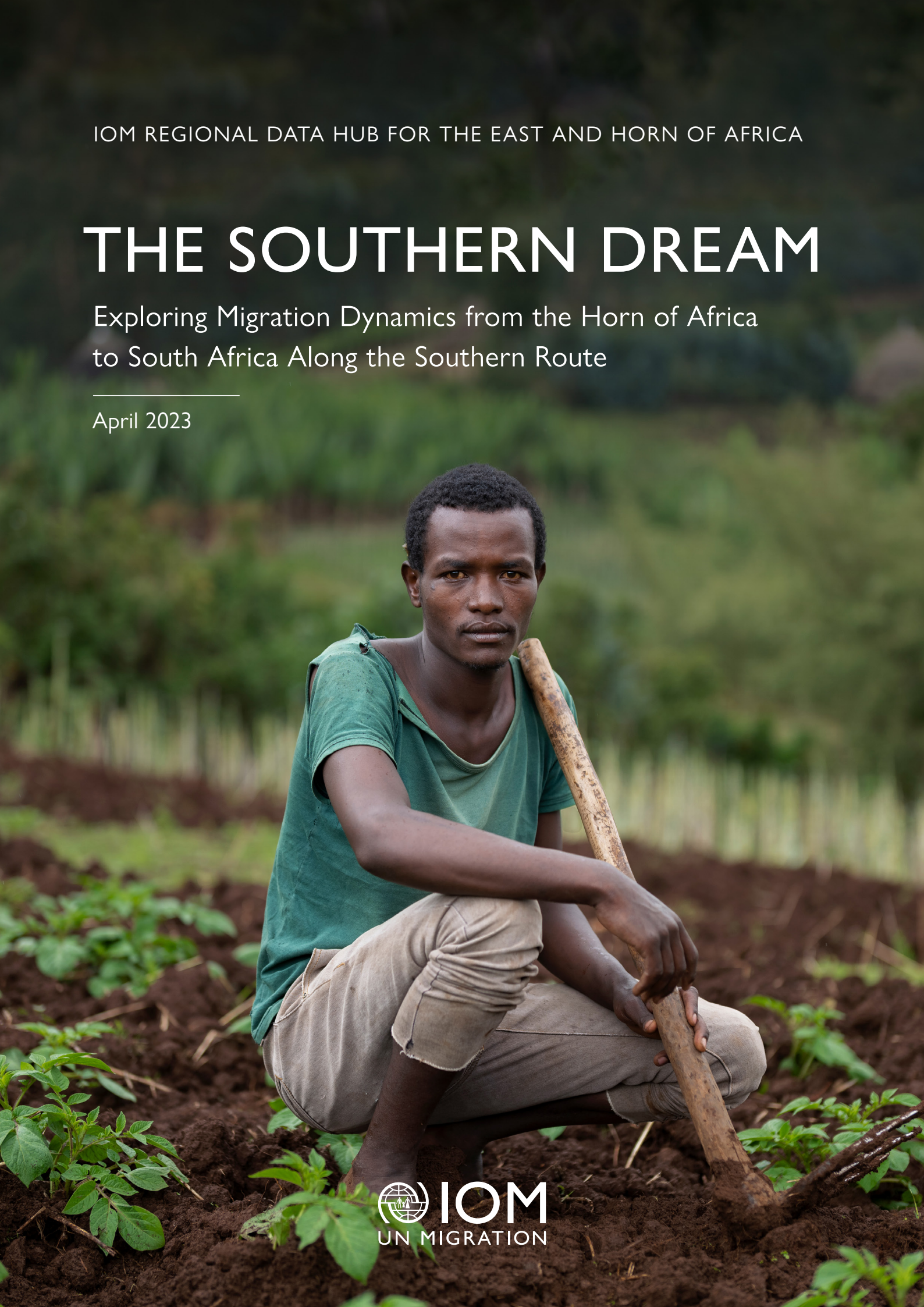
IOM REGIONAL DATA HUB FOR THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

THE SOUTHERN DREAM

Exploring Migration Dynamics from the Horn of Africa to South Africa Along the Southern Route

April 2023



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THE SOUTHERN DREAM

Exploring Migration Dynamics from the Horn of Africa to South Africa Along the Southern Route

April 2023

Project funded by the European Union
Project implemented by IOM

ABOUT IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL DATA HUB

Established in 2018, the Regional Data Hub (RDH) for the East and Horn of Africa supports evidence-based, strategic and policy-level discussion on migration through a combination of initiatives. In particular, the RDH uses multiple tools and processes to investigate the migration narrative in the region and gain a more in-depth understanding of the actors, dynamics and risks of migration. These initiatives aim to fill existing gaps by strengthening the regional evidence base on migration, which will further improve policymaking and programming. The RDH strategy is in line with the objectives of the IOM Migration Data Strategy (MDS). Publications can be consulted at https://eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/regional-data-hub. The RDH and this research project are largely funded through the generous support of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (EU-IOM JI), the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and IOM's Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MiRAC).

ABOUT THE EU-IOM JOINT INITIATIVE PROGRAMME

The EU-IOM JI programme was launched in December 2016 and is funded by the European Union (EU) Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The programme brings together 26 African countries of the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa regions, along with the EU and IOM around the goal of ensuring that migration is safer, more informed and better governed for both migrants and their communities. The programme enables migrants who decide to return to their countries of origin to do so in a safe and dignified way. It provides assistance to returning migrants to help them restart their lives in their countries of origin through an integrated approach to reintegration that supports both migrants and their communities, has the potential to complement local development, and mitigates some of the drivers of irregular migration. Also, within the programme's areas of action is building the capacity of governments and other partners; migration data collection and analysis to support fact-based programming; as well as information and awareness raising.

ABOUT THE PRM-FUNDED AFRICA REGIONAL MIGRATION PROGRAM

The Africa Regional Migration Program (ARMP) is funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and was developed in coordination with relevant target country IOM missions and governments in four IOM regions in Africa: East and Horn of Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa. The main goal of the programme is to appropriately respond to persisting needs and capacity gaps through a coordinated, well-planned, sequenced programme that systematically builds national capacity and regional and inter-country cooperation, adapting to political instability, changing leaderships, and to lacking or limited resources. The overall objective of the program is to support the governments in target countries to manage migration in a sustainable and humane manner.

RDH
IOM Regional Data Hub
East and Horn of Africa

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ACRONYMS

ASR	Assisted Spontaneous Return
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BOLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (Ethiopia)
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EHoA	East and Horn of Africa
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FM	Flow Monitoring
FMP	Flow Monitoring Points
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HoA	Horn of Africa
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ethiopia)
MRC	Migration Response Centre
RDH	Regional Data Hub
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USD	United States Dollar[1]
VHR	Voluntary Humanitarian Return

1 All USD values in this report have been calculated at the exchange rate of 1 USD = 0.192 ETB (Bloomberg exchange rate in July 2022).

DEFINITIONS[2]

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration

Administrative, logistical or financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country or country of transit and who decide to return to their country of origin.

Country of destination

A country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of origin

A country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of transit

The country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or of habitual residence.

Head of household

The person who is acknowledged as head by the other members and is the main decision-maker for decisions concerning the household.

Household

A group of people living together/sharing the same dwelling and cooking arrangements.

Integration

The two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, whereby migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community. It entails a set of joint responsibilities for migrants and communities, and incorporates other related notions such as social inclusion and social cohesion.

Interception

Any measure applied by a State, either at its land or sea borders, or on the high seas, territorial waters or borders of another State, to: (i) prevent embarkation of persons on an international journey; (ii) prevent further onward international travel by persons who have commenced their journey; or (iii) assert control of vessels where there are reasonable grounds to believe the vessel is transporting persons contrary to international or national maritime law. In relation to the above, the person or persons do not have the required documentation or valid permission to enter.

Internal labour migration

Movement of persons within Ethiopia for the purpose of establishing a new temporary or permanent residence to seek new employment opportunities.[3]

Irregular migration

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.

Labour migration

Movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment.

Missing migrant

Any person, who has died or gone missing in the process of migration towards an international destination.

2 All definitions are taken from the IOM glossary unless stated otherwise.

3 Internal labour migration is very common in Ethiopia, especially in rural areas. According to the Ethiopia Rural Socioeconomic Survey (2011–2012), in 74 per cent of rural communities, people left temporarily to look for work – 43 per cent of whom moved to urban centres, 38 per cent to other rural areas and 18 per cent outside of Ethiopia (CSA, 2011–2012). Rural–urban migration is often the first step towards international migration, as urban migrants usually experience welfare improvement, which may give them the means and aspirations to migrate (Bundervoet, 2018).

Multi-migrant household

A household where more than one member has attempted to migrate internationally, is currently abroad or has returned from abroad.

Network migration

The phenomenon through which initial migration of a few persons leads to more migration, either through informal recruitment of workers or through family reunion.

Regular migration

Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.

Reintegration

A process which enables individuals to re-establish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and inclusion in civic life. Reintegration has three key components: **Social reintegration** implies the access by a returning migrant to public services and infrastructures in his or her country of origin, including access to health, education, housing, justice and social protection schemes. **Psychosocial reintegration** is the reinsertion of a returning migrant into personal support networks (friends, relatives, neighbours) and civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations). This also includes the re-engagement with the values, mores, way of living, language, moral principles, ideology and traditions of the country of origin's society. **Economic reintegration** is the process by which a returning migrant re-enters the economic life of his or her country of origin and is able sustain a livelihood.

Remittances

Private international monetary transfers that migrants make, individually or collectively.

Returnees

Individuals who have migrated internationally and then returned to Ethiopia.

Return migration

The movement of persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border. Return migration may or may not be voluntary and includes voluntary repatriation.

Risk perception

Refers to migrants' awareness of challenges along the route and at arrival in South Africa, such as the lack of food and water, the crossing at sea, the war in Yemen and the risk of deportation.

Single-migrant household

A household where one member has attempted to migrate internationally, is currently abroad or has returned from abroad.

Social remittances

The transfer of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital from migrants to their communities of origin.

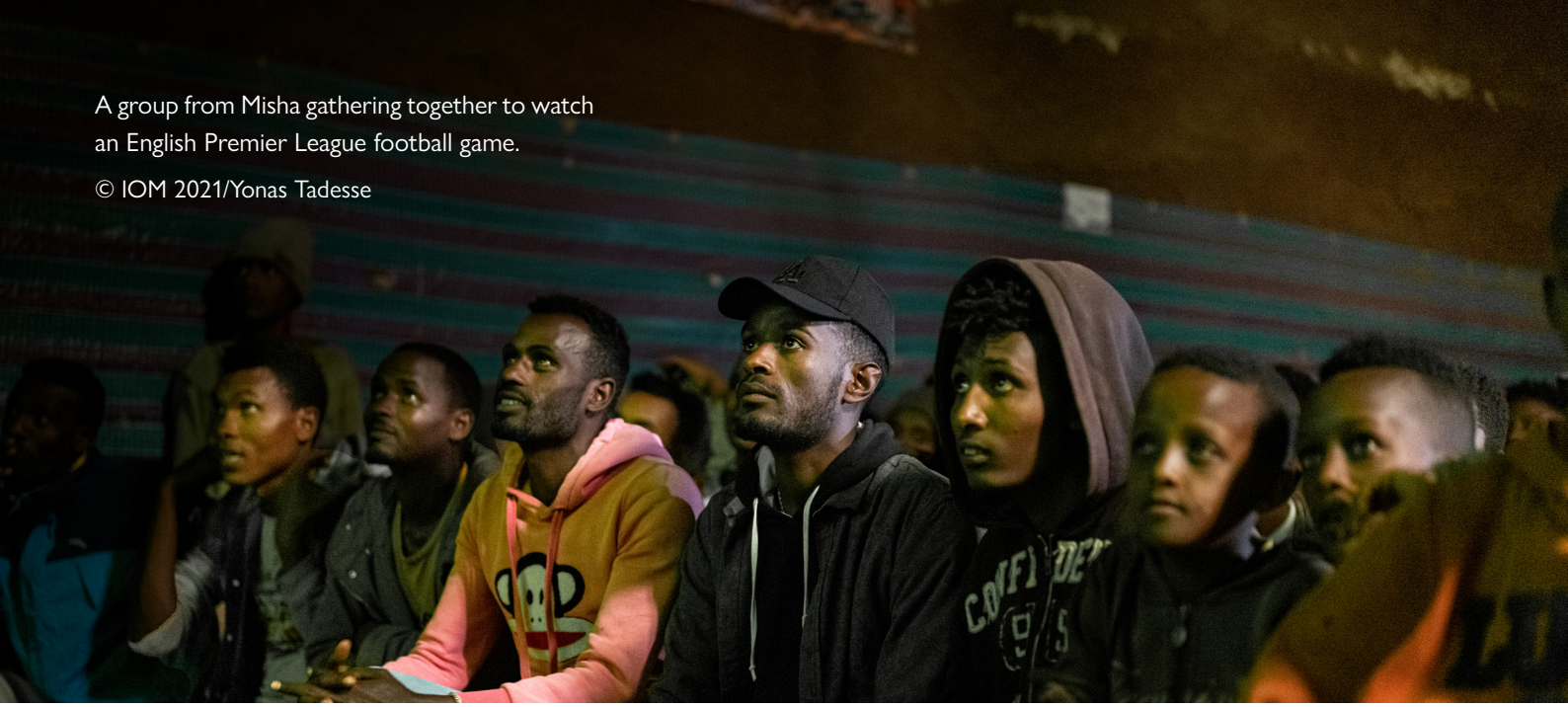
Unaccompanied Child

Children,[4] as defined in Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

Youth

For the purposes of this report, youth are defined as persons aged 15–29 years.

4 Every person younger than 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.



A group from Misha gathering together to watch an English Premier League football game.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the dynamics along the Southern Corridor, looking at who is migrating, why they are migrating, how they are migrating and their experiences in countries of origin, transit and at destination. This executive summary contains the key findings of each chapter of the report for quick reference.

MISHA: AN ORIGIN COMMUNITY OF HIGH EMIGRATION ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

- A variety of factors push young Ethiopians to migrate from southern Ethiopian woredas such as Misha. Misha has experienced environmental degradation including soil erosion and decreasing soil fertility, while rapid population growth has put a lot of pressure on land. Few job opportunities exist in the woreda outside of agriculture and this combination of factors has led to high youth unemployment or underemployment in low-wage jobs, even among university graduates. In this context of a shortage of farmland and lack of decent alternative livelihoods in rural areas, migration is often seen as an option to secure livelihoods for unemployed youth.

- As migration from communities such as Misha increases and flows expand over time, traditions, cultural practices and beliefs around migration flourish and reinforce its perpetuation. When communities develop a culture of migration, migration not only becomes normalized but is also seen as an acceptable livelihood strategy. Moreover, the visible inequalities between households with migrants and non-migrant households have led to a conviction among young people in Misha that migration is key to escaping poverty, enhancing livelihoods, improving lifestyles and living a good life. These perceptions are reinforced by a variety of actors including peers and community members, religious leaders and, in some cases, members of their nuclear family.

- Data from various RDH research projects have continuously shown that risk awareness among aspiring migrants and their households does not necessarily discourage them from migrating as the strong prospect of economic improvement pulling individuals to migrate from Ethiopia seems to outweigh the perceived risk. Aspiring migrants in Misha and their families are thus making calculated choices, whereby they are weighing the risks and benefits that migration could bring the household compared to staying in Ethiopia with unmet aspirations. However, the outcome of the risk–benefit calculation seems to differ across generations, with heads of households generally less optimistic about migration than young, aspiring migrants.

- Network migration is evident along the Southern Route, especially from the Hadiya and Kembata zones of Ethiopia, which have strong traditions of migrating to South Africa. Data suggests that individuals in Misha hold both sizeable family and community networks that enable migration. Through networks, aspiring migrants learn about success stories and opportunities, and are offered information and advice on organizing a migration journey, on the journey itself as well as on employment at destination. Migrants and would-be migrants can also tap into their networks for support before and during the journey, thereby lowering the costs and risks of migration.

TRAVEL ROUTES

- The routes migrants take along the Southern Corridor are fluid and respond to the highly dynamic situation in transit countries, as well as law enforcement activities on the ground. While most migrants travel overland on foot and in vehicles, some also use maritime smuggling routes. Those who can afford it and are able to get a visa fly to South Africa or Mozambique, which is mostly the case for women migrating for marriage and other purposes. Thus, migration along the Southern Route can be regular during some parts of the journey and irregular during others. In most cases, the route migrants take is selected by the smuggler rather than the migrants and is based on the smuggler's perception of the level of surveillance along the route at the time of movement.

- Ethiopians travelling along the Southern Route cross into Kenya at Moyale border point or use porous and unmanned points near the Moyale border to avoid detection by border officers. Although Ethiopia and Kenya have a bilateral agreement on free movement, the majority of migrants cross the border irregularly with the help of smugglers as they do not possess the required identity and travel documents to enable their legal entry, transit and/or stay in Kenya.

- Smuggling networks between Ethiopia and South Africa are comprised of a range of different actors spanning across origin, transit and destination countries. Brokers and smugglers along the Southern Route are not homogenous and have differing roles to play in the process, depending on their location and responsibilities. Although migration carries with it great risk and not all migrants successfully manage to reach their destinations, data suggest that brokers in southern Ethiopia are generally very positively perceived as individuals giving others the opportunity to realize their dreams.

MIGRANTS IN TRANSIT ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

- Most Ethiopian migrants on the Southern Route are young and male. This predominance of young, male migrants on this route links to the drivers of migration, the conditions of the route and the employment opportunities for Ethiopians in South Africa. Although women and girls are not commonly found migrating by land along the Southern Route, interviews conducted for this study suggest that the number of females migrating South overland from Ethiopia may be increasing. Most Ethiopians come from Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNP) region, particularly Hadiya and Kembata zones. Most Somalis along the Southern Route come from urban areas such as Mogadishu, Kismayo and Hargeisa. Although most Somalis on the Southern Route are young men, women are reportedly also using the route.

- Overland journeys are very dangerous, as migrants are exposed to a multitude of risks including physical hardship and exhaustion, as well as lack of basic needs and services. Migrants along this route are also exposed to various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse by a multitude of different actors they encounter en route. Intensified border controls and the proliferation of routes designed to circumvent checkpoints and detection by authorities, such as the maritime route between Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, have led to unsafe smuggling practices such as transporting migrants in airless fuel tankers and shipping containers, travelling long distances in unroadworthy and overloaded vehicles without stopping, oftentimes at night, circumventing checkpoints on foot across rough terrain and spending nights outside in forests, national parks and other areas with dangerous wildlife. Data collected for this research also reveals that various forms of violence and abuse, including but not limited to torture, physical assault, psychological and emotional abuse, and sexual violence perpetrated by smugglers and other actors is rampant, with 68 per cent of migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania reporting having experienced at least one such incident. Migrants intercepted while migrating in an irregular manner along the Southern Route are often detained in transit countries such as Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, where they are often treated under criminal law as illegal aliens.

- The COVID-19 pandemic also heightened migrant vulnerabilities during their journeys along the Southern Route, as they were more likely to experience abuse by brokers when they ran out of money due to increased (and often undisclosed) costs of the journey. Nonetheless, focus group discussions (FGDs) with aspiring migrants, parents of migrants and Key Informants in Misha confirmed that the pandemic had not decreased young people's ambitions to migrate.

ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION: LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

• Most Ethiopian and Somali migrants work in the informal sector as they often lack the residence status and work permits necessary to work in the formal sector. Many Ethiopians work in large, co-ethnic areas such as Jeppe in Johannesburg, under highly precarious conditions, operating informal businesses. Insecurity and precarity also characterize the experience of Ethiopian and Somali migrants working outside of co-ethnic agglomerates, particularly for those working in townships where unemployment and crime rates are high. Violence, extortion by gangs and officials and many other threats to their security are reportedly rampant, while migrants have limited access to State protection and legal recourse. Rising xenophobia has led to migrants being scapegoated for a multitude of social and economic problems in the country.

• Despite all the challenges migrants face working in South Africa, interviews with households in Misha woreda suggest that most migrants are successful in securing employment and remitting home. In 94 per cent of households at least one migrant managed to arrive at destination, and in 77 per cent of households at least one migrant was able to send remittances. Remittances seem to provide an important contribution to surveyed households' living conditions. Around 90 per cent of households receiving remittances rated them as important to the well-being of the household. When comparing migrant and non-migrant households surveyed in Misha, households with migrants and particularly those with more than one migrant also display higher standards of living in terms of the ownership of household goods.

