leinaweaver (2007a, 2007b; 2008) has recently highlighted this form of children's mobility

within the context of systemic poverty, mass migration and ongoing violence. Her research demonstrates the centrality of inter-household relationships in enabling children's relocation 'in conditions of danger and difficulty' (2007a:166). Her work also highlights migration as a collective process (e.g., in decision-making and perceived benefits) and not as an individual endeavour. Rural-urban migration, she effectively argues, is strongly linked to the idea of 'improving oneself' (*superar*) by overcoming poverty and through efforts at self-improvement (Leinaweaver 2008). Leinaweaver's work on 'child circulation' also illustrates how gender ideologies around labour create a preference for circulating female children who can take on household work in the receiving home (2007a: 167). The exchange provides an opportunity for poor families to ensure that their children's education and care are provided for, and at the same time strengthens cross-class kin connections. That is the hope and expectation at least, though this is sometimes met by a different reality.

Other researchers in Peru have highlighted the impact of migration on well-being, such as Benavides et al. (2006) who described how in rural communities education is believed to allow one to '*progresar*' or to improve one's self, even when (or perhaps because) it may require migration. Research by the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) group has done focused work on the migration–well-being relationship. For example, Lockley (2006) used such concepts as 'establishing oneself' (*establecerse*) and 'progressing' (*sobresalir*) to analyse the impact of migration on the well-being of (internal) migrants, while (Wright-Revollo 2007) examined the perceived obstacles to achieving well-being amongst a sample of Peruvian migrants in London and Madrid.

## 4. Young Lives: design, methods and sub-sample communities

This paper reports on analysis of data collected from Young Lives (YL), a fifteen year research and policy programme (2000-2015) that is tracking the lives and households of some 12,000 children and young people growing up in contexts of poverty. The study takes place in four countries: Peru, Ethiopia, India (Andhra Pradesh state) and Vietnam, in twenty sites per country. It aims to improve global understanding of the causes, dynamics and consequences of childhood poverty and how specific policies and interventions impact on children's lives. It does so by focusing on two cohorts of children in each country; a 'younger cohort' who were born in the year 2000/01 and an 'older cohort' who were born in 1994.

The research component is made up of two strands, both longitudinal in nature. The first strand is based on survey questionnaires administered every few years to all participating children and young people, including separate questionnaires for their primary caregivers and for gathering community-level data. Together, the questionnaires cover a broad range of themes to build a cumulative picture of children's experiences of poverty and within the dynamic contexts of their households and communities, including important relationships and institutions. The Young Lives sample is a 'pro-poor' sample, with nearly eighty per cent of YL children in Peru classified as living below the national poverty line (Escobal et al. 2008).

The first survey was carried out in 2002 (older cohort was aged eight, N = 714), then again in 2006 (aged 12, N = 685), with future rounds planned for 2009, 2012 and 2015. The second

strand of research uses qualitative methods to work more closely between survey rounds with a small number of sub-sample children, including their carers and teachers. This takes place with around fifty case study children across four communities per country (five communities in Ethiopia). Equal numbers from the younger and older cohorts and of boys and girls participate. The second round of qualitative research is underway at the end of 2008, with two more rounds planned for 2010 and 2013 (at the final round, the older cohort will be nearly twenty years old).

In Peru, the first round of qualitative research ('Qual-1') was carried out between August and December 2007. The four sites were selected to capture contrasts in area of residence (rural/urban), geographical location (coast, jungle, mountain), poverty and ethnic identity (to capture an indigenous group, namely Quechua-speaking). The research communities will be referred to as Rioja, Andahuaylas, San Román and Lima and are briefly described below:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Rioja* (YL cluster 5) is a rural community situated in the upper Amazon jungle region in the northern part of the country and is part of San Martín Department. It is about a ten minute drive from the district capital and four hours away from the regional capital. The village has high levels of poverty and most of its residents (around 270 households) obtain their livelihoods from agriculture and cattle raising activities, with coffee the main cash crop. Families also cultivate tropical fruits, manioc and corn for self consumption. Like many other villages in the region, this Rioja community is largely populated by Andean immigrants who come from the neighbouring region of Cajamarca. There is also a strong presence of the indigenous Awajun ethnic group (though none were successfully recruited for YL study). The main highway in the region, the *Carretera Marginal*, passes through the village. There is a preschool, primary school and secondary school in the village. The closest place offering higher education is the provincial capital which is about one hour's drive away. Among the social programmes operating in the village are: Glass of Milk (*Vaso de Leche*), Kitchen Co-op (*Comedor Popular*), school breakfast (only primary), school lunch (only preschool), and integral health insurance. Piped water is available to most households and electricity reached the community in 2007.

2. *Andahuaylas* (cluster 18) is the second rural community in the qualitative sub-sample. The village is located in the southern highlands of Peru, with lands between 3,000 and 3,500 meters in altitude, in the Department of Apurímac, one of the country's poorest regions. The region was particularly hard hit by the political violence that marked the decades of the 1980s and early 1990s. Several reported attacks against the police in recent years suggest terrorist activities continue, though who is responsible for the attacks is not always clear. This Andahuaylas community is about half an hour from the district capital and eight hours from the regional capital. The village is dispersed throughout the surrounding hills in which the farming land is located. There is a preschool, primary school and secondary school, but the nearest place to pursue higher education is in the provincial capital, located around forty-five minutes away. Around 335 households live in the community. They are mostly indigenous Quechua-speakers who support themselves through agriculture and cattle-raising. The main

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1 The variables chosen were: i) subjective poverty (percentage of people describing themselves as worse off than others in their community); ii) home services; iii) health index; iv) percentage in receipt of benefits from the government, FBO or NGO; v) percentage of boys attending school; vi) percentage of girls attending school; vii) percentage of working children; viii) percentage in a minority ethnic group; and ix) percentage of primary caregivers with no or primary education. The names of specific communities will not be used in this paper or other Young Lives publications in order to protect the identity of participants and communities. Community descriptions were adapted from reports provided by the Peruvian research team (Patricia Ames, unpublished YL report, 2007).

crops are potatoes and corn. There is piped water and electricity available in the community. Social programmes operating there include: Glass of Milk, Kitchen Co-op, school breakfast (only primary), school lunch (only preschool), integral health insurance, and more recently, JUNTOS, a cash transfer programme.

3. The *San Román* community (cluster 20) is an urban neighbourhood located in the city of Juliaca, in the southern Andes, at about 4000 meters in altitude, in the region of Puno. Juliaca is the economic and commercial centre of the region and many of San Román's 3000 households are dedicated to formal and informal trade, commerce and the textile industry. The area is also known for its drug dealing and smuggling activities. As an urban settlement, there is electricity, piped water, sewage, as well as a telephone service. It is a multi-cultural city with Spanish, Quechua and Aymara speakers, many of whom claim rural origins and are therefore migrants to the area. There is a public preschool and a public primary school in the neighbourhood, as well as a few private schools. Secondary schools are located in nearby neighbourhoods. Institutions to pursue higher education are available throughout the city and in the nearby city of Puno, the regional capital (45 minutes by car). There are only a few social programmes operating in the neighbourhood, but these include: Glass of Milk, a mothers' club, and a school breakfast programme (only primary).

4. *Lima 3* (cluster 14) is an urban neighbourhood located in the southern part of Lima, the national capital. This Lima neighbourhood has around 1118 households and is one of the '*pueblos jóvenes*' or spontaneous settlements that were erected on the outskirts of Lima; this one dates back to the 1950s. Residents of 'Lima 3' trace their origins to places all over the country, with some of them born in Lima. Their economic activities are various, but generally not related to agriculture. As an urban settlement, there is electricity, piped water, sewage, and a telephone service. There are several schools in the area, including public and private preschools, primary schools and secondary schools, as well as one *wawa wasi* (day care), PRONOEIs (non-formal preschool), a vocational centre and an academy that prepares students for university admission. Institutions of higher education are available throughout the city and district.

In each of the sub-sample communities described above, the same mix of qualitative research methods were used. They were complementary and aimed to explore the key themes of 'child well-being' and 'childhood transitions.' They included task-based group activities (with young people), collective and individual interviews (separately with young people, their carers and teachers), and classroom, home and community observations (in relation to case studies). Analysis for this paper is mainly focused on individual interview transcripts with young people, their carers and teachers, as well as reports on some of the creative methods used, including a life-course timeline and a 'well-being' drawing method. Neither migration or mobility were explicit research topics but they emerged during the interview discussions with young people and their carers around other core research themes, namely expectations and aspirations related to school and work. Further, as will be seen below, many YL children and especially their mothers already have a history of migration.

## 5. Peru and patterns of migration

Recent analysis from YL panel data suggest the country's economic and policy context has become more favourable for children and young people in recent years, but inequalities between different groups persist (Escobal et al. 2008, also see Sanchez 2007). For example, evidence shows that rural and ethnic minority children are more likely to experience poorer nutrition and poorer educational outcomes (*ibid*). This is despite a national reduction in aggregate poverty rates and increased social public expenditure. Improvements in urban areas account for most of the decline in poverty, with poverty rates in rural areas remaining virtually unchanged during the four years between survey rounds (*ibid*).

Persistent social and economic inequalities drive migration, especially from rural to urban areas and via established migrant networks, but also internationally. It is estimated that ten per cent of Peruvians live abroad, with migrant networks providing a channel for remittances to those who stay behind (Morales 2007). The amount of remittances channelled into Peru annually has nearly reached \$3,000 million (*ibid*); based on 2004 data, remittances into Peru equalled 279 per cent of its Official Development Assistance (ODA) and 117 per cent of its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (IDB 2006: 37).

During the four years between survey rounds, over nine per cent of older cohort households reported a change in residence (crossing a district border) (N = 60).<sup>2</sup> This is in line with the country's high levels of internal mobility with movements particularly in the direction of rural to urban areas. The capital city of Lima, for example, claims around one third of the country's population, despite representing just one tenth of its territory. By the late 1980s, it had 42 per cent of all university students, taught by 62 per cent of all professors, and 40 per cent of all school teachers (Hudson 1992). Work opportunities and access to technical and higher education are considered concentrated in coastal departments like Lima, Tacna, Moquegua and Madre de Dios and reinforce stereotypes of the dynamic coast in contrast to the stagnant Andean region and jungle (Morales 2007).

Migration in Peru is not just for economic reasons. During the 1980s and early 1990s widespread internal armed conflict between the Peruvian armed forces, the Maoist guerrilla group Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) and the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (*Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru*) led to thousands of deaths, and forced disappearance and migrations.<sup>3</sup> The Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (*Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación –CVR - del Peru*) published its final report in 2003 estimating around 69,000 deaths and disappearances due to the conflict (*la violencia*). The

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2 Three per cent of these were movements to another district within the same province (n= 21), two per cent to another province (n = 13) and three per cent to a different department (n = 26). The number of children is too small relatively to produce a 'profile' of migrated children, especially as we did not collect dates for migration. Preliminary analysis suggests there are no remarkable differences between migrated and non-migrated children. Alan Sanchez carried out preliminary analysis on migration variables based on R1 and R2 survey. Migrated children do not appear to be concentrated in any specific region (coast, mountain, jungle), area of residence (urban, rural) or poverty level (based on 2002 Wealth Index). Forty-two children had different primary caregivers to those reported at Round One. There were 591 children for whom no changes were reported either in household residence or in caregiver.

3 The impact of mother's migration history within the context of political violence on children's welfare has been explored using Young Lives data on the younger cohort by Javier Escobal (2008).

CVR collected 17,000 testimonies and documented over 11,500 cases of serious rights violations (CVR 2003; also see Coxshall 2005 for an ethnographic approach to seeking the 'truth' in relation to *la violencia*). The violence impacted most heavily on indigenous highland communities, and particularly in the region of Ayacucho. For decades prior to the violence, rural to urban migration was already a well-established pattern. Many poor rural migrants to Lima, for example, self-organised into residential areas by claiming outlying land to create 'spontaneous settlements' or '*pueblos jóvenes*' (Chambers 2005; Lobo 1982; Matos Mar Santos 1967). In 1990 there were an estimated 400 of these squatter settlements surrounding Lima, as well as 6,000 migrant regional clubs in the area (on regional clubs see Altamirano 1984). By the time political violence waned in the 1990s, several socially and culturally diverse migrant populations had been produced.