• The settlement and integration of new arrivals are influenced by village-based networks, ethnic origins and friendship or kinship ties and provide food, shelter, contacts and job information to new migrants. New arrivals who have had their journeys sponsored by businessmen in the diaspora sometimes work as indentured labourers, paying off their debts for many years and often working risky jobs under precarious conditions. Ethiopian migrants in South Africa cope with their marginalization, precarious working conditions in the informal sector and xenophobic violence due to their strong communal bonding, robust networks and the social capital they can draw on when they are hit by adversity.

THE EXPERIENCE OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

• Although migration along the Southern Corridor is successful in most cases, many migrants still end up stuck in countries of transit, where they may be detained for years until they are deported or their returns are assisted by the Government of Ethiopia and IOM. Data suggest that returnees who have had unsuccessful journeys often experience conflict with their families and stigma within their communities due to the sunk costs of the failed journey, especially in families that took on loans for the migration.

• Psychosocial reintegration is linked to economic reintegration, especially when migration has been financed by the family or through debts with other members of the community. Our data show that reintegration is a process that takes time. Three months after return, only 20 per cent of returnees had found employment, while 58 per cent had found employment when they were surveyed around 12 months after their return. Likewise, all other indicators related to discrimination, tensions with the household and social belonging to the community also improved over time.

• Despite the numerous challenges returnees reported facing upon return to their communities and the mixed feelings they expressed about their return, nearly all assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) recipients feel that they are able to stay in their community of origin, a feeling that seems to intensify as time goes by and they reintegrate more (81% after three months and 97% at around 12 months). However, some returnees continued to be unemployed and to experience tensions with their families, indicating that reintegration is not always sustainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance understanding of migration dynamics, migrant profiles as well as protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities of migrants along the Southern Route.

2. Enhance migrant protection services along the route through Migrant Response Centres.

3. Expand return and reintegration support for migrants in vulnerable situations considering to voluntarily return to their countries of origin.

4. Promote inter-State consultative cooperation on migration along the Southern Route.

5. Establish a Regional Smuggling Task Force.

6. Enhance the availability and accessibility to regular pathways for migration.

"I am planning to go to South Africa in a few months and have been saving money for the last three years for the trip. I will be leaving my wife and child behind to make money for our family.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 1990s, a growing number of Horn of Africa migrants have been observed moving towards the southern part of the continent and in particular South Africa, a migration corridor known as the Southern Route.[5] Most migrants observed along this route are Ethiopian and Somali nationals, the majority of whom travel irregularly along this route using various means including travelling on foot, in vehicles, by boat and by air. Migration along this route is facilitated by an intricate network of smugglers and other stakeholders involved in the process such as migrants' families and relatives in South Africa. Due to the number of countries that need to be crossed to reach South Africa, many of which have strict laws regulating irregular entry into their territories, migration along the Southern Route is more covert and expensive compared to migration along the Eastern Route. Migrants along the Southern Route often report harsh experiences including violence, abuse, exploitation, dangerous means of travel, and a severe lack of access to basic needs and services during the journey.

Gauging the volume of migrants moving along this corridor is extremely difficult, as movements largely remain unmonitored due to their covert nature and because of the large number of routes that are taken and constantly change in response to the situation on ground. In 2009, IOM estimated the number of Ethiopians and Somalis travelling along the Southern Route to South Africa to be between 17,000 to 20,000 migrants per year, of whom Ethiopians were the majority.[6] In 2017, the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) estimated – by looking at Ethiopian asylum applications in South Africa – that between 14,750 and 16,850 migrants travel along this route annually. South Africa hosts one of the largest concentrations of non-camp refugees and asylum seekers in Africa and Ethiopians are among the largest of these migrant populations. Most Ethiopians apply for asylum upon their arrival in South Africa to temporarily regularize their status. Data of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the number of asylum seekers in South Africa estimate the number of Ethiopians applying for asylum at 51,288, 48,099 and 46,123 in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively (UNHCR, 2022).

Similar to the Eastern and Northern Routes, migration along the Southern Route is driven by factors such as poverty, political instability, climatic shocks and lack of opportunities at origin. Aspiring migrants tend to perceive South Africa as a highly beneficial destination for migrant workers with better employment opportunities and substantially higher pay. The presence of well-established Ethiopian and Somali diasporas and robust networks between the Horn of Africa (HoA) and South Africa further facilitate these movements, and Ethiopians and Somalis in South Africa commonly sponsor the movement of individuals from their hometowns. Research respondents spoke of migration to South Africa as the 'South African Dream', wherein great financial success can be achieved in a relatively short period of time when compared to what could be achieved if they stayed in Ethiopia. Migrant flows along the Southern Corridor are overwhelmingly comprised of young men, while females mostly migrate south regularly for marriage purposes and are rarely found on the arduous overland route.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This is the second report in the RDH Southern Route research series, aiming to update the 2009 IOM study *In Pursuit of the Southern Dream: Victims of Necessity Assessment of the Irregular Movement of men from East Africa and the Horn to South Africa*. The series intends to provide an overview of the dynamics along the Southern Corridor, looking at who is migrating, why they are migrating, how they are migrating and their experiences in countries of origin, transit and at destination. This report brings together data collected at origin, in transit and at destination to provide a comprehensive overview of the migration dynamics along this route, which remains substantially understudied. As such, this study builds on nearly three years of investigation and has involved a multitude of stakeholders, including migration experts and practitioners, interviews with migrants at different stages of this lengthy journey, as well as an extended desk review to better contextualize the various findings. The full methodology can be consulted in Annex I.

5 There are two other interregional routes: the Eastern Route towards the Arabian Peninsula (in particular Saudi Arabia) and the Northern Route towards North Africa and Europe. Intraregional flows are classified as the Horn of Africa Route.

6 The estimate was compiled based on several data points. In particular, around 60 per cent of Ethiopians passed through a refugee camp in Malawi where their nationality was registered (IOM, 2009).

The report is organized into five main chapters:

1. Misha: An Origin Community of High Emigration Along the Southern Route – This chapter analyses the various drivers of migration from Ethiopia along the Southern Route, including how attitudes towards migration and networks between South Africa and Ethiopia reinforce flows.

2. Travel Routes – This chapter examines the routes migrants take through the Horn of Africa to South Africa and the smuggling networks that facilitate movements along these routes.

3. Migrants in Transit along the Southern Route – This chapter looks at who the migrants traveling along the Southern Route are, how they make their decisions to migrate and the risks they face during their migration.

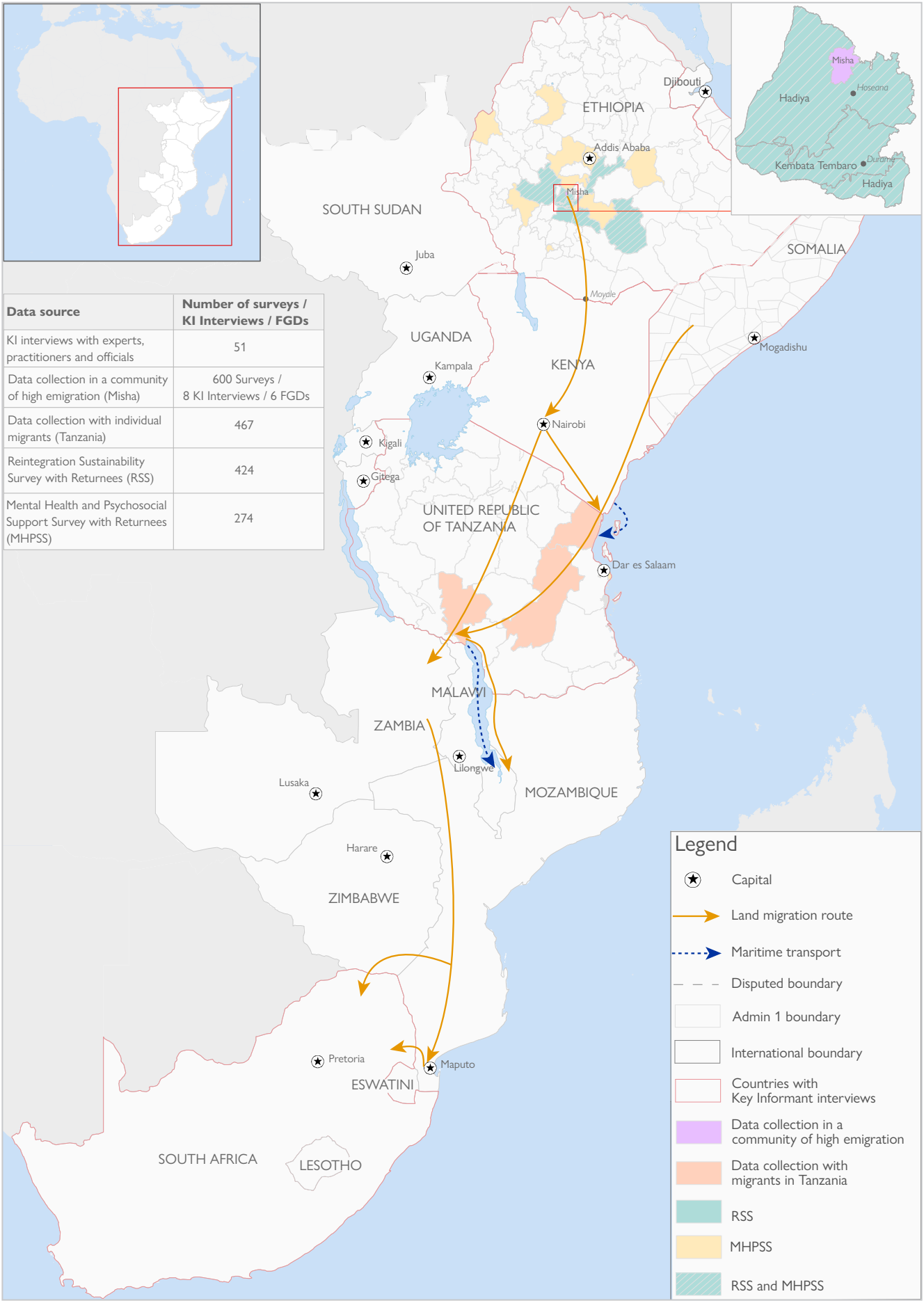
4. Arrival at Destination: Life in South Africa – This chapter investigates how East and Horn of Africa migrants experience life in South Africa, the risks they face and the importance of the remittances they are sending home.

5. The Experience of Return and Reintegration – This chapter focuses on the return and reintegration of Ethiopian migrants along the Southern Route and how returnees are perceived in their communities.

Thematic boxes are included throughout the report to shed light on the characteristics and dynamics of specific migrant groups moving along the route, as well as more sectorial findings. As this Southern Route research series builds on a large body of research collected by the RDH along the Eastern Corridor, comparative analytical statements across these two corridors have been included to help contextualize findings and provide a more holistic understanding of the complexities of migration dynamics in the Horn of Africa. The main objective of presenting findings from multiple data collection exercises in one structured report is to promote a more integrated understanding on how structural migration determinants at origin and the opportunities and networks in South Africa connect with the decision to embark on such a long and perilous journey. Such a holistic approach to analysing the Southern Route should help to better understand these migration trends and thereby improve policy making, programming and coordination for humanitarian and development actors.

Data being collected in Misha.

RESEARCH LOCATIONS



Data source	Number of surveys / KI Interviews / FGDs
KI interviews with experts, practitioners and officials	51
Data collection in a community of high emigration (Misha)	600 Surveys / 8 KI Interviews / 6 FGDs
Data collection with individual migrants (Tanzania)	467
Reintegration Sustainability Survey with Returnees (RSS)	424
Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Survey with Returnees (MHPSS)	274

Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

LIMITATIONS

The data presented in this report are not representative of migration from Ethiopia along the Southern Route and can only be considered indicative of migration dynamics. In addition, all information collected at household level – including on the migration experience – was answered by the Head of Household (HoH) on behalf of the migrant, serving as a proxy respondent. This implies the risk of bias, in particular regarding details about potentially sensitive topics, such as incidents during the migration journey or in country of destination, that the migrant(s) may not have shared or deliberately distorted to give more socially acceptable responses. A recall bias could also have occurred when respondents were asked to recall decisions and facts that took place several years before. This limitation also applies to individual surveys collected in detention centres where most migrants spent an average of two years after interception. The recall bias adds to the particular setting of interviews, which took place in the detention centres.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOUTHERN CORRIDOR FROM ETHIOPIA

Ethiopian migration to South Africa is rooted in the regime changes in both origin and destination countries in the early 1990s (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). Ethiopia's last emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by the country's military in 1974 and a military government, the Derg, established a totalitarian, socialist regime. In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, an ethnic federalist coalition consisting of different ethnic groups, overthrew the Derg regime and established a transitional government that allowed for the liberalization of migration governance in Ethiopia. An early stream of Ethiopian migrants to South Africa was the onward movement of men who had fled Ethiopia to seek refuge in Kenya during the civil war that resulted in the end of the Derg regime (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). Successive waves of repression and ethnic conflict have since triggered many Ethiopians to seek asylum in South Africa or use the country as a transit point to the global North.

The early 1990s also marked the collapse of the apartheid regime in South Africa. The African National Congress led the introduction of progressive asylum laws granting asylum seekers the right to work and study while their claims were being processed, and unlike many other countries in Africa, South Africa did not have an encampment policy (IOM, 2009). These laws led to the establishment of the first diaspora generation in South Africa as the country welcomed a significant number of Ethiopian asylum seekers. This democratic political climate, combined with economic opportunity, made South Africa an appealing destination for Ethiopians (The Johannesburg Inner City Partnership, 2017). South Africa has since been promoted by pioneer migrants and subsequent migrant generations, resulting in Ethiopians currently ranking among the largest migrant populations in the country. Most Ethiopians arrive in South Africa by irregular means and try to regularize their status once they arrive by applying for asylum. However, the asylum system has become more restrictive in recent years and a significant number of Ethiopians reside in South Africa irregularly (Netshikulwe et al., 2022).

Although the migration of Ethiopians to South Africa began in the 1990s, it gained momentum in the 2000s, when large numbers of Ethiopians, together with other nationalities from the Horn of Africa, particularly Somalis and Eritreans, began migrating to South Africa along various routes (Kefale & Mohammed, 2015). Unlike the Eastern Route where migration occurs from several different Ethiopian regions and many woredas within these regions, migration to South Africa is mainly concentrated among individuals coming from the towns of Hosaena and Durame and their satellite rural areas in the Hadiya and Kembata zones of SNNP region.

A variety of factors weighed into the establishment of a strong migration network between these areas and South Africa, in particular the alleged involvement of officials from these ethnic groups in the Ethiopian diplomatic mission in South Africa who arranged job opportunities for migrants from Hosaena and Durame and assisted their migration (Kanko et al., 2013). Moreover, post-election violence in 2000 specifically targeted the Hadiya and Kembata ethnic groups in SNNP (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). The well-established tradition of internal labour flows in these areas also helped migration to be perceived as socially acceptable (Kefale & Mohammed, 2015). The SNNP region, and particularly the Hadiya and Kembata zones, are the main areas of origin of Ethiopians along the Southern Route to this day, although Key Informants also mentioned Wolaita (SNNP), Hawassa and its satellite areas (Sidama) and West Arsi (Oromia) as being areas of origin of migration along the Southern Route.[7]

7 Key Informant 4, Key Informant 8, Key Informant 14, Key Informant 36.

Shiro Primary School.
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Another wave of migration of Ethiopians to South Africa is associated with the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which attracted aspiring entrepreneurs who were hoping to benefit from trade opportunities associated with the expected rise in consumption during the tournament (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). By that time, transnational social and smuggling networks were increasingly well established and playing an important role in perpetuating migration towards South Africa. Ethiopian migrants found job opportunities in major cities across South Africa such as Johannesburg and Pretoria and many were highly successful in sending home remittances. The success of these generations of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa motivated other youth in their hometowns to follow in their footsteps (Zack & Estifanos, 2015). The rapid expansion of formal schooling, the changing aspirations of young people and the desire to pursue better-paying work in South Africa are also crucial in understanding the developments of subsequent flows (Kuschminder and Siegel, 2014).

According to IOM Flow Monitoring data, the Southern Route made up 6 per cent of all movements tracked by DTM in the East and Horn of Africa (58,204 movements) in 2022, although most movements (76%) were intraregional, headed towards Kenya, while 21 per cent were intended towards South Africa. Migrants on the Southern Route were mostly Ethiopians (85%) and Somalis (15%). Most movements tracked towards South Africa were recorded at the Moyale flow monitoring point, where 10,238 movements were tracked in 2021 and 9,752 in 2022. Moyale is a town along the Ethiopian–Kenyan border and a major transit and logistics hub for migrants headed south. Migrants headed to South Africa were overwhelmingly Ethiopian men from the regions of SNNP and Oromia; only 1 per cent of migrants headed to South Africa in 2021 were female and 5 per cent were boys. Movements along this corridor are likely significantly higher than the 9,752 movements towards South Africa registered by DTM at Moyale FMP in 2022, due to limited data capacity along the route and the clandestine nature of the movements.

Although South Africa is viewed by migrants as a destination in its own right, some view it as a stepping stone to countries in the global North such as Europe and the United States.[8] Migrants have sought to move onward from South Africa through regular means, oftentimes through resettlement, as well as irregular means, although the latter remains unmonitored and data are scarce. In recent years, there has been anecdotal evidence of new, irregular transatlantic routes from South Africa to Latin America and onward to the United States.[9]

8 Ethiopian migrants used to reach the United States via legal channels, most commonly as students, to reunite with family members, as temporary workers, or through the diversity visa lottery (IOM Migration Data Portal, 2021).

9 Key Informant 1.

“I returned from South Africa to start a business and be with my family. I very much enjoyed my life there.

MISHA: AN ORIGIN COMMUNITY OF HIGH EMIGRATION ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

This chapter analyses the various drivers of migration from Ethiopia along the Southern Route, including how attitudes towards migration and networks between South Africa and Ethiopia reinforce flows

MISHA: AN ORIGIN COMMUNITY OF HIGH EMIGRATION ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

This section presents data gathered from various Key Informants as well as data collected by IOM in Misha, a community with strong historical ties and large migration flows to South Africa. Overall, 600 household interviews were carried out in the research area, 300 with households with experience of migration and 300 with households without migration experience.[10] Of the households assessed during the listing phase of the research, 58 per cent had at least one member who has migrated in the past or is currently abroad. Migration of multiple members within the same household is also very common, with around one in two households having more than one member who has migrated.

Misha woreda lies in Hadiya zone in the SNNP region of Ethiopia and is comprised of two urban and 21 rural kebeles, located in close proximity to Hosaena Town. Hosaena and its satellite rural woredas are key areas of origin of migration along the Southern Route. Although most migrant households interviewed in Misha have migrants who are in the 15–29 years age range, migration in Misha seems to span a larger age range, reflecting long histories of international migration. However, only 8 per cent of surveyed households had returnees, which is very low compared to surveyed Eastern Route communities, where returns from Yemen and Saudi Arabia were almost three times more likely (IOM, 2022a).

International migration flows from Misha, nearly all of which are irregular, are high[11] and households exhibit strong ties to migrants in destination countries through networks and remittances. Key Informants in the area also reported that many families in the woreda rely on migration as a livelihood strategy; even when not directly affected by migration, households seem to be aware of migration dynamics in the area and their impact on the community. In 2018, the Hadiya Zone Human Resource and Social Affairs Department estimated that around 61,150 young people (13,452 female and 47,698 male) had migrated irregularly to South Africa from the zone over a six-year period from 2013 to 2018 (Mekebo & Worku, 2020).