The Peruvian YL sample reflects these high levels and patterns of mobility. One third of children from the older cohort and over half of their mothers were migrants in their YL communities; in other words, they had been born elsewhere. Based on data collected in the Round Two survey, nineteen of the twenty six mothers participating in the qualitative sub-study reported being born 'elsewhere'. However, there was variation between communities: in the Rioja community (rural), all eight of the participating mothers were born elsewhere. In Andahuaylas (rural), only one of the six mothers was born elsewhere. Five of the six participating mothers in both San Roman (urban) and Lima (urban) were born outside the YL community. The case study mothers who had migrated into the YL communities gave the following reasons for their move: relationship (1), divorce/separation (1), problems with rent (1), land purchase/better land (2), to study (3), to work (3), to seek independence (3) and to improve the family dwelling (5).

By the time the older cohort were around twelve years old, eighty per cent of them had left their YL communities at some time (Round Two survey). Although this suggests a reasonable degree of mobility, the data does not indicate the distance, reason, frequency or duration of their trips. Nonetheless, more rural young people (one in four) were reported to have never left their villages, with fewer urban young people (one in seven) never having left their communities.

## 6. Two case studies: Elmer and Maria

By way of introduction to the further analysis, two brief case studies are presented which illustrate some of the key issues explored in more detail below. A total of three young people (from the twelve-year old cohort) who had been identified for possible participation in the qualitative sub-study were found to have migrated at the time of first fieldwork in late 2007 (N=27). All three cases highlight the important links between migration and education, especially in rural communities. Alvaro, one of these cases from Andahuaylas, convinced his parents to let him move to a student hostel about an hour away from his home. His reason for wanting to move was to study in a better quality secondary school and to be mentored by a former priest who ran the hostel. I present in more detail below the cases of Elmer and Maria who were both from poor households in Rioja and who had recently left their communities to live with family members elsewhere. Like Alvaro, Maria's migration was for better quality schooling and was rural-to-rural in direction. Elmer, on the other hand, moved

temporarily to Lima to provide his sister with help in her household and to spread the economic cost of his care and education. Their cases were selected for inclusion because they demonstrate how migration can be a multi-faceted, often intra-familial, strategy for improving lives.

### 6.1. Elmer Rubio

Elmer had lived most of his life in the 'Rioja' community, although his family re-located during his third through sixth grades of primary school to work on a nearby ranch, which meant the children had to attend schools that were of notably poorer quality. Like many others in the area, Elmer's family had migrated into Rioja, having moved there in search of agricultural work a year before he was born. When he was six years old he began to work (unpaid) during school holidays in the fields, 'for experience' and when he got older he worked harvesting coffee, for which he received ten soles (approximately £2.00) per day. He thought agricultural work was 'so-so' and that it was hard, but he enjoyed helping his father. He thought combining school and work was best for him, but said that when children only worked it was 'wrong, they should study'.

Shortly before beginning secondary school, Elmer moved from Rioja to Lima where his twenty-five year old sister had migrated five years earlier. She sent for him so that he could look after her two children (aged 3 and 6) while she and her husband went out to work (she worked in a nearby restaurant, her husband as a carpenter). In exchange for his help, his sister paid for all of his school-related expenses. Before moving to Lima, Elmer and his sister did not know each other very well, as she had left home when she was 13 years old and Elmer was a baby. Their mother saw this as an opportunity for them to become closer. The previous year the eldest brother (17 years old) had been living there for the same reason, but he had since returned to Rioja in order to graduate with his old classmates, which was also Elmer's plan. When asked which place was nicer, Lima or Rioja, Elmer quickly answered, 'Rioja', 'because there are more trees' and 'all my family is there'. But he said it was important for him to go to Lima, 'to know more things'.

Moving Elmer and his elder brother within the family meant some of the economic burden was lifted from their parents' household, while also benefiting the eldest sister. It also reflects the value placed on education, with Elmer's mother claiming, 'education is better in the city, not so backward as it is over here'. She attributed her own illiteracy to the circumstances of her childhood: 'before, the school was far away and we paid the teacher. It wasn't like now, that the school is near home and the state pays the teacher'. She described education as 'a legacy that no one can take away'. But she warned Elmer that if he ever failed a grade she would not register him for the following school year: 'finish your primary school and don't fail, so you can go to secondary school, because if not, you know, the machete is waiting for you', the machete symbolising agricultural work. 'I don't want him to be like me, with no education...it's not a time for not having studies, not anymore.' She wanted Elmer to study 'until he can find work' but feared he might find a girlfriend, 'bringing [her] a daughter-in-law' or grandchildren, which she viewed as a risk to his studies. Money was also a concern and Elmer had already told her that if he was unable to continue studying, he would work to support his younger siblings. But his mother wanted him to continue studying to get a job, 'otherwise, we all go and take the machete' [laughter]. She didn't think Rioja had any work for Elmer, 'only in the fields' (*chacra*).



## 6.2. Maria Vargas

Similar to Elmer's family, Maria's parents had migrated to Rioja a year before she was born. Elmer's and Maria's households were located in villages separated by a five-minute car ride. Maria's village, however, did not have a secondary school. When it came time for Maria to start secondary school, she was sent to live with her maternal grandparents about an hour's drive away in 'San Juan' where school quality was thought to be much better than anything on offer locally. Maria's parents sent money in support of her schooling, while Maria also assisted her grandmother with daily household chores. Maria liked her grandmother's town, especially because she had water and electricity there and no longer needed to use candles to do her homework. Despite these comforts, she considered 'home' to be where her mother, father and sisters lived, not her grandparents' house.

Although she performed a range of household chores, Maria rarely worked on her family's land because her mother considered she was still too young. However, during school breaks she accompanied her mother during the coffee harvest, and throughout the year helped out in her mother's shop (*bodega*) until it was shut down in 2007 due to poor sales. She received money for working in the shop, but also reported missing school in order to work. Maria's mother insisted that it was good for children to work so they do not become lazy, 'because by knowing how to work they can earn their money and in that way they can be educated also.'

Maria's mother was relatively well-educated in comparison to the other YL mothers in Rioja as she had seven years of schooling (of the twelve YL mothers in the qualitative research site, nine had either no or some primary school, and only three had attended secondary). However, she did not believe that formal education had been useful in her own life. Maria believed formal schooling would be essential for her future life, and hoped to complete technical college to become a teacher, though she did not expect to be able to, because the fees were too expensive. Of all the activities Maria did on a daily basis, her mother considered studying the most important in order for her to find 'some small job' in the future. Her mother preferred for Maria to stay single, study and work 'because with a family it's almost impossible'. The mother planned to relocate the whole family to San Juan in the coming year, since Maria's younger sister was expected to finish primary school and would need a place to attend secondary. She thought it would be too difficult for the grandmother to care for two girls on her own. That was why on weekends the family often travelled to San Juan to gradually prepare the land on which they planned to build their house. Maria's mother did not think her daughter would ever return to live in the Rioja community, and explained: 'Well, it's very difficult here, here there are no jobs. She will have to go to the city. She'll have to work there, to look for employment so she can study.' Maria's case demonstrates the difficulty in separating out different transitions from one another, as anticipated changes around school, work and migration appear integrally linked.

## 7. Education: becoming different, becoming somebody

The case studies above illustrate the growing centrality of education in understandings of what it takes to make successful transitions to adulthood ('becoming somebody') and out of poverty; as Elmer's mother said 'it's not a time for not having studies, not anymore'. This theme will be the focus of the remainder of the paper with connections made to the role of mobility in this process. The following data, which came from a group-based research activity with rural boys in Andahuaylas, touch on the main issues being explored. The activity used story completion to explore young people's experiences and views of school transitions and the roles of other people in the process. When the boys were asked what a teacher would tell a boy who was about to enter secondary school, they answered in turn:

'That he should study.'

'So that he can be a professional.'

'So that he's not stupid.'

'That he should keep studying so he doesn't have to go to the fields!'

When asked what the boy's father would tell him about secondary school, they responded:

'That he should work so he can be educated.'

'That he should keep studying so he's not like him' (the father).

For both young people and their caregivers, progressing through education promises the pathway to better lives and to 'becoming somebody' of value. I focus on four dimensions of this promise and discuss the role of mobility in fulfilling it. First, education brings literacy, which both young people and adults considered empowering (for example, in order to 'defend themselves'), especially for rural communities who are increasingly part of a wider, knowledge-based society. Second, education is the way in which someone becomes a 'professional' in life – a catch-all term referring to any non-manual, salaried, preferably governmental job – which brings security and respect. Third, through education young people have the possibility to become 'different' from older generations. Fourth, in many cases mobility is imagined as integral to the process of 'becoming somebody' through education and work.

### 7.1. To defend oneself

The idea that educational investments strengthen young people's capacity to defend themselves against difficult systems and 'bad' people came mainly from rural caregivers. Many of them believed that education would help their children to 'defend' themselves in the future, especially in the event of parental death or illness. The phrase '*para que se defienda en la vida*' (so that he defends himself in life) is a sentiment that resonated among this group, with one mother saying that her son would not have 'to suffer once he knows something, that he can defend himself' (Andahuaylas). A boy from rural Rioja maintained that school would be useful for his future 'because we can read and we don't get easily cheated out'. Another

boy from his community said that school was important for the 'signs', so that when you go to the city you won't get lost.

This function of education was also mentioned by mothers in rural Rioja, one of whom said that education was important for her son 'so he can read...so he knows how to solve a problem or anything that might happen...people who don't know do things blindly'. Another mother described how her son could defend himself if accused of a crime because 'he already knows, he is already educated, he can defend himself, search for a lawyer'. She contrasts this with her own lack of education, saying, 'even if they accuse me of something, even if it's just a joke, I don't know what I'd end up telling the authorities.'

Literacy also positions some young people as mediators for their less-educated parents. This is the case for one mother who works alongside her son as a street seller in urban San Román. She said:

You know, if you know how to read...I don't know anything, so how can I tally the bill (*sacar la cuenta*)? ...Let's say someone tells me: 'loan me this'... since I don't know how to take note of it, that's how I go broke (*a la quiebra*).

In this way, through education young people are thought to acquire a greater capacity to defend themselves, as well as the possibility to help defend others. This capacity is linked more generally to understandings of well-being or of 'faring well in life', with education playing a central role.<sup>4</sup>

## 7.2. Becoming a professional

'Becoming a professional' is a widespread aspiration of and for young people in Peru as several previous studies have shown (Ames 2002; Anison 1998; Benavides et al. 2006). They make a clear link between schooling and future well-being, owing to its role in becoming a 'professional'. When a boy from rural Rioja was asked to explain why he thought children needed a better education he responded, 'to be somebody in life', meaning, 'to be a professional'. His mother echoed this in a separate interview where she said, 'maybe, God willing, he finishes school and becomes a professional.'

In a group-based activity in rural Andahuaylas, to research boys' understandings of well-being, they were asked to think of a boy of their age in their community who was doing well in life and to describe him. They mentioned that he is a boy who goes to school, to which the researcher responded: 'Why does someone who goes to school fare well in life?' One of the boys answered, 'because he can become someone in life...he learns.' The researcher asked if somebody who did not go to school could 'become someone in life'. 'No, because you do not know anything,' was one of the responses. The researcher commented that 'there are people who have not studied and who know other things'. 'They know how to make children,' asserted one of the group, making everyone laugh. Another boy pointed out that the ones who have children do not fare well in life because they have nothing to draw from to support their children if they have not studied.

These comments can also be read in the context of the information gathered from all the twelve year olds and their caregivers in the second survey round regarding their educational aspirations (for the youth). Young people were asked: 'Imagine you had no constraints and could stay at school as long as you liked, what level of formal education would you like to

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4 From a personal communication from Natalia Streuli, Young Lives Research Assistant, 15 October 2008.

complete?' Caregivers were asked what level of formal education they wanted their children to complete. Around 90 per cent of young people would like to complete either university (78 per cent) or technical college (12) (n = 674). Caregivers' aspirations were similar in that 92 per cent of them want their children to complete either university (75 per cent) or technical school (17 per cent). Their responses thus indicate an intergenerational consensus.

To ascertain children's expectations, they were asked whether or not they thought the young person would achieve the desired grade level, to which 96 per cent of caregivers and 95 per cent of children said yes. Of those who thought there was a risk of dropping out early they were asked why, with the main response being 'fees/school materials too expensive' (over one third of young people, over three quarters of caregivers). Caregivers overwhelmingly identified '*falta de dinero*' (lack of money) as the greatest risk, while young people also pointed to family problems and relationships as a potential threat leading to school drop out:

'My father doesn't help me.'

'My father is looking for another job.'

'My brother doesn't want to teach me.'

'Lack of moral support from my family.'