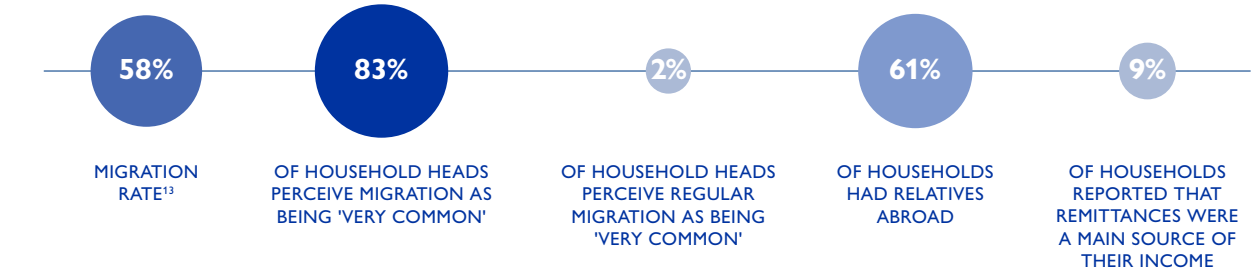
This chapter explores the drivers of migration from Ethiopia towards South Africa. Southern Route Migration from Misha is driven by a combination of push and pull factors, including high population pressure, environmental degradation and lack of economic opportunity. At the same time, aspiring migrants are pulled to migrate to South Africa by the visible impact that remittances have had on migrant households in the community, as well as returnees and diaspora members' perceived prosperity and the positive narratives around migration and life in South Africa that are widespread and culturally accepted (Adugna et al., 2019).[12] Transnational networks between origin and destination therefore play a huge role in perpetuating migration along this route by sparking the imagination of aspiring migrants, and diaspora members are often highly involved in supporting migration journeys.

10 More information on the methodology used for this study can be found in Annex I.

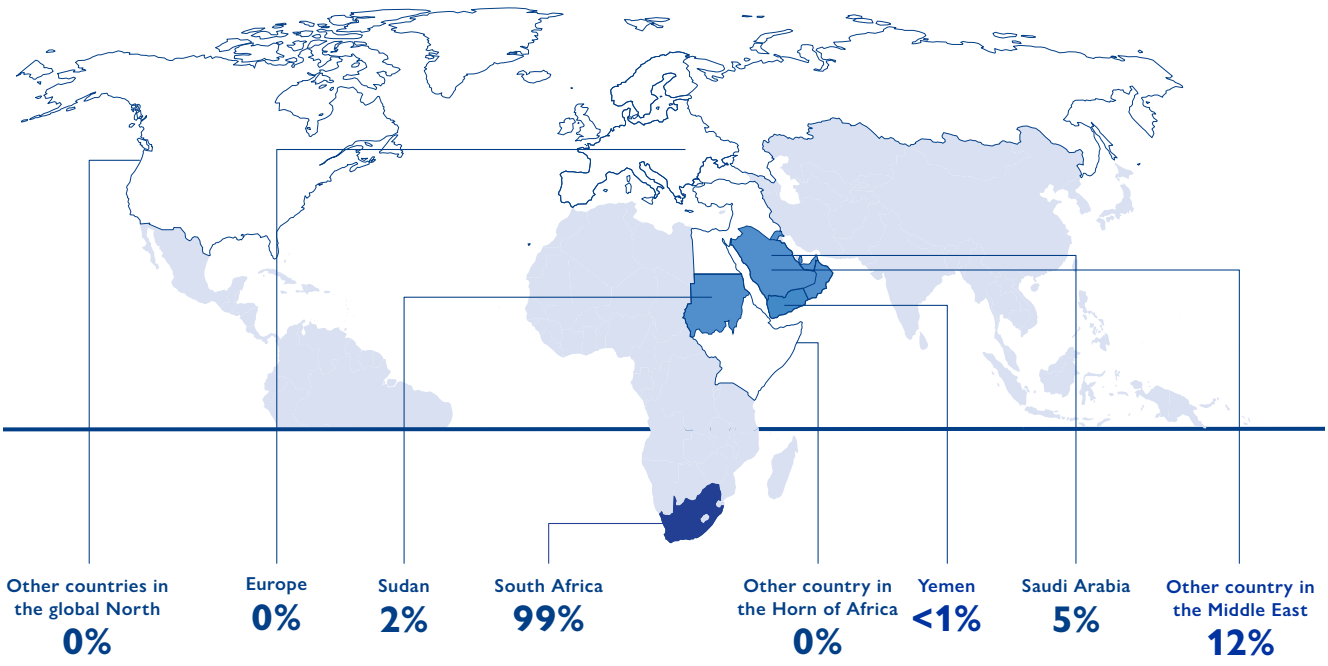
11 Aside from the main flow directed towards South Africa, there are secondary flows directed towards the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, or Saudi Arabia and Lebanon. These destinations are mainly targeted by female migrants. Marginal movements towards Sudan were also observed, while movements to Europe and other countries in the Global North were not recorded.

12 More information on this topic can be found in the RDH research report on The Role of Economic and Social Remittances in Shaping Migration Flows from Ethiopia.

Figure 1. Mobility profile for Misha Woreda (Data from listing and surveys, percentage of households)

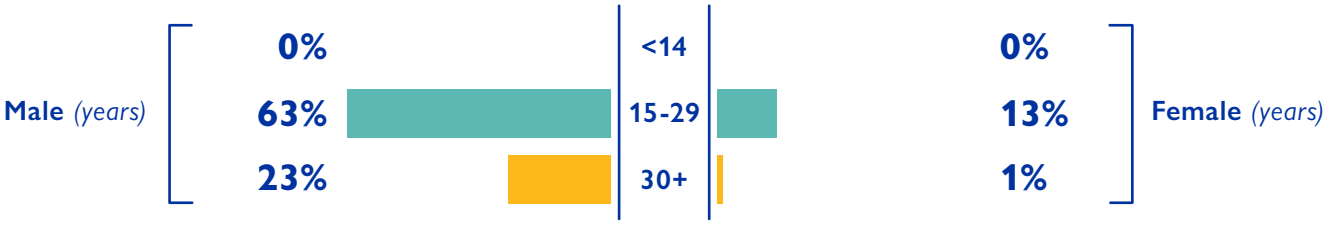


COUNTRY OF DESTINATION[14]



HOUSEHOLD PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF MIGRANTS



13 Data from listing. Overall, 805 households were screened in Misha, with a total of 761 migrants identified of whom 193 were returnees.

14 Numbers do not always add up to 100 per cent as households may have multiple migrant members.

“I have seven children. I have told my children to focus on their studies and to not think about going abroad. I have told them that if they try to migrate, they will become slaves or they will die on the road and their bodies will not be found. I am lucky because they have listened to me.

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LIVELIHOODS AND POPULATION PRESSURE

Home to an estimated population of 188,000 individuals, **Misha has an average population density of about 252 households per square kilometre, making it one of the most densely populated areas in Ethiopia** (Woldemichael et al., 2019). The main source of livelihood of surveyed households living in Misha is small-scale agriculture. Nearly all households have access to a piece of land (97%) and agriculture is the main income-generating activity in the woreda (94%). The main crops grown are enset, wheat, barley and teff. Eighty-two per cent of households own livestock, but only 8 per cent reported animal rearing as an activity generating household income.

Although the Hadiya zone is an area known for its agricultural activities, **Key Informants interviewed in Misha reported that the woreda has experienced environmental degradation including progressive soil erosion and decreasing soil fertility. Moreover, Key Informants also reported that the rapid population growth has put much pressure on land.** Land fragmentation is common due to the need to fairly distribute fertile land, resulting in an average land size of less than one hectare per family in Misha. However, one hectare is often too small to allow farmers to grow a surplus of crops that can be sold for income (Zewdu, 2018).[15] **Among surveyed households who reported farming for their own consumption, only 26 per cent reported self-sufficiency in terms of food availability over the last year, mostly due to small plot sizes (97%).** The increasing **scarcity of adequately sized agricultural land disproportionately impacts young people** due to subdivisions of inherited land, and has resulted in a large number of youth feeling their land is not big enough to sustain their families, as well as in landless youth (Adugna et al, 2019).[16]

Furthermore, few job opportunities exist in the woreda outside of agriculture and this combination of factors has led to high youth unemployment or underemployment in low-wage jobs, even among university graduates.[17] Key informants reported a limited presence of services and infrastructure (such as banks, microfinance institutions and hotels), meaning Misha has not yet shifted from an agriculture-based economy to a service-based one. Moreover, only 9 per cent of households engaged in business or trade activity in the 12 months prior to data collection and only 4 per cent earned money from self-owned agricultural business-like activities and Key Informants reported high youth unemployment and inactivity rates. Key Informants also noted that returned migrants from South Africa may put additional strain on the labour market and increase the competition for the few available jobs. **In this context of a shortage of farmland and lack of decent alternative livelihoods in rural areas such as Misha, migration is often seen as an option to secure livelihoods for unemployed youth.**

> *"They think that their lives will only change if they migrate to South Africa. This attitude also comes from seeing the differences in living standard between migrants and those who graduated and are working in Misha. Their living status is not comparable with that of successful migrants. Moreover, after graduation from university, many remain unemployed.*[18]

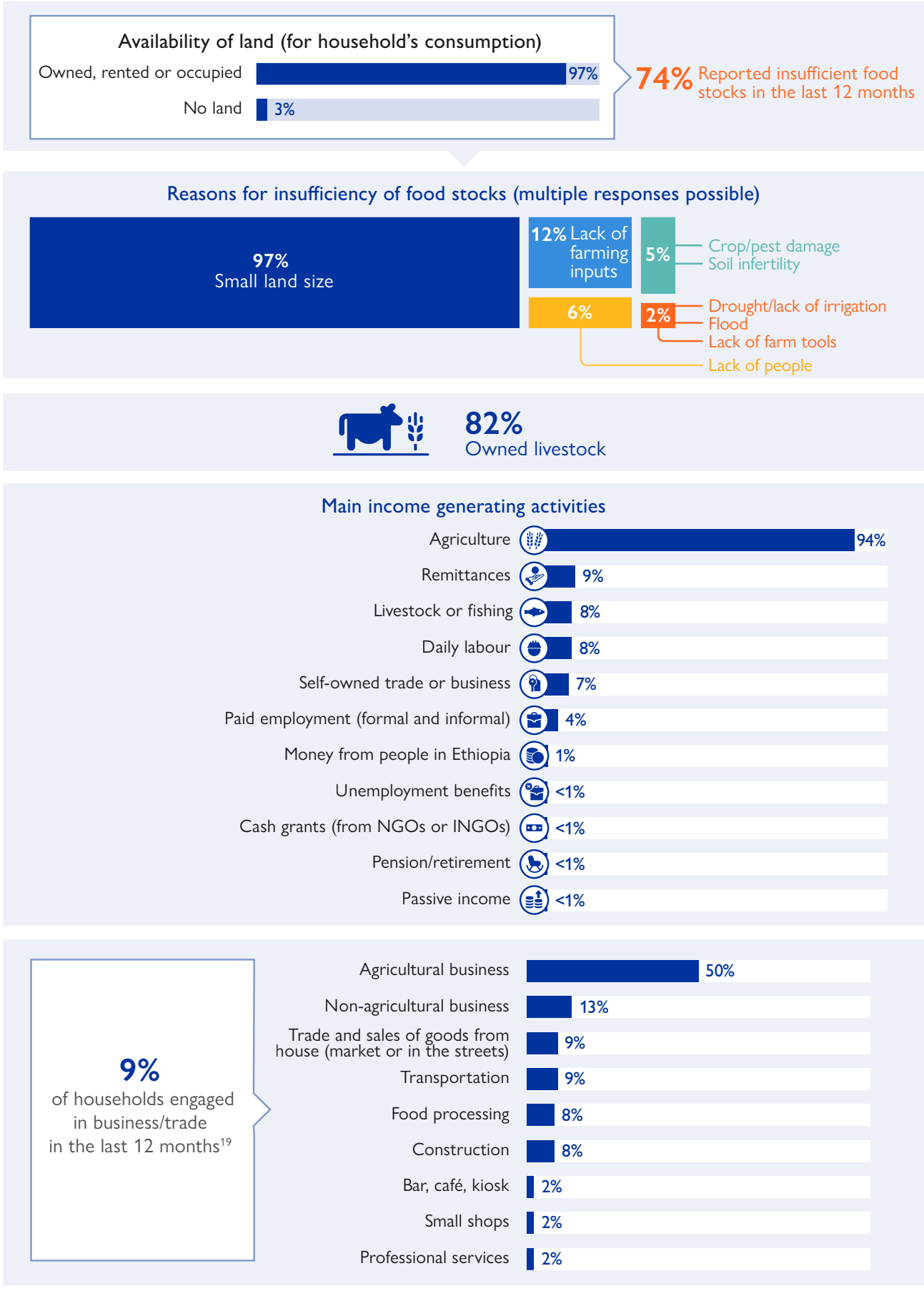
15 In Ethiopia, land is owned by the government and individuals cannot own land, they only have the right to use it. Thus, land is not sold and redistributed between individuals and young Ethiopians are far less likely than older generations to own farmland; they rather farm on the land of their parents or other families' land (Leta et. al., 2021; Key Informant 4; Key Informant 9).

16 Migration directly associated with land issues – and in particular small land size (43 migrants) – was mentioned by 59 migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania. However, the pressure from land may be higher, considering that migrants reporting reliance on land were slightly more likely to adopt coping strategies, such as skipping meals and/or reducing portions, and more frequently reported being unable to meet basic needs than those relying on other sources of income.

17 Data from Key Informant Interviews conducted for the Rapid Community Profile in Misha; Key Informant 9; Key Informant 4.

18 Key Informant interviewed in Misha.

Figure 2. Livelihood profile of households (Data from surveys)



19 Most common business/trade activities involved trade or sales of goods from home, at the market or in the streets and agricultural business (crops, staple crops, livestock by-products, fresh/processed fish).

“I want to go to South Africa. I do not know if I can change my life here because the region is so poor. I have seen people who went abroad really improve their lives. I have been told that I might die if I try to go there because the journey is very dangerous, but I want to try my luck because I can also die here.

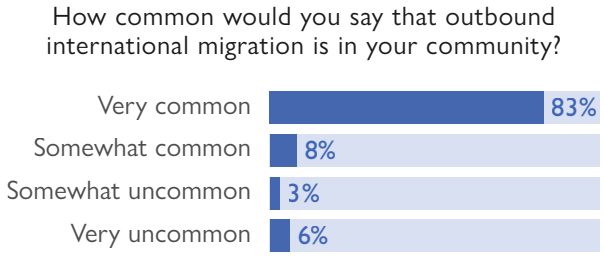
CULTURE OF MIGRATION, ATTITUDES AND RISK AWARENESS IN MISHA

> *Migration to South Africa is becoming a culture in Misha. This feeling and attitude developed over time and nowadays this community is accustomed to migration. This feeling comes from the overambition to prosper in a short period of time and to change family livelihoods, as well as the peer pressure of those who previously migrated to South Africa.*[20]

As migration from communities such as Misha increases and flows expand over time, traditions, cultural practices and beliefs around migration flourish and reinforce its perpetuation. Misha displays a strong 'culture of migration', defined as "a context where migration is common in society, socially accepted, based on historical precedent and migration decisions are part of everyday experiences that are seen as a legitimate means to social and economic well-being" (Cohen, 2004). When communities develop a culture of migration, migration not only becomes normalized but is also seen as an acceptable livelihood strategy. **Household surveys conducted in Misha demonstrate that international migration from the community is indeed pervasive, with over 90 per cent of surveyed households considering migration from the community as 'very common' or 'somewhat common'.**

The material and social success migration has brought to some individuals from Misha has increased their families' social status and earned them honour and respect from the community, while the dominant narratives around migration in the community link personal, social and material success to migration to South Africa. Migrants in South Africa also commonly send photos and wedding videos that reveal 'glaring disparities in material terms' compared to those in Ethiopia (Estifanos, 2017).

Figure 3. Households' perception of the pervasiveness of migration
(Percentage of all households, data from surveys)



Key Informants interviewed in Misha suggested that the visible inequalities between families with migrants and non-migrant households have led to a conviction among young people in Misha that migration is key to escaping poverty, enhancing livelihoods, improving lifestyles and living a good life: *"I think young people don't perceive a future without the kind of opportunities that this migration brings."*[21] Respondents in Misha also suggested that the livelihood improvements that remittance-receiving households make are very visible to community members and seen as proof of the success stories that are circulated in the community, thereby adding to the mythology around those who have become successful by migrating to South Africa and fuelling what the migration literature has labelled as a sense of 'relative deprivation'. This perception may create a sense of exclusion in non-migrants and non-migrant households who are not seeking to improve their livelihoods through migration. The sense of being left behind and the notion that success can only be achieved through migration is reportedly pervasive among young people in Misha and migration is deeply embedded in their social imaginaries.[22] When asked about whether they share negative experiences with aspiring migrants, one returnee FGD participant said: *"I try but they are not willing to listen as their soul has already migrated to South Africa"*.

20 Key Informant in Misha.
21 Key Informant 15.
22 Ibid.

Cultural practices and beliefs that celebrate migration are also highly visible in Misha and reinforce migration and the sense of being left behind. For example, lavish ceremonies are organized for successful migrants upon their return. This finding echoes findings of other studies that have also identified the existence of beliefs and practices depicting migration as a viable and socially accepted means of livelihood improvement among communities in Hadiya zone, resulting in an almost mythological focus on Ethiopians who have found success by migrating to South Africa. In such a context, the idea to migrate represents the tradition of the community at large and migrants are come to be seen as individuals to be emulated (Candido et al., 2016; Kefale & Mohammed, 2015).

Moreover, migration to South Africa has impacted and altered other aspects of Hadiya culture, specifically in terms of marriage practices. Traditionally, primary considerations during partner selection included criteria such as lineage, possession of large land and livestock. However, with the development of cultural values that celebrate and promote migration and the success that some migrants to South Africa have achieved, many families prefer partners for their daughters who have migrated to South Africa due to the anticipated economic benefits, such as remittances and significantly higher bride prices.[23] This alteration of the traditional, social fabric of Hadiya society has also come about because migration is not only about economic improvement but also highly intertwined with social status, which is particularly enjoyed by successful migrants. Migration thus becomes a way to increase one's marriage marketability, thereby challenging more traditionally ascribed identities of higher social status (Candido et al., 2016). IOM research on child migrants from Hadiya also found evidence that girls were being sent by their families to South Africa to marry successful migrants and the families receive bride wealth payments, thereby limiting these girls' agency and forcing them not only to migrate, but also to marry (IOM, 2020d).

Migration culture and the pressure it can put on unemployed youth to migrate and change their own and their families' lives is reinforced by a variety of actors including peers[24] and community members, religious leaders and, in some cases, members of their nuclear family. Several studies have found that churches and religious figures play a significant role in encouraging migration towards South Africa (Estifanos, 2017; IOM, 2020d; Adugna et al., 2019). An IOM (2020d) study on child migrants from Shashogo, another Hadiya community, found that Ethiopian migrants in South Africa send significant remittances to their churches in Ethiopia and that this is communicated to the community during worship, thereby indirectly motivating young adults to migrate. The study also found that pastors in the community offer prayer services to aspiring migrants. Likewise, Adugna et al. (2019) found that churches prophesize over aspiring individuals that they will find success in South Africa, thereby giving hope to aspiring migrants and courage to take on the risks of the journey. Their study found that migration is encouraged by such actors, as successful migrants remit money to the church in gratitude for arriving safely in South Africa.

> *"We feel inspired when we see families of migrants: they have corrugated iron houses and they can purchase big oxen for annual festivals for their family and get blessings from their parents. Our friends who have migrated have bought vehicles and built houses in Hosaena and are leading luxurious lives. How could we not desire to go with all these benefits from migration?"*[25]

> *"In Misha, people believe that migration is the best mechanism to overcome their economic problems. Especially the young age group is highly inspired by the success stories of migrants. They believe that in South Africa you can easily earn money, you can prosper in a short time, you can change your family's life rapidly and you will be able to buy a vehicle and house in Hosaena. These are the main narratives. Most segments of this community consider migration to South Africa as the sole mechanism to escape from poverty."*[26]

23 More information on marriage migration to South Africa can be found in the section on Women's Migration Along the Southern Route.

24 The role peers play in encouraging migration was explored in the RDH research report on The Role of Economic and Social Remittances in Shaping Migration Flows from Ethiopia.

25 FGD Respondent in Misha.

26 Key Informant interviewed in Misha.

Attitudes towards migration

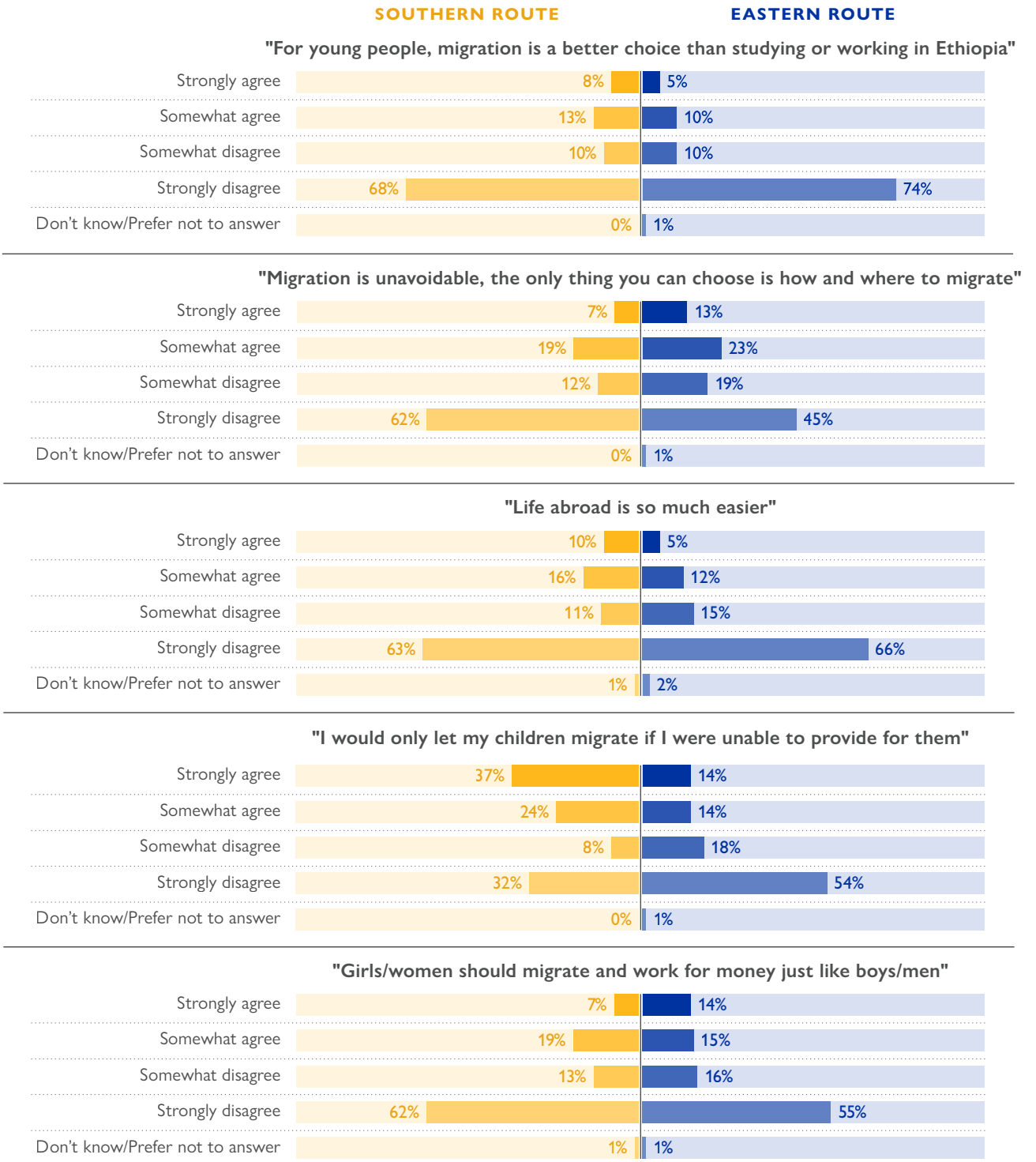
Focus group discussions with parents in Misha found mixed attitudes towards encouraging the migration of their children. While some parents opposed the idea due to the risks of the journey and challenges faced by migrants in South Africa, others suggested that migration is generally encouraged: *"Most parents in this community encourage their children to migrate. For example, my son was employed in a government office, but his salary was not encouraging. He left his work and migrated to South Africa. Unfortunately, he was killed by his Ethiopian friends in South Africa. Even though he left me in grief, I still encourage migration because we have nothing for them to stay here."* A respondent in a focus group with mothers in Misha explained: *"Encouraging and discouraging migration is dependent on the economic status of the family. If the family's economic status is poor, they may encourage migration for their children. There are also families who have good economic status that encourage their children to migrate so they become wealthier".*

Household surveys confirm this finding of mixed attitudes of heads of households towards migration. In order to gain insights into how migration is perceived, heads of households were asked to rate their agreement with a set of statements on migration. In Misha, around one in five households agreed with the statement that 'migration is a better choice than studying or working in Ethiopia', while around one in four agreed that 'migration is unavoidable' and 'life abroad is much easier'. **Survey responses therefore indicate a reluctant willingness towards migration, with heads of households mostly believing that their relatives would be better off in Ethiopia if they had decent opportunities, but that migration is sometimes necessary for those who don't.**

This indication is confirmed by the 61 per cent of households suggesting that they would 'only let their children migrate if [they] were unable to provide for them'. Compared to households living in communities of high emigration towards the Eastern Route, households in Misha are more likely to believe that 'migration is a better choice than staying in Ethiopia' and that 'life abroad is much easier', which could be reflective of the different working conditions in Saudi Arabia and South Africa. At the same time, households along the Eastern Route were more likely to believe that 'migration is unavoidable' (36%) compared to households in Misha.

"I work as a guard at a primary school. I always try and tell young people to work hard here instead of trying to migrate. We have lost so many strong young people who tried to leave Ethiopia.

Figure 4. Household perception of migration – Comparison between Southern and Eastern Route
(Percentage of all households, data from surveys)



“I am the mother of five children and I do not want them to go to South Africa or to the Gulf countries. I am afraid that when they get older, they will want to migrate because they have seen many people from their community do so. I want them to stay here to help me and their community.

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Risk Awareness

Data suggest that risk awareness as well as the willingness to take on risk have a generational component, making it hard to identify patterns. **The relatively low share of households believing that migration is a better choice for young people than studying and working in Ethiopia ties in with the high levels of risk awareness heads of households display, as well as the fairly low rates of success they attribute to migration.** Every single household that was interviewed in Misha expects challenges during migration, and the journey is perceived as the most dangerous part of the migration experience. Around 90 per cent of respondents feared death of the migrant, while disease and injury (82%), detention (59%), physical or mental abuse (36%), deportation from transit countries (31%) as well as kidnapping and enslavement (29%) were also commonly cited. Thirty-seven per cent of households also mentioned the risk of exploitation by the broker. At the same time, over two thirds of interviewed households believe that migrants are ‘somewhat’ or ‘fairly’ likely to reach their destination and find employment.

Figure 5. Challenges during the journey
(Percentage of all households, data from surveys)

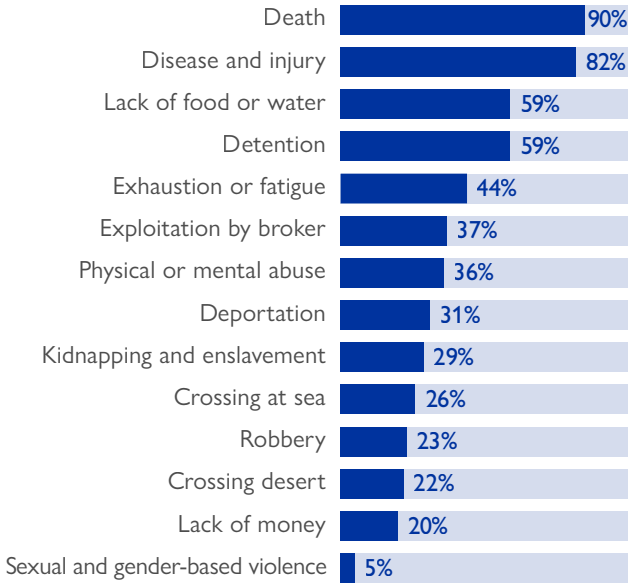
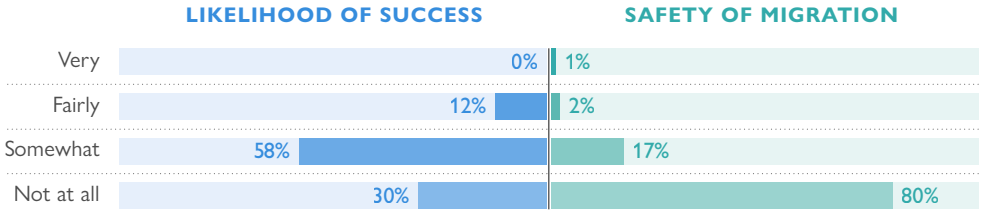


Figure 6. Perceived likelihood of success versus perceived safety of migration
(Percentage of all households, data from surveys)



> *Our children may suffer from hunger, thirst, imprisonment, beating by police and torture, and might die during their migration journey. Some of our children are imprisoned in Kenya and Tanzania, some have died during their journey and some of the 'unsuccessful' returnees have post-traumatic stress disorder.*[27]

Data from various RDH research projects have continuously shown that risk awareness among aspiring migrants and their households does not necessarily discourage them from migrating, as the strong prospect of economic improvement pushing individuals to migrate from Ethiopia seems to outweigh the perceived risk. Aspiring migrants in Misha and their families are thus making calculated choices, whereby they are weighing the risks and benefits that migration could bring the household compared to staying in Ethiopia with unmet aspirations. However, many aspiring migrants reportedly leave Misha without informing their families that they are leaving, out of fear that their families will prevent them from migrating due to the high risk of the journey: *"My son did not tell us about his migration, we heard from his friends that he was planning to go. When we asked him why he did not talk to us first, he said that we may not allow him to migrate because we want him to develop his career with education."* Around a third of migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania also reported not informing their families prior to departure. **This indicates that the outcome of the risk–benefit calculation may differ across generations, with heads of households generally less optimistic about migration than young, aspiring migrants.**

While our data suggest that aspiring migrants may not always have depth of knowledge on all the specific dangers and challenges they may face, they do generally have an understanding that the journey is dangerous and challenging. **To better understand aspiring migrants' willingness to migrate and take on risks, it is important to look at the migration culture in Misha and how it creates a context in which migration success stories and narratives dominate those of failure and risk.** Key informants as well as parent FGD participants emphasized that despite the availability of information on risk due to the large presence of returnees who have often had dangerous and life-threatening experiences during their journeys, such stories are hardly spoken about and are downplayed, while the success of those who achieved their goals is celebrated and widely discussed.[28]

> *Attitudes towards migration vary with the age groups of the community. Young people have a positive feeling towards migration. They think migration is the only option to move out of poverty. But the older age groups do not have good attitudes towards migration because they fear the suffering of their children during travel.*[29]

Data collected during FGDs with aspiring migrants in Misha also show that while all participants unanimously agreed that migration to South Africa is "challenging and horrific", they held deterministic beliefs that success and failure are linked to God and/or luck and suggested that they will only experience severe challenges or death if this is their destiny. Such strong beliefs in God may not only comfort migrants and give them courage to embark on journeys entailing severe risks they are very much aware of, but also make

27 Female FGD participant in Misha.
28 Key Informant 9.
29 Key Informant interviewed in Misha.

> I started the journey with 14 other people, but only four of us made it all the way to South Africa. In South Africa, I only made a small amount of money and I was able to build my own house there. I now have seven children. My children tell me that they want to go to South Africa but I do not think it is a good idea to send them to South Africa or to Arab countries. I will not fund their trip because they will just get killed there. There is no peace like there is here. Here we work as a family in our restaurant and my children are the cooks.

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it easier to disregard risk information when experiences are perceived as destiny and outside of one's control (van Bemmel, 2020).[30] When asked what strategies they would employ to mitigate risk, aspiring migrants across both focus groups believed that their *"only option was praying to God to save their life during their journey"*.

> *Gathering risk information from any actor may not help if you are not lucky and destined to be successful in your migration. Some people may be fortunate to enter South Africa without having gathered any information. There are also migrants who gather lots of information but may still be detained, tortured and killed by smugglers, die from starvation, or are deported back if they are not lucky.*

> *Youth in Misha know both the negative and positive side of migration, but they are mostly inspired by the success stories of migrants. They discuss what migrants' families bought (vehicles, land, houses, etc.) and their living standards as well as the capital of returnees. Youth also commonly compare the economic status of migrants and non-migrants. When they hear about the death of migrants inside containers due to suffocation, starvation on the journey and drowning in the oceans, they may get discouraged from migrating for a short time, but later they forget these challenges and give emphasis to the success stories of migrants again.*[31]

30 More information on this subject can be found in the RDH report To Change My Life.

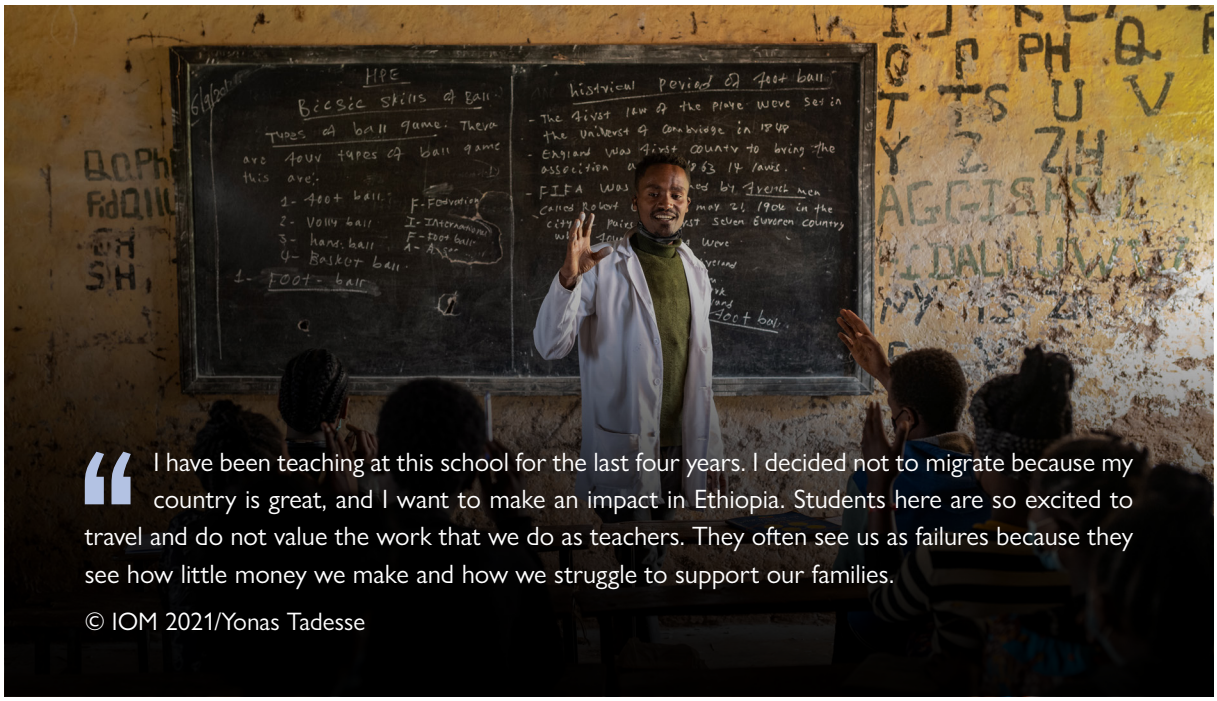
31 Ibid.

“I have heard the way people who have come back from South Africa and Arab countries talk. I've heard them say that there are people that are thrown off of buildings and sometimes raped. I have heard how people from other countries see people who come from poorer countries as less human. I don't want to leave my country and be a slave. I want to study and be a pharmacist.

> *All teachers in Misha try to raise awareness about the dangers of migration, but most youth don't listen to our guidance and some even mock their teachers for not migrating themselves and earning better salaries. The main factor for choosing migration over schooling is youth's strong desire to prosper in a short time, peer pressure and perceiving migration as the best option for changing one's life.*

The culture around Southern Route migration also manifests itself in young individuals attaching less value to pursuing higher education. Several studies conducted in SNNP region have found that education is no longer perceived by most as key to upward mobility and social status as migrants and their families are often visibly better off than those who pursued higher education and graduates are among those heading to South Africa (Estifanos, 2017; Semela & Cochrane, 2019; Kefale & Mohammed, 2015). An IOM (2020d) study on child migrants conducted in Shashogo, Hadiya, found that teachers are increasingly migrating from the area, thereby motivating children to follow in their footsteps. This reduced eagerness of youth to pursue education was also reported by several Key Informants interviewed in Misha, who expressed great concern over the *"brain drain of top educational achievers dropping out to migrate irregularly"*. FGD participants and Key Informants reported that the dropout rate of high-scoring students from both high school and middle school is increasing as more youth choose migration over education and see it as offering better opportunities for high pay compared to the jobs they could find as graduates.

However, migration and remittances may also have a positive impact on the education of migrants' siblings in Ethiopia, as some households and parents in Misha reported using remittances to send their non-migrating children to private schools in Hosaena Town, indicating that education is not generally viewed as unimportant across all generations. Key Informants interviewed in Misha who work in education also reported that schools in the area are actively trying to discuss the risks of migration with their pupils: *"In school, we discuss the risks of migration. We arrange programmes for pupils with 'unsuccessful' and 'successful' returnees so that they can share their experiences of the journey. We try to convince our students to focus on their education. We also share inspirational stories of those who were successful because of their education. Most students are not listening, but some students told us they changed their mind and decided not to migrate after we taught them these things."*



I have been teaching at this school for the last four years. I decided not to migrate because my country is great, and I want to make an impact in Ethiopia. Students here are so excited to travel and do not value the work that we do as teachers. They often see us as failures because they see how little money we make and how we struggle to support our families.

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“I have a university degree in geography. I have been teaching here for the last four years, but I have not made much progress in my life. I have been saving money and I am ready to start the journey to South Africa.

NETWORK MIGRATION FROM MISHA

The strong facilitating role of long-established networks linking Ethiopian migrants abroad to their home communities is particularly pronounced along the Southern Route. While smuggling networks, which will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, are well established and essential in enabling and sustaining movement along this corridor, social networks between origin and destination are equally key in understanding the perpetuation of migration along this route. Migration networks can be defined as "sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship and shared community origin" (Massey et al., 1988).

Through networks, aspiring migrants learn about success stories and opportunities, and are offered information and advice on organizing a migration journey, on the journey itself as well as on employment at destination. Migrants and would-be migrants can also tap into their networks for support before and during the journey, thereby lowering the costs and risks of migration. Such assistance can take many forms, including the provision of information, financial capital to pay for journeys, ransom payments for those stranded in transit countries, connections to a reliable broker, a place to stay while in transit as well as support once at destination, with accommodation, contacts or even a job (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964). Family networks – that is, ties based on direct kinship – are among the strongest facilitators of migration. The increased use of communication technologies further facilitates movement and has played a catalysing role in migration along this route, as information can be accessed more rapidly across borders and is not limited to face-to-face interactions.[32]

Network migration is particularly evident along the Southern Route and especially from the Hadiya and Kembata zones of Ethiopia, which have strong traditions of migrating to South Africa. Data suggests that individuals in Misha hold both sizeable family and community networks that enable migration. In 68 per cent of migrant households, migrants either had relatives or friends at destination and in 53 per cent of cases migration occurred with the support of an earlier migrant.[33] In most multi-migrant households (80%), at least one individual migrated to the same country as another family member. During FGDs, when asked about their preferred destination, most would-be migrants confirmed that South Africa was their preferred destination because they had family and/or friends there who could advise and support them in planning the journey and in finding a job once they arrive.

Male FGD participants in Misha also explained that their family and friends in South Africa were covering the cost of their migration as journeys are often sponsored by prospective employers as a loan. Once the migrant reaches South Africa, he will work in the friend or relative's business for around three to four years until the money received for travel including interest has been paid back. Members of the Ethiopian diaspora in South Africa often run successful businesses and study respondents explained that they tend to search for migrants from their home communities to move to South Africa and work for them. Some Ethiopian businesses in South Africa even pay brokers to identify migrants in Ethiopia who could work for them. Respondents reported that there is a strong culture of community support in Misha and explained that supporting and encouraging the migration of at least two or three family and community members is not only voluntary for the Ethiopian diaspora, but a cultural obligation for those who have successfully entered and settled in South Africa. Nonetheless, money to cover the journey is mostly given as a loan rather than a gift and migrants are often committed to work in the business of the person who paid for their journey until they have paid off their debts.