Young people were also asked, 'when you are about 20 years old, what job do you think you will be doing?', to which 36 per cent responded 'studying'. Many more caregivers (61 per cent) thought their children would still be studying at that age. Contrast this with the 3 per cent of youth and 4 per cent of caregivers who thought they (the children) would be farming. Even fewer expected to be full-time parents or homemakers (less than 1 per cent). Notably, responses by and for boys and girls were similar. Information collected on the main occupations of heads of household (usually fathers, for example see Table 1) offer another backdrop against which to consider the occupational aspirations of rural and urban youth.

**Table 1:** *Main Occupation of Household Head by Qualitative Sites, Older Cohort*

	Rioja (rural)	Andahuaylas (rural)	San Román (urban)	Lima 3 (urban)
Related to agriculture	76 %	91.2%	9.2%	–
Not related to agriculture	12%	8.6%	88.5%	98%
Non-waged (e.g., homemaker or dependent)	12%	–	2.3%	2.1%

Source: Round 2, 1994 Cohort Household Questionnaire, 2006

The qualitative data paints a similar picture of high youth aspirations among both young people and their caregivers (Table 2 below). Caregivers in the rural communities were less likely to mention specific jobs, such as 'doctor' or 'teacher' and often just said they want their children to study '*hasta que sea profesional*' (until s/he becomes a professional). Only a few of them identified manual jobs (one mechanic, one seamstress). Urban caregivers also aspire to professional jobs for their children but were more varied and specific in their preferences, which included veterinarian, architect and engineer. Urban youths point to a wider variety of job aspirations that ranged from footballer and pastry chef to police officer and banker. None of the rural young people in the qualitative study aspired to 'agricultural' jobs, with the exception of one boy who wanted to be an agricultural engineer.

As mentioned earlier, the desire to become a professional is linked to the notion of 'becoming somebody in life' (*ser algo or alguien en la vida*). It connotes steady work, and consistent

wages and contrasts sharply with life in the countryside. Education is important to obtain steady work, or as one boy explained, *trabajos seguros*, because without a stable job, 'you have to search for work...and this requires time, and when time passes, you lose time, and while you're losing time you run out of money, and while you run out of money, you run out of food and then you're left with nothing to live from' (*San Román*). A boy from the Lima site said that boys who don't study end up becoming 'brutes' (*bruto*), lazy, and living on the street, 'carrying...bags of sugar, of rice'. In his view, a childhood without education results in a simple 'brutish' life of hard labour.

**Table 2:** *Youth and Caregiver Occupational Aspirations*

Youth aspirations (for self)		Caregiver aspirations (for their children)	
Teacher	7	'Professional'	6
Doctor	6	Teacher	4
Police	2	Doctor	3
Vet	2	Engineer	2
Accountant	1	Mechanic	2
Banker	1	Accountant	1
Business admin	1	Architect	1
Engineer	1	Seamstress	1
Footballer	1	Military	1
Mechanic	1	Vet	1
Military/police	1		<i>n = 22</i>
Pastry chef	1		
Secretary	1		
	<i>n = 26</i>		

Source: Young Lives qualitative sub-sample interviews, 2007

In a similar vein, education was seen to afford a certain 'distinction' or social legitimacy, an idea that transcended the urban/rural divide. The mother of a boy in rural Andahuaylas asserted that if he dropped out of school early he would be 'without value' (*no tendria valor*). But by studying he could 'end up being somebody...even if it's a street cleaner, if he'd studied well'. This was echoed by a city mother who maintained that a life 'without studies...it's not worth anything' (*sin estudios...no vale nada*) (*San Román*). Another mother, from Lima, expressed a more measured aspiration, believing that with education her son 'could make something of himself...not a big professional but perhaps he could become something'. She went on to say that it's not just about her son finding a job, but that 'if he studies he's worth something' (*vale para algo*).

Benavides et al. (2006: 197) also found that rural caregivers and young people in Peru have high aspirations for the future. They carried out a study among 1300 rural households and found that despite low levels of parental education, for example, children and adults alike placed a high value on children's schooling and have high educational aspirations. They combined surveys, interviews and home observations to determine the extent to which rural household dynamics were consistent with that which is expected by the model of formal schooling. The study referred to the so-called 'myth of education' (*el mito de la educación*) which holds that education is the solution that will break young people and their families free from the chains of poverty and ignorance. At the same time, formal education represents a kind of threat to the reproduction of the tastes and cultural practices that are locally valued

within rural communities (Ames 2002: 26-27, in Benavides et al. 2006). Benavides et al. (2006:161) concluded that despite high aspirations for young people, low levels of non-monetary support for school activities were observed in terms of there being little dialogue about school or time spent on homework.

### 7.3. Becoming different ('que tenga una vida diferente que yo')

All of the twelve year old young people who were a part of the qualitative research were enrolled in school (seven in primary and twenty in secondary). The belief in the power of education to create intergenerational difference, even among children who were living in the same environment and doing similar work, was illustrated by both urban and rural caregivers. Rural parents in particular drew on various metaphors to contrast their experiences with their children's, such as this rural father who said:

I also walk in the fields with sandals (*ojotas*). At least he will go with shoes (*zapatitos*) if he gets a good head with education (*si coge cabeza con los estudios pues*). (*San Román*)

The father refers to his sandals (*ojotas*) made from recycled car tires that are typically worn by local peasants, as they are more affordable than the factory-made shoes associated with city residents and the lifestyle he aspires to for his son.

The trajectories rural parents envision for their children are generally very different from their own personal histories and based on contrasting childhood experiences. Education is considered the key factor creating distinct, better lives and pathways out of poverty. This is already reflected in levels of educational attainment; it is likely that young people in the countryside are already more educated than their mothers. 19 per cent of rural mothers had never been to school, compared to 4 per cent of mothers living in urban areas (Round 2 survey, full older cohort sample). Most rural mothers reported between 1 and 6 years of schooling (52.8 per cent), while most urban mothers had between 7 and 11 years of schooling (47.8 per cent).

The metaphor of 'vision' was used by caregivers in rural Andahuaylas to contrast younger and older generations in terms of being 'with or without eyes'. One of the mothers said, for example, that if she had been educated like her daughter she would also have had a different life; instead, she goes 'without eyes' (*sin ojos*). To 'have eyes' is to be able to read and write and is a skill that either widens or narrows the intergenerational gap. Another mother in this community echoed the idea, saying that if she 'had eyes' she could help her son with his school work. She explained that instead she is left with 'nothing other than my mouth...I tell him to do his homework.' Illiteracy creates a cultural divide limiting caregivers in the kind of support they can offer in relation to their children's school work; as the mother above intimated, she can only use her mouth, to encourage her son to do well.