> *"I have both friends and family members who live in South Africa and who will be covering the cost of my journey, but they do not cover the cost for free. I will pay them back from the salary I will earn in South Africa over three to four years including interest. I will have to work for them until I pay back the money I received for travel. Even migrants who don't have family in South Africa get sponsored this way because Ethiopians in South Africa need migrants to work for them and they also earn money from the interest they make from the loan.*[34]

32 More information on network migration can be found in the RDH research report on Network Migration and Transnational Ties in Five Communities of High Emigration in Ethiopia.

33 For the study, the following options were considered as "receiving support": individuals migrated because they had an arranged marriage/job at destination and/or based on relatives/friends offering support at destination and/or the journey was partly or fully financed through remittances and/or relatives abroad arranged for the broker.

34 Male FGD respondent in Misha.

"I have four brothers and three sisters. Two of my brothers are in South Africa. One has been living there for 12 years, the other for five years. I do not want to go to South Africa. I own a metal shop and I had to save a lot of money to be able to open it. I want to expand my shop because I am talented in this field. My brothers do not seem to be living a good life in South Africa and I wish they would come back so we can all work in the shop together.

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More than one in 10 migration journeys in Misha were pre-arranged at destination, with individuals migrating either because they had a job offer or for an arranged marriage (12% versus 2–3% in communities of high emigration to Saudi Arabia). Marriage migration of women to marry members of the Ethiopian diaspora in South Africa is another example of a transnational space in which migrants abroad facilitate the journeys of subsequent migrants. All female would-be migrant FGD participants in Misha reported that their migration, including obtaining relevant travel documents such as passports and visas, plane tickets and all communication with brokers was being arranged and paid for by their prospective husbands. Moreover, none of the participants were aware of the costs of their travel.[35]

> *"My future husband always tells me that South Africa is a heavenly country but one of my friends who lives there told me that life is not good there, especially for housewives. Prospective husbands do not tell their future wives that migration has risks because they do not want to lose us, they mostly encourage us.*[36]

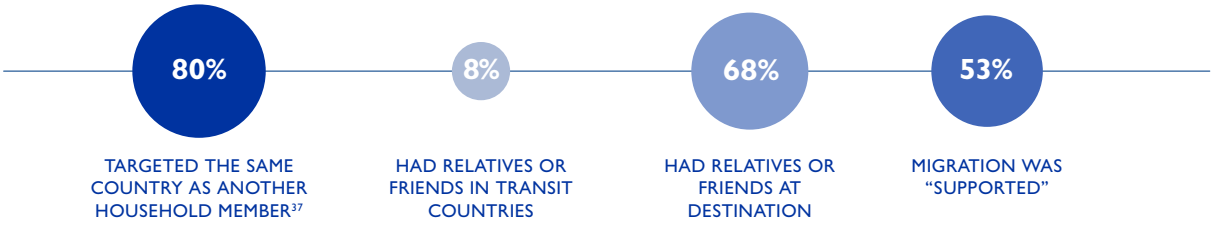
Participants also discussed that knowing migrants abroad whom they could ask for advice meant that they could plan their journeys more easily and faster compared to other destinations where they had no network and no means. In 50 per cent of households, relatives abroad were the most trusted source of information about migration; they arranged contacts with brokers and directly financed migration via remittances. Friends abroad and returnees were also instrumental in providing information about migration (40%) but much less likely to finance it (14%). FGD participants explained that people abroad tend to be perceived as trustworthy sources of information as they have been successful in achieving what aspiring migrants are hoping to attain.

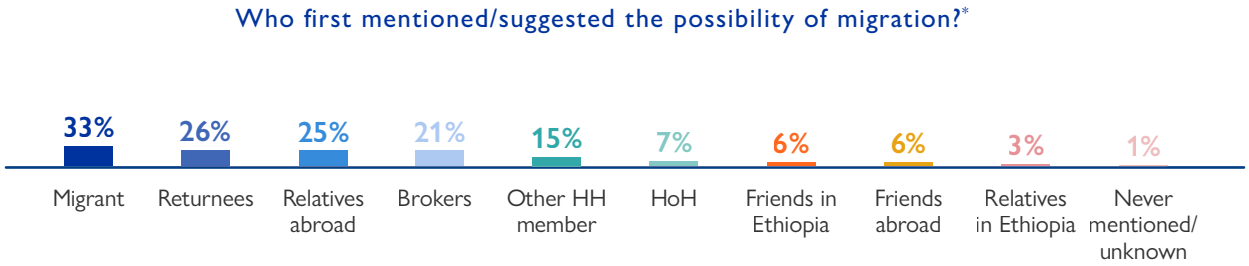
Having robust networks of relatives and friends in the host space that actively facilitate movement reduces the cost and risk of migration. Furthermore, an enabling environment in which social and smuggling networks appear to be interrelated in Misha has created a context in which it is often migrant hosts at destination who approach smugglers to facilitate journeys for their would-be wives, relatives or future employees (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). Brokers were also reported among the most trusted source of information by 20 per cent of households. This figure can be related to the specific context of Misha woreda, where decades of successful labour migration to South Africa have led to the development of smuggling networks based on personal relationships, where brokers are named 'Berri Kefoch' which translates to "door openers" or 'Askoblay' which means "migrant helpers" (Adugna et al. 2019; Adugna et al. 2021).

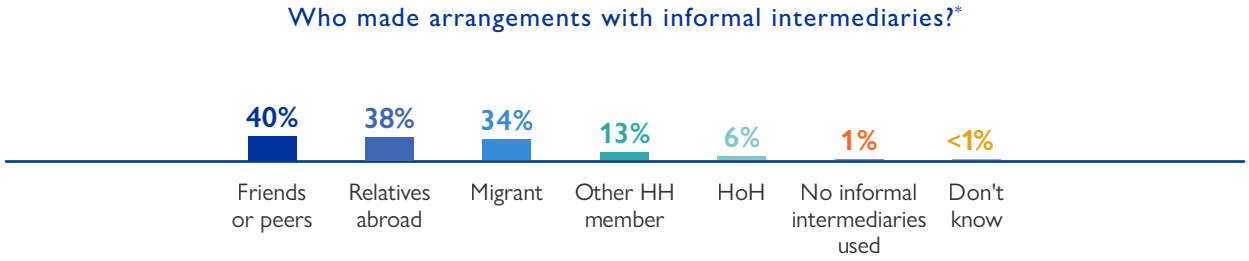
35 More information can be found in the section on Women's Migration Along the Southern Route.

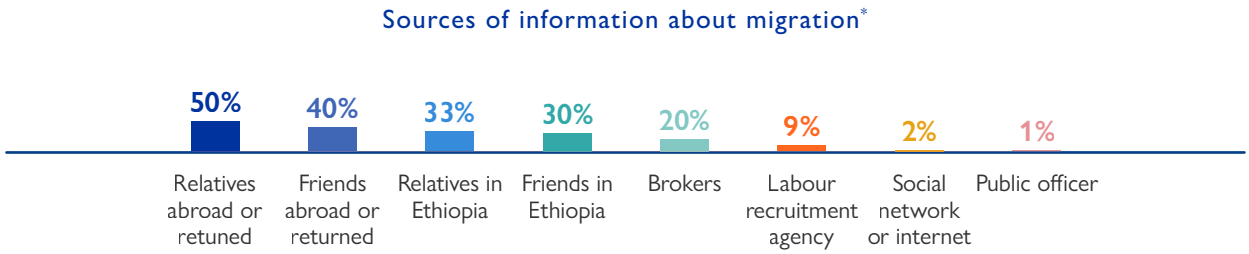
36 Female FGD respondent in Misha.

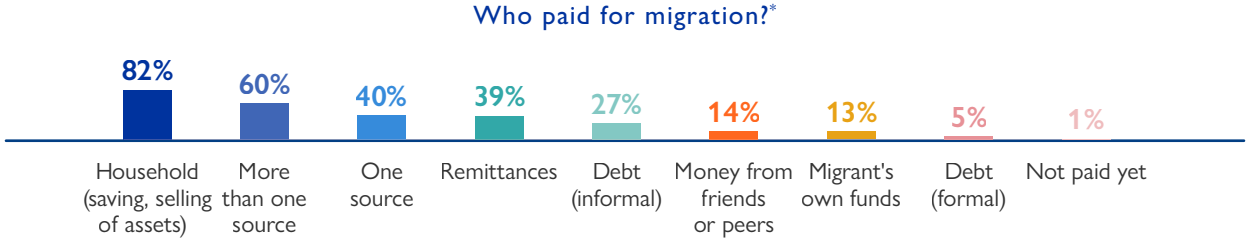
Figure 7. Network migration (Percentage of all households, data from surveys)











* Multiple responses possible

37 Multi-migrant households only.

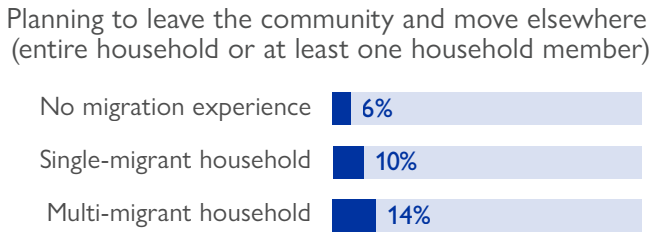
MIGRATION NETWORKS AND MIGRATION 'SUCCESS'

Data from household surveys were analysed to further investigate the importance of networks in the outcome of migration and identify the elements most linked to success. Migration was defined as 'successful' when at least one migrant in the household reached the intended destination and was able to remit home, and 'unsuccessful' when no migrants reached their destination or, if some did, they were unable to remit home. Success was assessed exclusively from a household perspective and did not consider the individual cost at which the outcome was achieved.[38]

Migration was successful in around three out of four households in Misha, where 230 of the 300 surveyed households with migration experience had at least one migrant arrive at destination and remit. This overall success rate of 77 per cent is high when compared to other communities studied by the RDH, for example Erer in Harari region, a community which predominantly migrates along the Eastern Route and demonstrated few network links between Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, where only 12 per cent of households reported that their migrants had successfully reached their destination. **Family networks are the strongest predictor of success and stand out as one of the most important factors that shape the migration experience: a previous experience of migration within the household increases the chances of arriving at destination and being able to remit home from 61 (single-migrant households) to 92 per cent (multi-migrant households).**[39]

Data on future intentions also suggest that, over time, households with experience of migration, especially households where more than one member has already migrated, are the most likely to encourage further migration movements and keep the networks alive. The higher intention to migrate observed within multi-migrant households may indicate both the willingness of other members to try their luck as well as the possible dependence of these households on remittances.

Figure 8. Planning to migrate (Percentage of all households, data from surveys)



38 A tree-based method was used, with the binary variable 'success' defined as the dependent variable. Overall, 17 independent variables were selected to explore their relationship with 'success' among those touching upon the involvement and contribution of family and community networks prior and during the migration. For a description of the model and the complete list of variables that were included please refer to the RDH research report on Network Migration and Transnational Ties in Five Communities of High Emigration in Ethiopia.

39 The overall accuracy of the model is 80 per cent. In other words, the model has accurately classified 237 out of 300 households in the observed sample. However, the model has a stronger power in identifying success (91%) rather than failure (40%), suggesting that further information would be needed to explore the dynamics of failure (or else success), especially once migrants arrive in their country of destination, including the role of networks in providing emotional support (which may ease the transition in countries of destination) and that of individual characteristics that may help migrants better adjust at destination, enter the job market and/or take advantage of their networks (such as the ability to speak the language or other specific skills).

TRAVEL ROUTES

This chapter examines the routes migrants take through the Horn of Africa to South Africa and the smuggling networks that facilitate movements along these routes

“My father left us when we were very young. He was shot in his own shop in South Africa where the robbers left him. I have four brothers and one sister. I am learning to be a metal worker. My mother takes care of us and she has a small piece of land that she works on. Even if most of my friends want to leave the country, I don't want to go abroad.

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TRAVEL ROUTES

This chapter looks at travel routes, length and cost of the journey and the smuggling networks that facilitate travel along the Southern Route by drawing on data collected from over 50 Key Informants in various transit countries, Ethiopian migrants stranded in the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as relevant literature. Overall, 467 Ethiopian migrants were interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania.[40]

The routes migrants take along the Southern Route are fluid, which is indicative of the highly dynamic situation in transit countries, as well as law enforcement activities on the ground.[41] While most migrants travel overland on foot and in vehicles, some also use maritime smuggling routes. Those who can afford it and are able to get a visa fly to South Africa or Mozambique, which is mostly the case for women migrating for marriage, family reunification or other purposes. **Thus, migration along the Southern Route can be regular during some parts of the journey and irregular during others.**

In most cases, the route and means of travel is decided by the smuggler rather than the migrants. This decision is usually based on the smuggler's perception of safety and the level of surveillance along the route at the time of movement. Migrants reportedly have little agency over the route they are taking and in many cases smugglers purposefully avoid disclosing information on exact locations for fear of being reported.[42] Lead brokers are in constant communication with brokers on the ground, informing decisions in real-time based on where there is less monitoring. Such flexibility and adaptability is necessary to avoid border controls and made possible through a vast network of individuals and potential routes involved in the process.[43] Although the routes can change daily, the main routes through Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania were identified during qualitative data collection and surveys with migrants in the United Republic of Tanzania.

40 More information on the methodology used for this study can be found in Annex I.

41 Key Informant 38.

42 Key Informant 9; Key Informant 41.

43 Key Informant 15.

MIGRATION FROM ETHIOPIA INTO KENYA: SPOTLIGHT MOYALE

Ethiopians travelling along the Southern Route cross into Kenya at Moyale border point or use porous and unmanned points near the Moyale border to avoid detection by border officers.[44] Moyale and its surroundings see a variety of movements including of daily commuters, short-term economic movements, pastoralist movements, refugee movements (mostly of Tigrayans and Oromos), recent cross-border displacement due to drought, as well as movements of migrants headed south towards destinations such as Nairobi and South Africa.[45] Although the majority of migrants observed crossing the Moyale border towards Kenya are Ethiopians, qualitative respondents interviewed in 2020 observed that Eritreans were also commonly crossing this border and a particularly large influx of Eritreans crossing the Moyale border was witnessed following the opening of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018.[46]

Migrant smuggling is an important part of the economy in both Moyale, Ethiopia and Moyale, Kenya, with around 60 per cent of the town's income reportedly coming from illicit trade (MMC, 2017a). An entire industry has been created on both sides of the border to facilitate irregular movements, including transport as well as food and accommodation. However, the area has seen increased control in recent years, including the building of a trench along parts of the border that has resulted in the use of alternative routes and crossing points. Migrants crossing the border irregularly mostly do so on foot or by using motorbikes, commonly referred to as boda-boda (motorbikes).[47]

Although Ethiopia and Kenya have a bilateral agreement on free movement (meaning Ethiopians can legally enter Kenya using a valid identity document and without a visa), the majority of migrants cross the border irregularly with the help of smugglers as they do not possess the required identity and travel documents to enable their legal entry, transit and/or stay in Kenya. Moreover, Adugna et al. (2019) found that migrants holding a passport and trying to cross the border regularly have to answer questions on the purpose of their travel to Kenya to receive both the exit stamp in Ethiopia and entry stamp in Kenya and that migrants from Hadiya and Kembata are generally suspected by immigration officers on both sides of the border as intending to migrate to South Africa. The immigration procedures, coupled with the reported bias towards migrants from these zones, increases their reliance on smugglers to facilitate their entry into Kenya. Key Informants in Moyale suggested that around 200 to 300 migrants cross the border irregularly each night, albeit for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, DTM Flow Monitoring has recorded almost 20,000 migrants as having crossed through Moyale headed towards South Africa in the past two years (10,243 in 2021 and 9,752 in 2022).

MIGRATION THROUGH KENYA

Migrants and their smugglers use two main routes from Moyale to Kenya's capital Nairobi. The choice of route is dependent on the security situation, the ethnicity of the individual transporting the migrants, as well as the contacts and safe houses available to the lead smuggler along the route. The most common route goes through Marsabit and Isiolo, has better infrastructure and tarmac roads and is preferred by non-Somali speaking smugglers. The second route goes through Wajir and is a rough, gravel road mostly used by smugglers of Somali ethnicity. The ethnicity of the smuggler has been found to play an important role along these two routes as the law enforcement actors with whom smugglers must negotiate belong to these ethnic groups and language proficiency as well as ethnic, and social belonging are key to successfully navigating these contexts (Adugna et al., 2019).

Along the Marsabit route, smugglers use 'panya routes' (off-road) in the Chalbi desert to avoid police checkpoints. Migrants are often asked to take these off-road legs on foot. **Most migrants are therefore arrested in Isiolo, where the lack of alternative off-road routes make detection by local authorities more likely. Key Informants also reported that protection concerns are heightened in Isiolo as migrants are sometimes abandoned by their smugglers when the routes smugglers take through the county are heavily policed.** From Isiolo, migrants either travel via Meru and Embu towards Nairobi or along the Nanyuki and Nyeri highway. Those travelling from Moyale via Wajir usually travel via Garissa and Mwingi

44 Key Informant 6; Key Informant 14; Key Informant 18; Key Informant 27; Key Informant 29; Key Informant 39.

45 Key Informant 33; Key Informant 36.

46 Key Informant 21; Key Informant 22; Key Informant 33.

47 Ibid.

towards Thika.[48] The modes of transport vary, with most migrants doing some shorter legs of their journey on foot in areas heavily manned by the police, but mostly travelling in vehicles such as trucks, mini-buses, cars and pickup trucks; it is not uncommon for smugglers to switch vehicles during the journey.

In Kenya, Nairobi is the major transit hub in the smuggling business along the Southern Route, where onward journeys are organized and migrants transiting through are handed over to new intermediaries who facilitate their journey to the United Republic of Tanzania. Regardless of the route taken from Moyale, migrants often end their journeys in Nairobi's Eastleigh neighbourhood, known for its large Ethiopian and Somali diaspora communities. Migrants who are transiting through Nairobi on their way to South Africa are often accommodated in so-called 'safe houses' in Eastleigh or on the periphery of Nairobi in areas such as Ruiru, Kitengela, Kariobangi, Huruma and Mathare.[49] Migrants are also often hidden in informal settlements in areas such as Kasarani, Kayole, Majengo, Huruma and Pangani, where they are easily hidden from law enforcement until the smugglers have gathered a group of migrants large enough to start the next leg of the journey.[50]

Three main routes were identified from Nairobi to the Tanzanian border: one via Athi River towards porous points near the Namanga border crossing; one towards Oloitokitok (Kilimanjaro area); and the main route (at the time of data collection in 2020) ran towards the southern coast, where smugglers have a variety of land-based and coastal routes including porous border points into the United Republic of Tanzania near the Lunga Lunga border, as well as by boat on the Indian Ocean. Lead smugglers use their contacts on the ground to determine which route is the least surveilled on a given day and to inform crossing time.[51] The Kilimanjaro route is mostly used when the routes near Lunga Lunga are being tightly controlled (Deshingkar et al., 2019).

Key Informants interviewed in the Vanga area in Kwale county, the southern tip of Kenya, reported that large groups of Ethiopians were crossing through the area on their way to the United Republic of Tanzania. Migrants along this route are usually transported in trucks until they reach Samburu or Mariakani along the Nairobi-Mombasa highway, from where they are taken by car or boda-boda (motorbike) to Vanga via Kinango. A few also travel via Mombasa along the coastal road, although checkpoints along the road have deterred smugglers from using this route in recent years. Key Informants expressed concern over the use of boda-boda that are often driven at high speed for long distances along rough roads to avoid detection, resulting in an increase in the number of accidents along this route.[52]

48 Key Informant 21; Key Informant 27; Key Informant 33; Key Informant 37.

49 Key Informant 13; Key Informant 16; Key Informant 27.

50 Key Informant 22; Key Informant 37.

51 Key Informant 5; Key Informant 6; Key Informant 27; Key Informant 29; Key Informant 39.

52 Key Informant 35; Key Informant 42.

"My youngest brother is living in South Africa and paid for me to start the journey to join him there. I could not make it and on the way, I had to spend two years in prison in Tanzania and the Red Cross brought me back to Ethiopia.