School participation may also produce changes in cultural identity that give rise to intergenerational tension and conflict. For example, a rural mother from Andahuaylas noted changes in her daughter who had recently begun to attend secondary school in the neighbouring city. She points to the girl's preference for 'wearing pants' and not the customary *pollera* or skirt; she also said that her daughter has tried to '*castellanizar*' ('Spanishise') the family, who are indigenous Quechua-speakers. This and the other examples provided above reflect assumptions about the power of education to transform young people's *habitus*.

Bourdieu discussed this kind of 'duality of frames of reference' in a study he did on his childhood village of Béarn in southwestern France in the 1960s where the rates of bachelorhood were on the rise (Bourdieu 1962). In 'The Peasant and His Body', he used the

scene of a local ball to analyse the cultural clash between the city and the countryside. He showed how urban categories of judgement were penetrating the rural setting and how young men from the village were being devalued by local single women on the basis of their *habitus*, or the 'traces of the activities and attitudes associated with agricultural life' (p. 583). Young women had assimilated the values and patterns of the city more quickly which led them to judge local men as worthless marriage partners, a sentiment which young men themselves had begun to internalise. This example is not intended to suggest that the same dynamics are at play in the Peruvian communities discussed here. But there is evidence emerging from Young Lives research that young people growing up in rural settings may be developing multiple 'frames of reference', particularly as they progress through formal education, but also as a result of access to television, radio, and even the internet. And these frames of reference may ultimately encourage them to migrate.

Reference to differences between younger and older generations as expressed on and through the body was not limited to rural caregivers. Urban caregivers referred to the distinct lives (*vidas distintas*) of their children. For example, a mother in San Román described her daughter's resistance to work and preference for 'doing nothing':

So, she doesn't do anything, look at her hands how pretty, well, her hands are pretty because she doesn't do anything, because a working hand will never look how it should...I tell her like this, clearly, a working hand, 'don't you see my hand?', I tell her...it's all torn up...[T]hey don't work, they don't do anything, so of course (their hands) have to be like that.

Young people learn to value the process of 'becoming different', which is legitimised through educational discourse and the school environment. For example, in an interview with a secondary school teacher in rural Rioja, the teacher explained what he tells the students in his classroom:

If you want to be professionals you have to look after yourselves...if you don't look after yourselves, who will? Nobody. Only you. 'We', I tell them, 'We, as your parents, as your teachers, we give you all the support you need so you have to grab it and later on you'll be better for it, you'll be professional...Or do you want to be like your parents?', I tell them. 'Nooooo' (the students say).

Despite wanting to become 'different', 92 per cent of the older cohort said they are proud of the job done by their head of household (R2).

This idea of 'difference' did not only apply to parents and Young Lives children, but also to older and younger siblings. Many older brothers and sisters were described as having lost their 'chance' to 'become somebody' in life, but that there was still hope for the younger siblings. Older siblings can be positive role models, as well as models of what younger siblings do not want to become. When a mother in rural Rioja was asked if she herself had worked as a child, she said 'yes' and that:

Before we didn't know what secondary school was. Nowadays the little boy tells you 'mom, I want to study'...he tells you, 'I want to study more than Juan (his older brother). I want to go to secondary school.'

Another mother from this community would like it if her son could 'become some kind of professional, now that his brothers, the others, haven't been able to.'

Relationships between older and younger siblings were often defined by mutual responsibilities. A rural mother described how her older children encouraged the younger ones to study, saying: 'study, study...we're going to work, but you study' (Rioja). Another

mother from Rioja explained how her older daughter had recently failed her post-secondary school entry exams and had insisted that instead of spending money for her to retake her exams, the family use the money for her younger brother's education: 'Why do you want to spend the money in vain? It's better to spend it on my little brother, save your money and spend it on him.' There were also many cases where older siblings were reported to encourage their younger siblings to continue studying by offering material and moral support. One boy's brothers reportedly told him, 'Dedicate yourself to your studies. We're working for your stomach!'

#### 7.4. 'La chacra': suffering in the fields

Getting an education and freeing oneself from dependence on the land are key requirements for rural youth aiming to 'become somebody' in life. School plays an instrumental role in this goal (Visscher 2004). It was the adult caregivers and not their children who use an idiom of suffering to describe their lives working in '*la chacra*' or the fields. 'The *chacra* is hard, it is suffering' is their deep-felt belief and 'education' is the thing that counters it. One mother explained:

[I]n the fields we suffer...with nothing other than her [daughter's] studies she'll surely do well...we have to suffer a barbarity (*una barbaridad*). (*Andahuaylas*)

Childhood was remembered as different for the mothers' generation growing up, while lack of education and hard work were two of its key markers. One mother who had grown up in the countryside and migrated to San Román lamented never having 'had a childhood', saying:

I helped my mom...I practically didn't have a childhood, I never had anything, never played, I never had the opportunity because mainly...you know that in the countryside there's so much sacrifice.

Another mother wanted her daughter to be 'not like me, everything a misery' (*Andahuaylas*). She described a life of hard work, saying, 'We suffer so much, eating dust, at times we go out and come back black...your feet black too, that's how we work the land.' She envisioned something different for her daughter in that 'she'll follow nothing more than her studies'. If her daughter has a 'head on her shoulders' (*si tiene cabezita*) she can get accepted into a course, so that 'surely she won't suffer like us'.

As a symbol of rural suffering, the *chacra* was also used as a threat by caregivers to spur their children to do well in school. This was rare in the cities, though one girl in San Román recalled her mother telling her, 'If you don't pass I'm going to send you to the countryside to herd little piggies! (*pastear chanchitos*)'. 'The *chacra* is waiting for us' is the way one mother in rural Rioja put it to her son, to which he responded, 'I don't want to work in the fields...I want to finish my studies.' She emphasised the distinctive domains of 'education' and 'the fields' by saying, 'what is of the *chacra*, is *chacra*, your studies no one can take away from you.'

Especially in rural communities, caregivers regarded education in terms of permanence, 'a legacy that no one can take away' (caregiver, Rioja). This contrasted with the uncertainty associated with their agricultural livelihoods and the image of the fields as suffering, hard work and instability. Even so, the *chacra* seemed to always be there, looming as the alternative trajectory if the individual failed in their education. Another Riojan mother pointed to the responsibility of young people to shape their pathways, insisting:

He has to do his part too. Everything the school asks us to buy for our children we buy. I tell him, 'Son, if you don't want to study, the fields are waiting for you.' If he's determined, he'll make it because he knows how to.



Caregivers identified children themselves as one of the primary risks for their dropping out of school early. One girl's father jokingly told her to 'study well, if you don't pass, we won't put you in there (the school), we'll put you in the field...if you don't want to study, you're screwing it up for yourself, and you'll stay like us, peasants (*campesinas*)' (Andahuaylas). This reflects an intergenerational contract whereby adults and children have complementary roles in shaping youth trajectories out of poverty (see for example Croll 2006). This came out particularly strongly when young people talked about their views on children who skipped school, as already briefly mentioned above. One of the urban girls, for example, said, 'It's bad, their parents give them everything, they make an effort working, and that's how she pays them back. They have to pay them back by studying' (San Román). The idea of 'paying back' also came out in some of the parent's interviews. One mother in Lima, for example, explained how her twelve year old daughter had recently announced that she intended to start working to 'help out' when she turned fifteen. The mother's response was that she would not allow her daughter to work, explaining, 'The help you will give me is by studying and that you become something and only then when you're somebody can you help me.' In the urban sites material interdependence between young people and their older siblings and adult caregivers was not highlighted as it was so clearly in the rural sites. However, as the examples above suggest, young people alluded to a kind of moral interdependence whereby their attendance and performance in school was the way they paid back their parents for working to support their education.

Results from the Round Two survey provide further evidence of expectations for continued interdependence into the future. Caregivers were presented with a series of statements in relation to (YL) children describing various expectations for the future. They were asked whether or not they agreed with each statement using a five point scale, anchored by 'not at all' (01) to 'a lot' (05).

- Around 66 per cent agreed ('quite a lot' or 'a lot') that their children would continue to live close to them as grown ups, with negligible difference between rural and urban caregivers. There was, however, some difference according to gender of child (62 % of caregivers of male children, and 71% of caregivers of female children responded in this way).
- Over half of all caregivers expected ('quite a lot' or 'a lot') that their (YL) children would provide financial assistance to their younger siblings when grown.

## 7.5. Education requires and increases mobility

For young people growing up in resource-poor communities, continuing education beyond primary school often entails travelling greater distances to the nearest secondary school. In the qualitative research, young people rarely aspired to migrate for the sake of migration. It was mostly an implicit assumption behind their aspirations and linked to schooling and job opportunities. Bello and Villaran (2004) have also linked high expectations for schooling with migration projects in Peru (in Benavides et al. 2006). 'They go far away, where the jobs are...they leave,' is what a YL mother in Rioja said about where she expects her son to live after finishing school.

Especially in rural communities, education both requires mobility and increases one's capacity for being mobile. But urban caregivers also make this connection. One of the mothers in Lima spoke about migration and the need to leave one's childhood community as inevitable. Referring to her daughter, she said:

She's got to become something, she has to become something, by all means, after post-secondary, they can't stay here...with a profession that takes her far she won't experience many difficulties. If you drop out too soon and don't become a professional that's when you encounter difficulties.

In this view, dropping out of school early reduces options and opportunities for leaving the community, as a rural mother explained in reference to her son: '[If he] doesn't progress in his studies, then he'll only live here (*aqui no mas vivia pues*)' (Andahuaylas). She expected her eldest son to migrate to Ecuador for work within the year, and thought her younger son would eventually follow his example. 'They leave when they've grown up. They go to look for work...most of them go to Lima or Ecuador.' Although she preferred for her young son to remain in the village, she accepted that 'they're almost young men at that age. It's up to them.'

Young people were also pragmatic in acknowledging the need for mobility in order to pursue quality education, especially if they aspired to attend university. Few of them, however, enthusiastically embraced the idea of long-distance, permanent migration and wanted to be close to their parents and home. Likewise, many caregivers said that when their children were grown they would like to continue living near them, but some of them viewed migration as inevitable. This came out clearly during an interview with a mother in Lima who had rejected several opportunities to migrate abroad with her husband. She talked about the lack of jobs throughout the country which pushed young people to leave. She expected that if her son became an engineer he would go abroad, but said, 'My heart will break...it's something that hurts me deep inside, I don't like it...but if it's necessary.' Another mother in Lima recalled how when her generation was growing up everyone wanted to move to Lima, but that her son's generation oriented themselves internationally. She accepted her son's possible migration abroad, 'because that's what usually happens'.

When rural young people orient themselves toward migration, it is generally to the next biggest town or capital city. Young people in the urban sites, and particularly in Lima, tend to orient their mobility to a 'better neighbourhood' or internationally. One of the young women in Lima stated clearly:

Put it this way, I think that here we don't have a future and for this reason I'm going to leave for another country, the United States, to work, no?

Overall, there were no major gender differences in migration aspirations. Young women also aspired to migrate, though some caregivers expressed concern about the possibility. One of the mothers in San Román, for example, was clear that she did not want her daughter to move away because 'you run a risk with it, since they're young girls, not far away, because when they're here, you know, at times, you can control them.'

## 7.6. The city versus the countryside

For many living in the rural areas, the city represented less suffering, as one mother said:

I dream, always dream that the city isn't like it is here, here it's always suffering...well, as I see it, there can't be that much suffering [in the city], because they don't get wet, they don't get sunburned, they have their secure jobs, they have their daily schedule, and in contrast, here it's backbreaking. (*Rioja*)

Perceived differences between the city and the countryside influenced aspirations for youth migration. One of the main differences that distinguish city and countryside was in terms of services or perceptions of school quality and job opportunities (Benavides 2006: 173) but also in terms of quality of life. People in the rural communities said themselves that young

people there were backward compared to their quick and advanced city counterparts. With few exceptions, not many caregivers elaborated on why such differences exist, but one rural father explained it as a difference between those who have money (*plata*) and those who don't (Andahuaylas). Deeper structural inequalities and discrimination were otherwise rarely mentioned in the research conversations.

## 8. Discussion

In this section, I briefly discuss the dynamics of young people's aspirations based on the analysis presented above. In particular, I focus on: 1) whether or not their aspirations are 'levelled' or 'inflated'; 2) the collective (and intergenerational) dimension of their aspirations; and 3) the possibility that young people are being prepared for multiple trajectories.