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Key Informants identified several areas near the Lunga Lunga border where smuggled migrants have been identified, including Majoreni, Bodo, Kidimu and Shimoni for those using the coastal route and Mwereni for land border crossings. **Migrants are sometimes kept in so-called 'safe houses' in small villages until the smugglers have decided which route to use to enter the United Republic of Tanzania. However, many migrants are also hidden in forested areas near porous land border points, and in some instances, they reportedly waited in the forest for several days while the smugglers assessed the situation.**

Key Informants reported that the coastal route is only used when land border control and police barriers on the Tanzanian side of the border are tight, as the establishment of a Coast Guard in the border area in recent years has made movements through the Indian Ocean more difficult. In case of movement through the sea, migrants mostly board the boats at night near Kidimu or Funzi, depending on the patrols. At the point of interview in mid-2020, over 200 Ethiopian migrants had been intercepted in the area on land and at sea within a two-week period, indicating that migration along this route was particularly common.[53] Interviews with migrants in the United Republic of Tanzania show that at least 55 per cent entered the United Republic of Tanzania around Lunga Lunga towards Tanga, mostly by land (86%) but also by sea (10%) indicating that this route was still common and active in 2021 and 2022.

MIGRATION THROUGH THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AND BEYOND

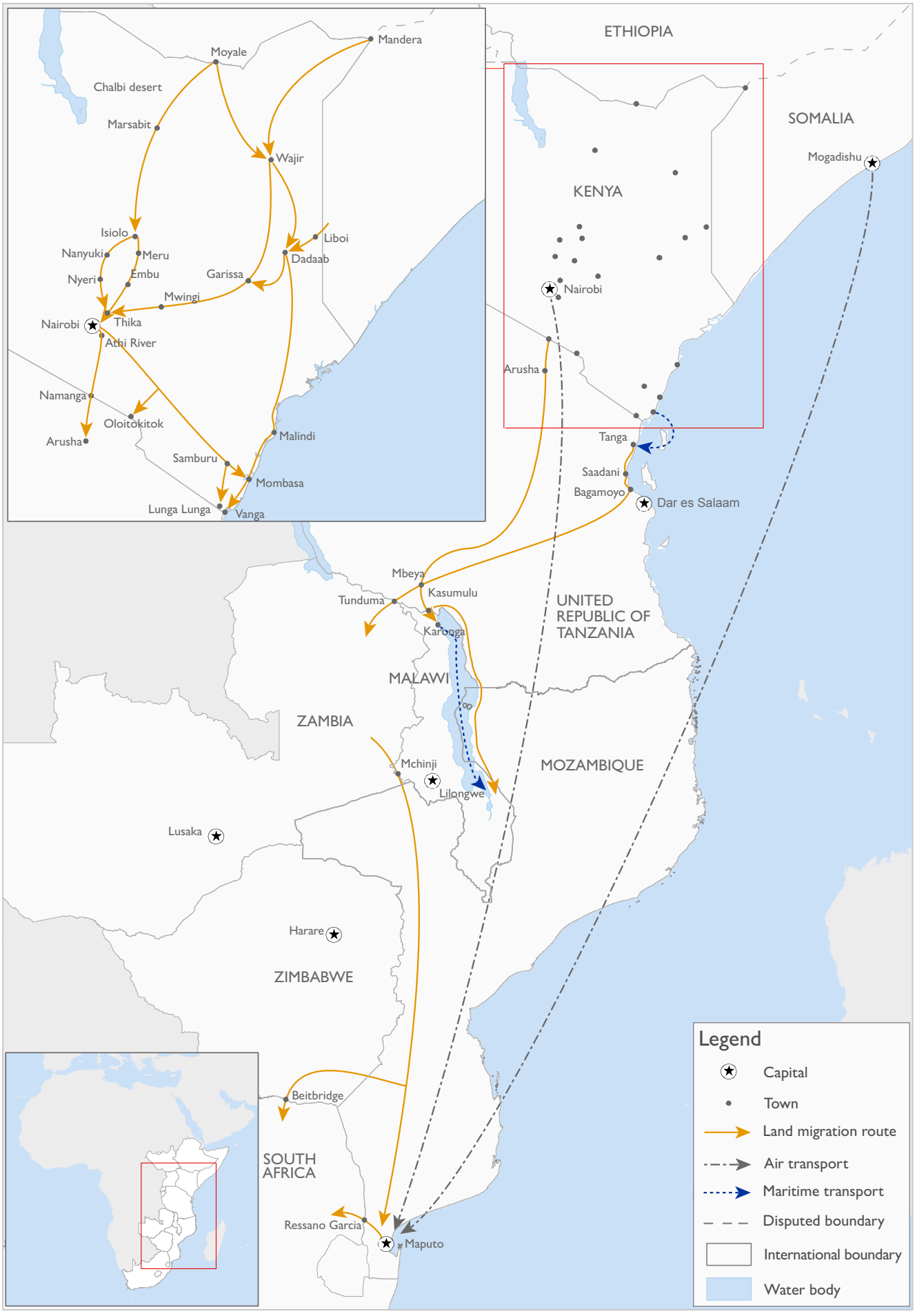
A small number of migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania (7%, 39 individuals) mentioned having bypassed Kenya altogether and travelled from Ethiopia into South Sudan and from South Sudan towards the United Republic of Tanzania via Uganda. Most migrants crossing the Kenyan-Tanzanian border near Namanga or Oloitokitok are taken towards Arusha. Migrants who crossed into the United Republic of Tanzania near Lunga Lunga (known as Horo Horo on the Tanzanian side) mostly travel onwards to Tanga and Bagamoyo.[54] Migrants travelling by boat often pass through small islands such as Kirui island off the coast of Tanga to avoid detection.[55] Those crossing the border into the United Republic of Tanzania by land near Tanga are often transported using boda boda (motorbikes).

From Tanga, migrants normally move towards Saadani National Park in the Bagamoyo region, where local authorities have found many migrants abandoned by their smugglers, or they are hidden in the mangroves along the coast of Bagamoyo until the smuggler can arrange for safe transportation to Mbeya, on the border to Zambia or Kyela, on the border to Malawi. Smugglers operating the Bagamoyo to Mbeya route reportedly use trucks carrying cement or other cargo to transport migrants to the United Republic of Tanzania's southern border. Of the migrants interviewed for this research, most had been intercepted between Tanga and Dar es Salaam. Migrants passing through Arusha are often transported from Arusha to Tunduma border in Mbeya or Kasumulu border in Kyela in trucks and fuel tankers. Fuel tankers are particularly dangerous and often linked to migrant deaths by asphyxiation in transit.[56] Depending on the situation on the ground, migrants may also exit the United Republic of Tanzania into Mozambique.

After the United Republic of Tanzania, the routes migrants take towards South Africa become more dispersed, making it hard to identify current migration dynamics. The most common countries of transit include Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. At the time of research, those transiting through Mozambique were avoiding routes that previously crossed through north-eastern Mozambique due to conflict in the area by transiting through western Mozambique along Lake Malawi. Key Informants also reported active smuggling in Karonga, Lilongwe and Blantyre in Malawi, as well as a route using boats on Lake Malawi and a route crossing from Zambia into Malawi at Mchinji border and running through Mozambique along the border with Zimbabwe towards Maputo, another key smuggling hub along the Southern Route where many lead smugglers are based. Depending on which route they are taking, migrants will enter South Africa from Mozambique through the border town of Ressano Garcia (Komatipoort on the South African side); or from Mozambique into Zimbabwe to South Africa through the Musina Beitbridge border; or from Zimbabwe into Botswana to South Africa.[57] This intricate network of smuggling routes is highly changeable and constantly evolving in response to changes on the ground.

53 Key Informant 32; Key Informant 42.
54 Key Informant 28; Key Informant 31; Key Informant 35; Key Informant 38; Key Informant 41.
55 Key Informant 42.
56 Key Informant 38.
57 Key Informant 3; Key Informant 5.

MIGRATION ROUTES ALONG THE SOUTHERN CORRIDOR



Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

“I have two brothers who live in South Africa. My brothers there support our family, but I am scared for them because I heard about the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. I just want them to come home in peace. Before I was married, I also wanted to go to South Africa, but now it is too late for me because I am married with three children.

LENGTH AND COST OF THE JOURNEY

The Southern Route to South Africa is the second most expensive route out of Ethiopia. It is significantly more expensive than the Eastern Route to the Gulf countries, which requires, on average, around 500–750 United States dollars (USD) but cheaper than the Northern Route to Europe. **A review of past and recent data suggests that the Southern Route has gotten more expensive over the years**. In the 2009 IOM study, migrants reported paying approximately between USD 1,750 and USD 2,000 for the journey from the Horn of Africa to South Africa (although the report also noted that many migrants incurred additional costs en route as they were robbed and oftentimes had to pay unanticipated bribes along the way). In 2013, IOM set a new estimate at USD 2,500–5,000 and in 2017 MMC raised it to a median of USD 3,000 (USD 5,000 for the route through Zambia and Mozambique). Costs appear to have risen again due to increased surveillance along the route. Data collected from migrants in the United Republic of Tanzania show that they had already paid on average 250,000 Ethiopian birr (around USD 4,800) for the journey.

The journey from Ethiopia to South Africa is expensive and lengthy, with nearly one in two migrants surveyed in the United Republic of Tanzania having been on the road between one and three months to reach the United Republic of Tanzania (43%), while 38 per cent had travelled between two weeks and one month. In comparison, Ethiopian migrants surveyed travelling along the Eastern Route took less than a month, on average, to reach their final intended destination (Saudi Arabia) and paid around USD 500–750,[58] which is less than one sixth of what migrants are paying along the Southern Route.[59] Payment arrangements with brokers differ, with some migrants paying the full amount upfront and others paying some of the money upfront and subsequent instalments based on migrants successfully reaching certain points along the journey.[60]

Similar to other corridors, costs vary based on the popularity of the route, the existence of established migration networks and the 'package' migrants pay for (in terms of the level of safety and protection granted, the means of travel and duration of time spent on foot versus in vehicles, and the provision of basic necessities such as food and water). **Most migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania were not aware of how much they would end up paying for their journey, with three out of four migrants reporting being unaware that they would be passed on to other brokers and one out of four being extorted for additional fees en route by brokers.** According to Key Informants interviewed in transit countries, those who move fastest are usually those who have relatives at destination who are involved in facilitating the migration and willing to spend significant amounts of money doing so.

58 IOM, 2021b.

59 Interviews with remigrating individuals and returnees in Obock and Bossaso (IOM, 2021b).

60 Key Informants interviewed in Misha.

"I graduated from high school and I didn't have a job. I couldn't find a job here so my brothers asked me to go to South Africa. I left with my best friend and used my passport to travel until Nairobi. After Kenya, I arrived to Tanzania by bus. To get from Tanzania to Mozambique, we travelled for two days. I was in a group of 97 people who journeyed by boat. The trip was very dangerous, we were thirsty and hungry. We only ate one piece of bread in two days and we saw people die on the road.

Figure 9. From Ethiopia to South Africa or GCC countries

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	SOUTHERN ROUTE	EASTERN ROUTE
Destination countries	**South Africa**	**Saudi Arabia and Other GCC countries**
Transit countries	Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique	Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen
Estimated stock of migrants in countries of destination[a] *(number of individuals and % of total stock)*	**44.181** *(5%, South Africa)*	**164.259** *(17%, Saudi Arabia)* **16.645** *(2%, other GCC countries)*
Average cost[b]	**USD 4.800** *(minimum)*	**USD 500–750**
Average length[c]	**2–6 months**	**26 days**
Remittances[d] *(million USD)*	**19 million**	**191 million**

a In 2020, the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimated the total stock of Ethiopian immigrants at 946,129 individuals, of whom 307,980 (33% of total stock) in Northern America. Estimates include the "regular" population only. According to the World Bank, in 2017 there were around 750,000 undocumented migrants in Saudi Arabia and 250,000 in South Africa (Cenfri, 2018).

b *Source:* Interviews with migrants in transit along the Southern Route and the Eastern Route.

c *Source:* Interviews with migrants in transit and Key Informant interviews for the Southern Route and the Eastern Route.

d The United States, Saudi Arabia and South Africa are common countries of migration and of remittances (World Bank estimates 2017).

SMUGGLING NETWORKS

Irregular migration along the Southern Route would not be possible without smugglers and their expansive network who help facilitate these movements. With few opportunities for regular migration and the risks posed by physical and legal barriers erected to prevent irregular migration, informal systems and networks have been established to assist migrants to travel irregularly along flexible and highly adaptable routes. Crossing borders in heavily surveilled areas often involves repeated attempts, re-timing of movements and in some cases re-routing during travel to avoid detection by authorities (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). Moreover, the journey from Ethiopia to South Africa involves transiting through several countries and migrants and those supporting them may employ a single agent to coordinate the journey or hire multiple facilitators for different legs of the journey. Smugglers fulfil a range of functions for migrants along this route, from providing security and protection during the journey to arranging transportation, coordinating routes and the crossing of borders and, in some cases, providing migrants with false documents to facilitate their movements (Adugna et al., 2019).

As the number of individuals wanting to migrate to South Africa increased, the networks of smugglers along the Southern Route expanded and became more sophisticated. Smuggling networks between Ethiopia and South Africa are comprised of a range of different actors spanning across origin, transit and destination countries. Studies on this route have found that migrants (former and current), their families, relatives and contacts at destination, local communities and law enforcement actors often actively participate in the smuggling process (ACMS, 2019). **Brokers and smugglers along the Southern Route are not homogenous and have differing roles to play in the process depending on their location and responsibilities.** Kefale and Mohammed (2015) categorize the brokers operating along the Southern Route into three categories. The 'grassroots brokers' are embedded in the communities migrants come from and often have other occupations in addition to recruiting aspiring migrants and connecting them with lead brokers. Returnees are often involved in this process. Grassroots brokers do not usually actively and publicly persuade aspiring migrants to migrate, as the risks along the route are well known, but rather support those with expressed intentions by providing contacts and information (Adugna et al., 2019).

'Lead brokers' are mostly situated in Ethiopia or key transit hubs along the route such as Moyale, Hosaena, Hawassa, Nairobi or Maputo. Lead brokers usually have several 'grassroot brokers', known as suppliers (akirabiwoch) or collectors (sebsabiwoch) in Ethiopia, working for them who are paid a commission for each aspiring migrant they connect them with. 'Grassroot brokers' may include traders, teachers, civil servants, businessmen and in some cases even church officials (Adugna et al., 2019). 'Lead brokers' have established networks spanning from Ethiopia across various transit countries and into South Africa and are responsible for arranging migrants' journeys using a chain of smugglers in transit countries. Migrants often do not meet their lead broker or know their identity due to the illegality of their business and the secrecy associated with it.

The third group of smugglers are those residing in transit locations who are involved in the actual movement of the migrants and receive payment from the lead broker for doing so. Smugglers oversee a network of individuals involved in a variety of activities related to clandestine movements such as providing documentation and transportation from node to node, finding accommodation, arranging border crossings, etc. Those working together with the smuggler often come from various backgrounds including drivers of minibuses and trucks, boda boda (motorbike) operators, traders and law enforcement actors (Adugna et al., 2019). Members of local communities including women are also often part of the system supporting smugglers in transit towns such as Moyale, where they cook food for migrants and help in accommodating them.

Several Key Informants as well as existing literature suggest that law enforcement officers in transit countries are often involved both directly and indirectly in the lucrative business of migrant smuggling. Qualitative data collected for this study confirm IOM findings from 2014 that concluded that corruption is an ingrained part of smuggling along this route, where officials at the border and checkpoints are routinely bribed to facilitate the movement of irregular migrants (MMC, 2017). **The increasing control of borders and migration is forcing smuggling networks to involve those actors controlling migration; lead brokers and smugglers' success depends on their ability to work effectively with the migration control structure** (Adugna et al., 2019).

> I gave up on trying to go abroad because I don't have the money for the trip. If I did have the money, I would take the chance and try to go, even on foot if I have to.

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Although migration carries with it great risk and not all migrants successfully manage to reach their destinations, data suggest that brokers in southern Ethiopia are generally very positively perceived as individuals giving others the opportunity to realize their dreams and local discourse recognizes their contribution to the success of those migrants who achieved their goals:[61] *"Migrants, brokers and others in the area feel that they are all a part of the same process and they regard migration as a huge success because it has brought enormous wealth to Moyale and Hadiya and it's evident everywhere. You know, the brokers regard themselves and are seen by others as heroes, they don't see themselves as irresponsible and immoral smugglers the way they have been portrayed in the media."* Adugna et al. (2019) also found that migrant smuggling is a socioculturally embedded business in Hadiya, with grassroot brokers living in the same community as aspiring migrants and being trusted by them due to their shared ethnic, religious and geographical backgrounds. Successful brokers in the area have also been known to abide by locally established values and norms such as returning the money paid for migration to families of migrants who have passed away en route (Adugna et al., 2019).

61 Key Informant 2; Key Informant 15; Key Informant 21; Key Informant 41.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRATION ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

The first case of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Ethiopia was identified in March 2020 and the pandemic had a measurable impact on the country and migration dynamics along the Southern Route in the months following the outbreak. **Key Informants interviewed in Misha and transit countries along the route unanimously agreed that migration along this corridor significantly reduced in the early months of the pandemic when rigorous domestic and international travel restrictions were in place and fears of the disease and the impact of restrictions on irregular movement across borders were heightened.** Key Informants interviewed in Moyale, various transit locations in Kenya and Tanzania all reported seeing a large reduction in movements until around August 2020, when Kenya began a phased reopening of the country and some COVID-19-related restrictions were lifted.[62] In the later months of 2020, at the time they were being interviewed, Key Informants not only reported that movements had resumed at regular, pre-pandemic levels, but actually increased due to the 'backlog' of migrants who had been postponing their journeys during the pandemic's earlier months:[63] *"In the past two months [September and October 2020] movements here [Lunga Lunga area] have been very high and the numbers keep growing. The situation is more serious now than before COVID-19. Up until July we had no movements here, but since August we are intercepting so many migrants. If we have intercepted hundreds of people in the past months, think about how many more have managed to cross? So, so many."*[64]

Focus group discussions with aspiring migrants, parents of migrants and Key Informants in Misha confirmed that the pandemic had not decreased youths' ambitions to migrate, but only put their plans on hold temporarily while brokers and smugglers were reassessing and adapting their networks and strategies to heightened levels of border control and regulations. During an FGD with fathers in Misha, one father explained: *"Our children know there is death, detention and torture on the road to South Africa, but they do not consider it. So, if our children do not fear these risks, why would they fear COVID-19? Our children focus only on the positive stories of 'successful' migrants but ignore the warnings of 'unsuccessful' migrants and negative stories of migration".* Focus groups with aspiring migrants confirmed this observation. Key Informants in Misha also observed that school closures due to the pandemic may have heightened ambitions to migrate as students were bored and had nothing to do and that brokers in the community were spreading false narratives among students that migrating during the pandemic was in fact easier.

> *"COVID-19 is not affecting our ambitions to migrate because youth are not getting sick with it. It is not affecting our desire, but it has made it harder for us to migrate due to the increase travel costs due to the pandemic. Do you think the pandemic is worse than being jobless and living a poor lifestyle here?*[65]

The COVID-19 pandemic also heightened migrant vulnerabilities during their journeys along the Southern Route, as they were more likely to experience abuse by brokers when they ran out of money due to increased (and often undisclosed) costs of the journey. Brokers also reportedly increased the costs of the journey for those who were already in transit and those who were unable to pay additional fees became stranded along the route. They also experienced increased stigma in transit communities and less support and access to resources in these communities. Options for those who were planning on working in transit to fund their journeys in places such as Eastleigh in Nairobi were severely limited, as resident Ethiopian and Somali populations in Eastleigh were suffering from lockdowns, business and market closures.[66] As a result, some became stranded or detained during their journeys due to tightened controls and some reportedly contracted the disease due to lack of protective wear and adequate preventative precautions during travel, while not having access to medical care.[67]

> *"Migration during the pandemic became more dangerous than before. Many migrants were detained and some have been exposed to the virus. In addition, during their travel, if there are lockdowns or restrictions, their life will be in danger as they will stay on the road for a long time and may not get enough food and water. And the brokers may also ask for extra payment for longer stays during the lockdown.*[68]

62 Key Informant 16; Key Informant 21; Key Informant 22; Key Informant 27; Key Informant 30; Key Informant 33; Key Informant 35; Key Informant 36; Key Informant 37; Key Informant 38; Key Informant 39; Key Informant 40; Key Informant 41; Key Informant 42; Key Informant 46.

63 Key Informant 38; Key Informant 41; Key Informant 42.

64 Key Informant 42.

65 FGD Participant in Misha.

66 Key Informant 13; Key Informant 16; Key Informant 43.

67 Key Informant 5; Key Informant 29; Key Informant 33; Key Informant 42.

68 Key Informant interviewed in Misha.

MIGRANTS IN TRANSIT ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

This chapter looks at who the migrants traveling along the Southern Route are, how they make their decisions to migrate and the risks they face during their migration

MIGRANTS IN TRANSIT ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

Drawing mostly on data collected from Key Informants in various transit countries and data collected from Ethiopian migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania, this chapter looks at the profiles of migrants in transit along the Southern Route and the challenges they face. Overall, 467 transit migrants were interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania.[69] With an average age of 21 years, nearly all migrants were young and 16 per cent were minors. All interviewed migrants were male, and the majority were single (86%).

PROFILES OF MIGRANTS

Migrants in transit along the Southern Route are mostly young and male.[70] **The predominance of young, male migrants on this route links to the drivers of migration, the conditions of the route and the employment opportunities for Ethiopians in South Africa.** Unemployment and landlessness, two of the major push factors along this route, are most prevalent among youth, while the type of jobs migrants carry out in South Africa are less suited to older and female migrants. The available jobs in South Africa are seen as laborious and physically demanding and working in South Africa is perceived as insecure and highly risky due to the high crime rates in the country (Kefale and Mohammed, 2015).

The harsh travel conditions on the road and high level of risk associated with irregular migration across multiple international boundaries where migrants may be exposed to many types of hardship was also posited as an explanation as to why women rarely migrate to South Africa irregularly. The gendered nature of irregular flows on the Southern Route can also be explained by the preference of women and girls for the GCC countries, where most female migrants from SNNP migrate to carry out domestic work, or regular migration for marriage purposes to South Africa.[71]

> *Migration from Misha is gendered. The reason is that the accessibility of jobs for men and women is different in South Africa and Saudi Arabia. For instance, in South Africa, the available jobs for migrants are shopkeeper, machine operator and loading and unloading deliveries etc., which are mostly suited for males. On the contrary, the main job for migrants in Saudi Arabia is domestic work, which is more suitable for women.*[72]

Ethiopian migrants surveyed in the United Republic of Tanzania mostly come from large households (the average size is 7.5 members), which is significantly larger than the average household size of 4.7 in Ethiopia.[73] **Despite their young age, individuals travelling to South Africa had a higher level of education and were significantly better off compared to their counterparts interviewed in transit countries along the Eastern Route.** Moreover, around 80 per cent of surveyed migrants had a source of income in Ethiopia, with monthly earnings of around 3,500 birr (67 USD) – compared to 26 per cent and 1,500 birr (29 USD) for those travelling along the Eastern Route. Nonetheless, migration along both routes is fuelled by economic pressure at home with a large share of migrants reporting that their households had been unable to cover their basic needs and had been relying on coping strategies (around 70%) prior to their migration.

69 More information on the methodology used for this study can be found in Annex I.

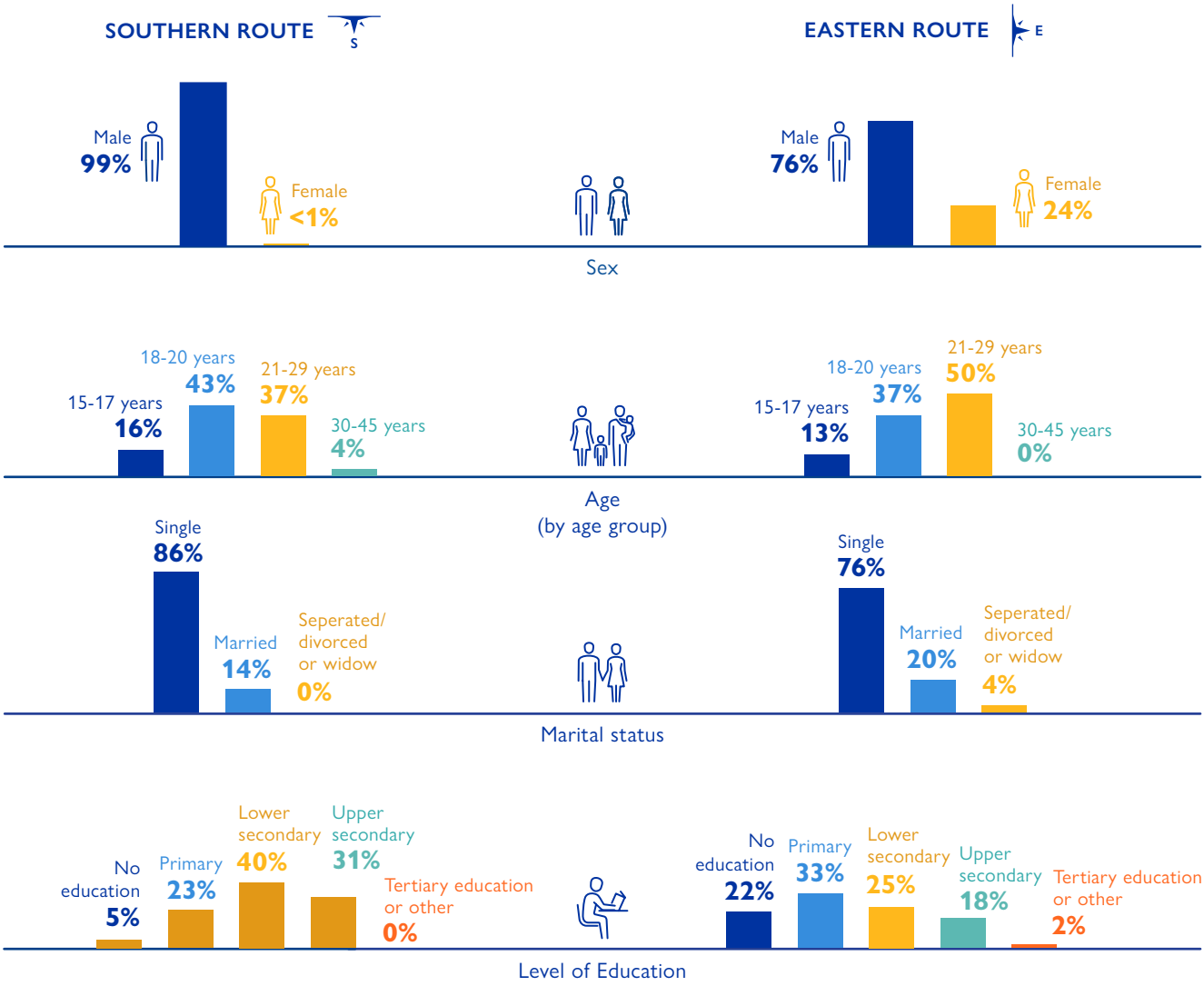
70 Key Informant 2; Key Informant 3; Key Informant 6; Key Informant 32; Key Informant 36; Key Informant 37; Key Informant 38; Key Informant 42.

71 Even on the Eastern Route, where women accounted for 24 per cent of interviewed migrants in transit, women are indeed far more likely than men to migrate to the Middle East through regular channels. Women who are migrating through regular channels via private employment agencies tend to have far less arduous journeys to their destinations, as they fly directly (or via Kenya due to the ban on domestic worker migration in Ethiopia), whereas men most commonly travel irregularly by land via Djibouti and Somali and sea across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen (Fernandez, 2017).

72 Key Informant interviewed in Misha.

73 In 2018, the average household size in Ethiopia was 4.7 members per household, ranging from 4.6 and 4.8 persons respectively in Amhara in Tigray (main regions of origin of migrants transiting along the Eastern Route together with Oromia) and 5.5 persons in Oromia and SNNP regions (main regions of origin of migrants along the Southern Route), which have the highest averages across the country. (Mini Demographic and Health Survey, 2019).

Figure 10. Comparison of sociodemographic characteristics of migrants interviewed in transit along the Southern Route in Tanzania and along the Eastern Route in Bossaso and Obock



7.5 members	Average household size	6.25 members[74]
80%	Had a source of income prior to migration	26%
56%	Was the main provider of income	30%[75]
71%	Household was unable to cover for basic needs	69%
69%	Household relied on coping strategies	57%
24%	Previous experience of internal migration	19%
1%	Previous experience of international migration	15%
43%	At least one family member migrated to the same country	37%
70%	Community migration to the same country is frequent or very frequent	42%

74 This data was collected from 1,526 migrants interviewed while transiting through Bossaso, Puntland along the Eastern Route.

75 Asked only to 1,526 migrants transiting through Bossaso, Puntland.

“I am in fifth grade and have five brothers and three sisters. I have seen people from my neighborhood become rich by going abroad and I want to be like them. I want to go to Dubai to work.

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These findings are corroborated by Key Informants interviewed in Misha who reported that a variety of individuals migrate from their communities including low-skilled, unemployed youth as well as both unemployed and employed graduates. Migration experts interviewed in Ethiopia suggested, however, that traditionally, most migrants along the Southern Route were young men who had not completed their education and that the increase in graduates and even migrants who were employed in Ethiopia is a more recent phenomenon resulting from the lack of decent job opportunities at origin.[76]

Previous experience of internal migration, mostly to Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa, was commonly reported (24%) among respondents surveyed in the United Republic of Tanzania, while almost none of the surveyed migrants had previous experience migrating internationally (1%). This stands in contrast to the Eastern Route, where returns and remigration attempts occur more frequently (around 15% of migrants transiting through Obock and Bossaso were migrating for at least the second time). However, around 43 per cent of migrants interviewed in transit along the Southern Route reported that someone in their household had previously migrated internationally, supporting the data from Misha on the existence of strong network migration from Ethiopia.

Data collected from migrants in transit in the United Republic of Tanzania also support existing literature and findings from other phases of this research that suggest that migration along the Southern Route mostly originates in two zones in SNNP, the Hadiya and Kembata zones, both of which have strong ties and networks to South Africa. Nearly all individuals interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania came from Hadiya (71%, 7% of whom were from Misha woreda) and Kembata (24%) zones, where migration to South Africa is very common as a livelihood strategy and mostly seen as socially acceptable. Of the migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania, 70 per cent reported that migration from their communities to South Africa was ‘frequent’ or ‘very frequent’.[77]

76 Key Informant 4; Key Informant 9.

77 Further details on these zones and network migration can be found in the previous chapter.

SOMALI MIGRATION ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

Data collected from Key Informants in Somalia and Kenya suggest that many Somalis along the Southern Route come from urban areas such as Hargeisa, Kismayo and Mogadishu.[78] Particularly the Garre clan has a strong presence in South Africa and movements to South Africa tend to occur along clan lines, wherein individuals who have settled in South Africa support the movement of members of their clan in Somalia.[79] Somali migration along the Southern Route is driven by a variety of factors including political instability, insecurity, violence, climatic conditions such as drought, as well as to seek better economic opportunities. Most Somali migrants along the Southern Route are young and between the ages of 15 and 30 years. Although most Somalis on the Southern Route are young men, women are reportedly also using the route. While many migrate for marriage, some also migrate in search of employment.[80]

Somalis usually enter into Kenya through Mandera in the northeast or Liboi, from where they travel to Dadaab and then Garissa.[81] Somali migrants often have relatives in north-eastern Kenya or in and around the refugee camps in Dadaab, where they tend to stay for a few days or weeks until they can move onwards to Nairobi or towards Kenya's southern borders via Malindi and Mombasa, oftentimes in the back of trucks carrying livestock and other goods.[82] Some wealthier Somali migrants fly directly to Mozambique from where they travel irregularly to South Africa.[83] Most Somali migrants use overland routes to exit Kenya, including porous border points near Namanga and Lunga Lunga. Several Key Informants suggested that smugglers along these routes provide migrants with fake Kenyan identification documents that facilitate their movement through Kenya as well as the United Republic of Tanzania.[84]

Migrant networks and social ties play a significant role in perpetuating Somali migration to South Africa. The movement of migrants is funded by aspiring migrants' families and/or clans and often paid for by migrants in South Africa, many of whom operate successful businesses, which in turn motivates aspiring migrants to migrate and be successful like those who have already established themselves.[85] In his study on Somali women in South Africa, Waiganjo (2017) found that most interviewees had family or friends in South Africa who had facilitated their migration and that the information the diaspora was sharing via social media about life in South Africa had shaped their expectations and hopes of a better life. The study also found that networks in South Africa play a key role in supporting migrants to settle into life there by providing accommodation to new arrivals and support in the documentation process. New arrivals' settlement process is also facilitated by the Somali diaspora as they are given jobs in businesses belonging to members of the community. In South Africa, Somalis mostly reside in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces (Uwimpuhwe & Ruiters, 2018).

78 Key Informant 1; Key Informant 5; Key Informant 25; Key Informant 39.
79 Key Informant 5.
80 Key Informant 25; Key Informant 39; Key Informant 46.
81 Key Informant 39.
82 Key Informant 11.
83 Key Informant 25.
84 Key Informant 25; Key Informant 30; Key Informant 39.
85 Key Informant 46.

WOMEN'S MIGRATION ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

The majority of Ethiopian women who migrate along the Southern Route to South Africa do so for marriage purposes. They travel either directly to South Africa by air or by air to Mozambique from where they are smuggled overland for the final leg of the journey to South Africa. Successful and established male migrants in South Africa who are looking to establish a family often look for young Ethiopian women from their home communities to be their wives (Kefale & Mohammed, 2015). Prospective wives may be selected by the migrant himself, often former girlfriends, by his family members at origin or with the help of 'Lambemancho', marriage mediators who often provide their services in areas of high migration along the Southern Route. They are usually hired by the prospective groom or his family to assist in selecting a suitable bride and help make the marriage arrangements (Candido et al., 2016).

The lines between migration brokers and marriage mediators are often blurred. Arrangements range from marriages that are fully arranged by the bride's family, who are often hoping to improve their economic situation through the bride price and sometimes marry off daughters who have not yet reached the age of 18 years, to arrangements where the bride and groom have voluntarily chosen each other (Candido et al., 2016). **However, female FGD respondents in Misha unanimously agreed that the nature of these arranged marriages was shifting:** *"Previously, marriage was mostly arranged by the parents of the prospective husband when the migrant asked his family to find him a wife. They would look for a girl with good behaviour and whose family has a good social and economic status. The family would then give the name of that girl to their son so he could start the process to get a marriage visa. Nowadays, due to social media, the girls in the community and the boys in South Africa often communicate online and many initiative marriage arrangements themselves. There are also brokers who are commissioned by migrants in South Africa to select a wife for them."* All but two FGD respondents in Misha reported having selected their own husbands.

The journeys of women travelling to South Africa for marriage are organized and paid for by the prospective groom or his family in Ethiopia. After the marriage is arranged by the family or couple and approved by their families, the visa is processed by the prospective husband and the broker. FGD participants in Misha reported that they neither knew how the brokers and their husbands organized their journeys, nor how much they were paying or when they would travel. Despite their varying degrees of agency in the migration process, participants emphasized that women who are selected for marriage migration to South Africa are considered more privileged than those who migrate to Saudi Arabia to work as domestic workers and most participants did not expect any difficulties in South Africa once they arrive at destination. One participant, however, expressed her fear around migrating to marry a man she did not know: *"I am scared to migrate. What if my husband abuses me after I get there? I have no friends in South Africa who I could talk to about my suffering, and I have nowhere to live other than my future husband's house."*

A FGD with female returnees from South Africa, all of whom had migrated for marriage purposes, highlighted that life in South Africa is not always easy for Ethiopian women. All participants had experienced crimes such as violence and robbery and had felt isolated as housewives: *"South Africa is not the best place for female migrants. There are no job opportunities, the only option we had was being a housewife, which is very depressing – spending all day at home taking care of children."* They also reported that even though their husbands were earning enough money to comfortably support them and their families, it had been hard for them to live so far from their homeland: *"Raising a child in South Africa was difficult for me because it was a new environment, a new culture and a different social life for us. After I give birth, I decided to return. Here in Ethiopia, our children will grow up accustomed to their culture and social life."* Despite these challenges, participants stressed that they had been able to support their families back home by improving their houses and by purchasing agricultural inputs such as fertilizer through remittances and have been able to establish small businesses and build houses in Hosaena Town with the money that was earned by their husbands in South Africa.

Although women and girls are not commonly found migrating by land along the Southern Route, qualitative interviews conducted for this study suggest that the number of women migrating south overland from Ethiopia may be increasing. Key Informants suggested that the profiles of migrants along the Southern Route are becoming increasingly varied due to women becoming more educated and employment opportunities for women and girls in Ethiopia being limited.[86]

86 Key Informant 3.

“My uncle tried to go to South Africa but he was caught by police on the way and stayed in prison for six years and had to come back. I would take my chances right now and try to go to South Africa to change my life.

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Key Informants interviewed in Kenya, for example, reported that they had witnessed an inflow of female Ethiopian labour migrants intending to work in Kenya, particularly women from West Arsi and Shashamane in Oromia, who are migrating to Nairobi's Eastleigh area to work as domestic workers or open small businesses, where there is a sizeable diaspora in Eastleigh from these areas supporting this migration.[87]

Key Informants interviewed in Ethiopia and South Africa also suggested that although rare, there are some independent, female migrants in South Africa who are running their own businesses.[88] It therefore seems that women are traveling along the Southern Route for marriage, and to a lesser extent other purposes, albeit in far smaller numbers than men, and using different methods of travel, which may explain why they are so rarely identified moving along this route. A recent IOM (2021a) study found that the women who are not able to fly to South Africa often fly to Mozambique, from where they are then smuggled for a shorter distance to South Africa. This is considered safer and is much faster, allowing women to arrive in South Africa in a few days rather than spending weeks or months on the road.[89]

87 Key Informant 21; Key Informant 36.

88 Key Informant 3; Key Informant 8.

89 Key Informant 2; Key Informant 8.

Decision-making

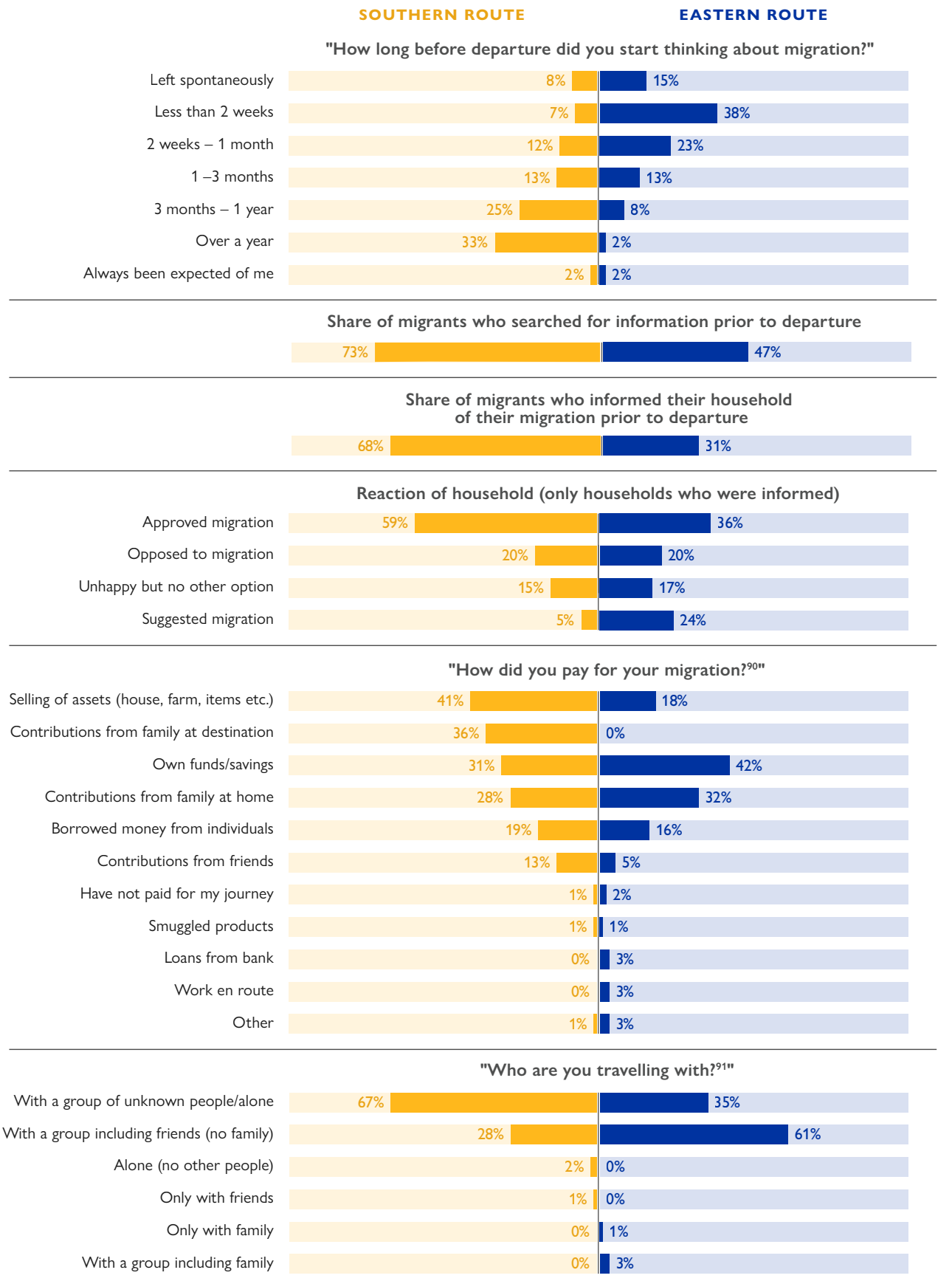
Compared to migrants on the Eastern Route, many of whom left abruptly or within two weeks of first contemplating migration, migrants interviewed in transit in the United Republic of Tanzania along the Southern Route seem to have taken more time to prepare for their journeys, with nearly three out of four reporting that they took the decision to leave at least one month prior departure. Migrants interviewed on the Southern Route were also more likely to have searched for information on migration prior to departure compared to migrants interviewed on the Eastern Route (73% and 47%, respectively).