The young people who participated in this study had high aspirations for their future; they and their caregivers believed in the efficacy of schooling and connected educational attainment with upward social mobility. The recent economic growth and expansion of services in Peru perhaps provided the reference point necessary to support the 'capacity to aspire'. The underlying logic may have been that young people can aspire differently to their parents because the realities of their childhoods were different. Possibilities and opportunities were different, so their expectations need not be the same. Given that evidence from Peru suggests that half of all children do not finish secondary school (Guadalupe 2002, in Cueto et al. 2005) it may be that their aspirations were inflated and did not reflect the structural inequalities shaping both their childhoods and their pathways to adulthood and through poverty. The longitudinal design of Young Lives will enable us to track the pathways they take into early adulthood and to document how their aspirations change over time.

Examples were presented in earlier sections that suggested young people's aspirations reflect interdependent family relationships and a 'collective' view of their future. There were high expectations that young people will remain active members of their households, even if they moved away (recall that over half of the young people were expected by their caregivers to provide material assistance to their younger siblings when grown, according to the full sample survey, 2006). There were examples of this in the qualitative sub-sample where older siblings were providing various forms of support for younger brothers and sisters. Nicolas, for example, lived in Rioja with his mother and had three older sisters who had migrated to Lima to work as domestic maids. His mother described how Nicolas wanted to drop out of school because he worried about the rising costs of school-related fees, clothing and food, but that his sisters insisted he continue to study:

[Mother]: So many times when his sisters call... 'We're working for you,' they tell him, 'so you can be well, so you can go to secondary. Don't be like us who didn't even pass through a secondary school for a single day. If we had finished our secondary we would be something else,' they say, 'we would be more, our work would be a little better.'

While young Peruvians growing up in poverty were 'aiming high' with their aspirations, they and their caregivers were also aiming in multiple directions. In other words, some of them had dual strategies (including a 'back up') for transitioning to adulthood. In this respect, differences between the four sub-study communities were apparent but could not easily be explained along the rural and urban division. Becoming a 'professional', for example, was a common goal for young people; it was considered the ideal pathway through adulthood and out of poverty. But in practice some of them were being socialised for 'back-up' trajectories.

This was especially true of working children who learned useful skills in their daily activities, whether it was farm work, herding, or selling wares at the market. From the age of seven and eight, boys and girls growing up in rural villages began to take on increasing responsibilities on family farms and in the care of livestock and other animals. Their parents generally expected progressive participation in a number of activities that contributed to household reproduction, beginning at around age four with simple domestic tasks, such as food preparation and cleaning (Ames et al. 2008: 4). By age ten, many of them were contributing fully to agricultural tasks on their family lands and soon after some of them began to work for pay in others' fields (ibid: 12).

Despite the picture of suffering that some caregivers presented of '*la chacra*', the skills young people learned in agricultural work were held to be useful for their future, even if it was not the desired future. There were many young people in the villages who reported enjoying aspects of their work (which they sometimes combined with 'play'), valuing their work for the contribution it made to their family welfare, and taking pride in being a good worker (ibid: 13). When a mother in rural Rioja was asked what she thought about her son going to the fields, she replied:

Well, for me because we're peasants (*agricultores*), he has to learn about everything...in the field...because when they get to be older, they don't get a profession, they have to dedicate themselves to the fields as well, so, the fields...

Even while caregivers declared high ambitions for their children, such as careers as doctors and engineers, many of them also said they'd prefer 'shorter' courses which were less expensive and would allow their children to begin earning a wage sooner. There was a spectrum of becoming 'a professional' and caregivers often said they'd be happy with 'whatever little thing', '*cualquier cosita*,' as long as it was not anything like the suffering of the fields, or for urban youth, a pathway leading to delinquency or criminality.

## 9. Conclusion

This paper was based on data from child and household surveys, enriched by in-depth qualitative research with a group of 12 year-olds being studied longitudinally by the Young Lives project in Peru. It took as its core concepts aspirations, transitions and trajectories as they relate to education and migration, in order to explore the way young people growing up in poor households orient themselves and are oriented by others for the future. Young people in both rural and urban communities were oriented toward educational trajectories through which they could 'become somebody in life'. This entailed becoming a 'professional' of some kind, securing steady work from the state, a '*sueldo*' or salary, and not being tied to 'the land' (*la chacra*).

There is growing evidence in Peru that education is highly valued, including in impoverished areas and households (see for example Ames 2002; Ansi3n et al. 1998; Cueto et al. 2005). I argued that both young people and their parents were 'aiming high' but that rural youth especially gained important skills through agricultural and pastoral work that prepared them in case their aspirations for professional careers were not met. Working urban youth, such as those in the San Rom3n community, also gained practical, potentially useful skills for the future.

The core set of findings focused on the centrality of education in shaping childhoods and transitions to adulthood. Urban caregivers wanted their children to be 'better' while rural

caregivers wanted their children to be 'different', and education was considered central to disrupting the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Growing up to be 'different' included being: better able to defend oneself in the world; materially better-off and secure; free from physical suffering and hardship; and socially valued because one was educated and therefore 'somebody' in life. This kind of difference did not necessarily signal a weakening or fragmentation of family relationships or interdependencies. In many cases, and on the contrary, it reflected a sense of mutual responsibilities within the family and intergenerational continuity. Mobility and migration were underlying, sometimes silent dimensions of these aspired transition processes.

In conclusion, I return to some of the key concepts for transitions I introduced at the beginning of the paper and ask: did young people and their caregivers growing up in poverty in this context have levelled or depressed aspirations? Based on evidence from Young Lives, the answer is clearly 'no'. Did they have the capacity to aspire? Evidently, yes. But Appadurai's concept of the 'capacity to aspire' entails not only the capacity to envision a particular kind of future, but also the capacity to map out and plan the necessary steps to achieve it. If poverty is the greatest threat to successful transitions, as Lloyd and others (2005) have suggested, then we should also be asking about the 'capacity to achieve' and whether or not young people were acquiring the cultural tools and *habitus* necessary to map out their pathways out of poverty. At age twelve, most young people in our study believed they still had the capacity to achieve and to 'become somebody' in life; for some of them, however, this may entail becoming somebody 'someplace else'.

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**Young Lives is an innovative long-term international research project investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty.**

The project seeks to:

- improve understanding of the causes and consequences of childhood poverty and to examine how policies affect children's well-being
- inform the development and implementation of future policies and practices that will reduce childhood poverty.

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Young Lives is coordinated by a small team based at the University of Oxford, led by Jo Boyden.

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