Migrants on the Southern Route were also more than twice as likely to inform their families of their migration prior to departure (68% and 31%, respectively), which may be related to informed families on the Southern Route approving migration more often than on the Eastern Route (59% and 36%, respectively). Family members of migrants headed towards South Africa were also often financially involved in the migration (36% from family at destination and 28% from family at home), often through the sale of assets. Around one in four migrants on the Southern Route were able to cofinance migration with their own funds (27%), but only 4 per cent reported a self-sustained migration. Nineteen per cent had to borrow money and 13 per cent were supported by friends.

Nearly all migrants were travelling in a group, with only eight individuals stating that they had been travelling alone. Travel companions were most commonly individuals the migrant had not known prior to departure (66%) and, less frequently, friends (31%) or family members (2%).

“I am in fifth grade and have seen people from neighbourhood become rich from going to South Africa and the Gulf countries. I want to be like them. I want to go to Dubai to work.

Figure 11. Characteristics of the journey – Comparison between Southern and Eastern Routes (Data from surveys)



90 In Obock and Bossaso, migrants were asked about family contribution without specification if family was at destination or at home.

91 In Obock and Bossaso, migrants were asked if they were travelling with family, either alone or with a group of people with no specification of friends. It is assumed that when migrants stated that they were travelling "alone", it meant that they were travelling with unknown people, whereas where they stated they were travelling in group without family, they had been travelling with other known people.

“My brother went to South Africa hoping for a better life but he was put in prison in the United Republic of Tanzania on his way there. I also wanted to go but now I prefer to stay here and work as a carpenter, because my brother told me about the problems in South Africa.

PROTECTION RISKS ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

Most of the migration along the Southern Route occurs outside of regulated channels, with migrants travelling by vehicle, in some cases by boat and walking long distances on foot for weeks, and in some cases for months. **These long, overland journeys are very dangerous as migrants are exposed to a multitude of risks including physical hardship and exhaustion, as well as lack of basic needs and services. Migrants along this route are also exposed to various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse by a multitude of different actors they encounter en route.** Almost all migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania for this research reported having received insufficient amounts of food, water and other basic needs during their journey (98%). The insufficient provision of basic needs including food, water, health care and sanitation amenities during the journey is not only physically challenging but also heightens migrants' risk of disease.

The conditions and method of travel along this route also pose significant threat to migrants' well-being. **Intensified border controls and the proliferation of routes designed to circumvent checkpoints and detection by authorities, such as the maritime route between Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, have led to unsafe smuggling practices such as transporting migrants in airless fuel tankers and shipping containers, travelling long distances in unroadworthy and overloaded vehicles without stopping, oftentimes at night, circumventing checkpoints on foot across rough terrain and spending nights outside in forests, national parks and other areas with dangerous wildlife.**[92] Such rerouting and unsafe transportation practices exposes migrants to great risk such as drowning at sea and asphyxiation in containers, several incidents of which have been reported along this route.

The so-called 'safe houses' along the route where smugglers hold the migrants at various transit points are reportedly often overcrowded, unhygienic and lacking in basic water and sanitation facilities. As such, respondents reported that the transmission of communicable diseases during migrants' stay in such locations is a common concern: *"The cases we have intercepted have been stuck in safe houses in a very crowded manner and the conditions in which they are held tend to be quite unhygienic. I've seen instances where there has been a breakout of cholera and similar diseases and the migrants had not received any medical care or treatment. Many also show signs of malnutrition, especially those who have been kept in confinement for a long time while smugglers wait for their families to send money for them to continue their journeys."*[93]

> *"Migrants are particularly vulnerable in Saadani National Park. It has a lot of wild animals and there have been several times when we have intercepted groups of migrants abandoned by their smugglers in that park. Once they have been abandoned, they don't have many other options other than surrendering themselves to the authorities. By the time we find them they are often very weak and have not eaten for several days. We have also had instances where migrants have been attacked by wild animals in this park and abandoned by their smugglers because of their injuries. Migrants are also vulnerable due to the way they are transported, hidden in tankers transporting fuel. It is easy for them to suffocate and die in these tankers and we have had incidents where migrants died of suffocation.*

Due to the many border crossings and the long distances travelled along the Southern Route, migrants rely heavily on smugglers who often extort migrants along the way. Of the migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania, all but one reported having travelled with the help of at least one broker and 79 per cent had had their journey facilitated by additional brokers and smugglers en route, the vast majority of whom had not been aware that they would be moving with the help of multiple facilitators when they were organizing their journeys. The more actors are involved in a movement, the higher the risk of extortion, as each new encounter can expose migrants to additional payments.

Extortion and deception are commonly reported. Brokers and smugglers also often withheld, misinformed or deceived migrants. Around one in four migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania reported having been asked to make payments to brokers during the journey that they had not anticipated prior to departure (24%). Key informants reported that some brokers along

92 Key Informant 1; Key Informant 2; Key Informant 12; Key Informant 29; Key Informant 30; Key Informant 38; Key Informant 39; Key Informant 42.

93 Key Informant 32.

this route deceive migrants by requiring they pay half of their journey upfront and the other half upon arrival, but once the migrants arrive in Kenya they are told their journey will not continue until their families send the remaining payment including additional charges for each day they stay in the so-called 'safehouse' until their families pay for them to be released.[94] Abandonment of migrants by smugglers is also common along this route, particularly in border zones and near police checkpoints. This often happens when smugglers feel like they may be in danger of being apprehended.[95]

> *"Sometimes migrants are abandoned by their smugglers after leaving Moyale and although they may have already paid the full amount, the smugglers do not return their money back. Some of the migrants have sold their assets, they sell all they have in Ethiopia to be smuggled to South Africa. And when they are abandoned and then caught in transit, they are left with nothing. I remember a case where a migrant told me his friend had committed suicide because he sold everything in Ethiopia and everything that he had was given to the smuggler who abandoned him.*[96]

Data collected for this research also reveals that various forms of violence and abuse, including but not limited to torture, physical assault, psychological and emotional abuse, and sexual violence perpetrated by smugglers and other actors is rampant, with 68 per cent of migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania reporting having experienced at least one such incident. Furthermore, 3 per cent of migrants including children stated that they had either been victims of abduction or kidnapping, or had experienced exploitation through forced labour, **a clear indication of how smuggling of migrants can result in trafficking in persons along this route.**[97] Key Informants in both Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania recounted incidents where migrants were coerced into working against their will under exploitative circumstances in order to settle additional payments. Several Key Informants also highlighted that transit through Malawi and Mozambique is particularly precarious as armed, criminal groups prey on smugglers and migrants and force them to pay bribes and, in some cases, force them to work in order to be allowed to pass through their territories.[98]

Around 20 per cent of migrants reported having had to pay bribes during their journey and 9 per cent reported incidents involving theft or extortion, mostly by smugglers who were reported to have used violence to steal migrants' assets, most commonly their phones. **Corruption through the payment of bribes to facilitate travel seems to be widespread along the Southern Route, particularly in border areas and at checkpoints** (ACMS, 2018; IOM, 2021a; MMC, 2017; Kefale & Mohammed, 2015). In 2017, MMC found that the number of reported bribes was larger than the sample of respondents, indicating that most migrants had in fact paid multiple bribes to avoid arrest. Moreover, the fear of arrest puts additional psychological pressure on migrants who are already travelling under difficult circumstances, as arrest in most transit countries means detention and can result in long prison sentences for illegal entry and, ultimately, deportation back to Ethiopia and sunk costs associated with a failed migration (Kefale & Mohammed, 2015).

Migrants intercepted while migrating irregularly along the Southern Route are often detained in transit countries such as Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique where they are often treated under criminal law as illegal aliens. As a result of border patrol and immigration law enforcement by the United Republic of Tanzania, many migrants are detained and tried under the Immigration Act of the United Republic of Tanzania and its clauses pertaining to irregular entry. In some instances, migrants are detained for a long time prior to trial due to bottlenecks in the judiciary.

While the exact number of migrants in detention along the Southern Route is difficult to ascertain, IOM has continuously conducted verification visits to different detention facilities throughout the United Republic of

94 Key Informant 3; Key Informant 41.

95 Key Informant 21; Key Informant 27.

96 Key Informant 21.

97 Migrant smuggling is defined as the intentional organization or facilitation of the irregular movement of persons across state borders with their consent in exchange of financial or other gain. In this sense, smuggling is distinct from trafficking, which is aimed at the exploitation of the victim and involves physical or psychological violence, deception and coercion. However, the distinction between these two types of crime can become blurred in practice and often smuggled migrants also become victims of violence or other forms of exploitation, as it is in this case. Of all individuals interviewed, only one stated that he would recommend migration to friends or family members.

98 Key Informant 5; Key Informant 9; Key Informant 22.

A group of women in Misha Woreda preparing enset.
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Tanzania where migrants are held. Between 2019 and 2022, IOM counted 4,054 migrants during such visits. In 2022 alone, IOM verified the presence of around 780 Ethiopians in detention centres in six regions of the United Republic of Tanzania, including 17 minors. However, it was estimated in 2022 that their actual number was around 5,000, as not all prisons holding Ethiopian migrants were visited.[99] In February 2023, Vita Kawawa, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Service Standing Committee of the Tanzanian Parliament stated that there were 7,493 migrants in prisons in the country.[100] The vast majority can be assumed to be migrants who were traveling along the Southern Route. According to the Tanzanian Department of Prisons, there was a total prison population of 32,146 in 2022. Therefore, approximately 23 per cent of inmates in the United Republic of Tanzania are foreign nationals. Since January 2021, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has consistently emphasized that they do not want to keep migrants in prisons and would be eager to release them, including pardoning those who have not finished their sentences, on condition that they are supported to return to their countries of origin. In July 2022, Ethiopia announced that it would conduct a repatriation operation to return around 12,000 Ethiopians facing dire situations abroad, including from the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi along the Southern Route. Return efforts have reportedly reduced the number of Ethiopians in detention in Malawi and Zambia (MMC, 2022).

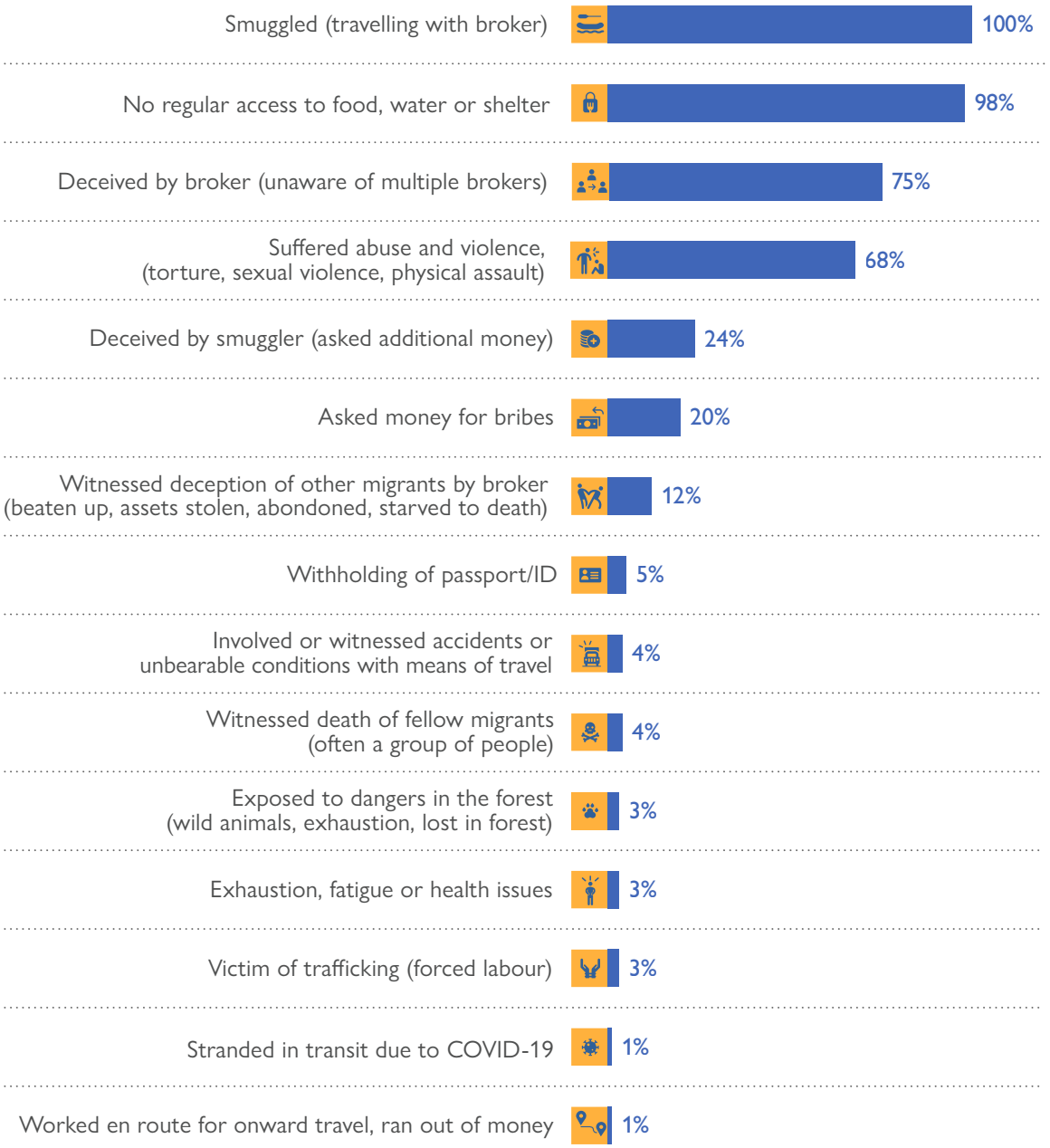
> *"I was imprisoned in Zimbabwe and suffered severe mental trauma. I was beaten by police in the prison, was not given food for three to four days and they mocked me due to my hunger and poverty. That time was really painful. After I experienced the adventures of migration and the torture in the prison, I know that migration is awful and I do not wish for any human to migrate.*[101]

99 IOM, 2021a.

100 https://thechanzo.com/2023/02/07/the-chanzo-morning-briefing-february-7-2023/.

101 FGD Participant in Misha.

Figure 12. Protection concerns (Multiple responses possible, data from surveys)



"My first son died in a car accident in South Africa. Even though I lost my son, I would encourage people to do their best to try to go to South Africa because everyone has a different story. Our life has changed a lot because four of my children and my husband lived in South Africa.

MISSING MIGRANTS ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

Migrant deaths along the Southern Route are unfortunately not uncommon. Eighteen migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania reported to have witnessed the death of fellow migrants – sometimes two or three people, and in one case, '15 out of a group of 60 people'. Migrants were reportedly left behind when sick, starved to death or killed during incidents. Three people reported that migrants were allegedly shot by national police forces, possibly referring to a single incident that occurred in proximity of the Moyale border point. Several families interviewed in the context of the Missing Migrants Project (MMP) also confirmed having lost at least one family member along the Southern Route, suggesting that this route may have become more violent, exploitative and perilous in recent years.[102] **Incidents of mass deaths along this route have also been more frequently reported in recent years,** such as the discovery of 27 Ethiopian bodies found abandoned in Chongwe Ngwerere, Zambia and a mass grave holding at least 25 Ethiopian migrants in Mzimba, Malawi in 2022, or the death of 64 Ethiopian men who died of asphyxiation in a sealed shipping container on the back of a truck intercepted in Mozambique in 2019 (IOM, 2022b).

Getting accurate information about missing migrants is very challenging as sources reporting on migrant deaths and disappearances continue to be scarce and most deaths occur during irregular transit in remote areas such as forests or at sea where they are hidden from authorities and thus never reported or recorded. Nevertheless, some efforts to keep track of deaths and disappearances of Ethiopian migrants do exist. In 2021, a labour and migration survey conducted by the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) in urban and rural areas of all regions of Ethiopia found that close to 51,000 Ethiopian migrants have gone missing since 2016 and according to the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BOLSA) in Southern Ethiopia, 4,265 deaths and 1,707 disappearances of migrants from the Southern zones of Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro were recorded along the Southern route to South Africa between 2012 and 2019.

102 IOM has tracked migrant deaths and disappearances since 2014 through its Missing Migrants Project, to better understand the challenges migrants face on their journeys, identify hotspots where many migrants go missing and better inform policy and humanitarian needs. Data were collected from testimonies of families and survivors in Hadiya and Kembata Tembaro districts and reports of Ethiopian embassies along the southern route, then were gathered by BOLSA officials together with local offices of IOM (Mengiste, 2021).

"My cousin Yosef was 18 years old when he died in Tanzania on the road to South Africa. He died in a truck because he could not breathe. I've heard of many people dying on the way to South Africa so I never want to go there.

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ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION: LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

This chapter investigates how East and Horn of Africa migrants experience life in South Africa, the risks they face and the importance of the remittances they are sending home

ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION: LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Drawing on data collected from Key Informants in South Africa, through literature review and from surveys with households in Misha,[103] this chapter explores migrants' arrival and living conditions in South Africa, including the challenges and insecurities they face and how they navigate them through strong social networks. The chapter also looks at the importance of remittances sent from South Africa.

The United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) (2020) estimates the stock of Ethiopian migrants living in South Africa at around 44,000 individuals. However, figures are thought to be much larger due to methodological complexities involved in estimating migration and the high prevalence of irregular migration. South Africa has experienced recurring incidences of xenophobia in recent years, which contributes to migrants not identifying themselves. In 2021, a labour and migration survey conducted by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency suggested that the number of 'recent' migrants in South Africa was around 110,000 individuals,[104] for a "potential" projected volume of remittances to Ethiopia of around USD 87 million – around 80 per cent of which is occurring informally.[105] Most migrants are settled in Durban, Pretoria or Johannesburg – following in the footsteps of early pioneer migrants who found success working in small-scale retail business (ACMS, 2019). These three cities are among the largest economic hubs in South Africa. Johannesburg and Pretoria are both in the province of Gauteng, which is considered the largest economic hub in the country (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Data collected from migrants in transit in the United Republic of Tanzania confirm that most migrants were headed to Gauteng province in South Africa, although almost half of those interviewed were unaware of the specific destination they were headed towards.

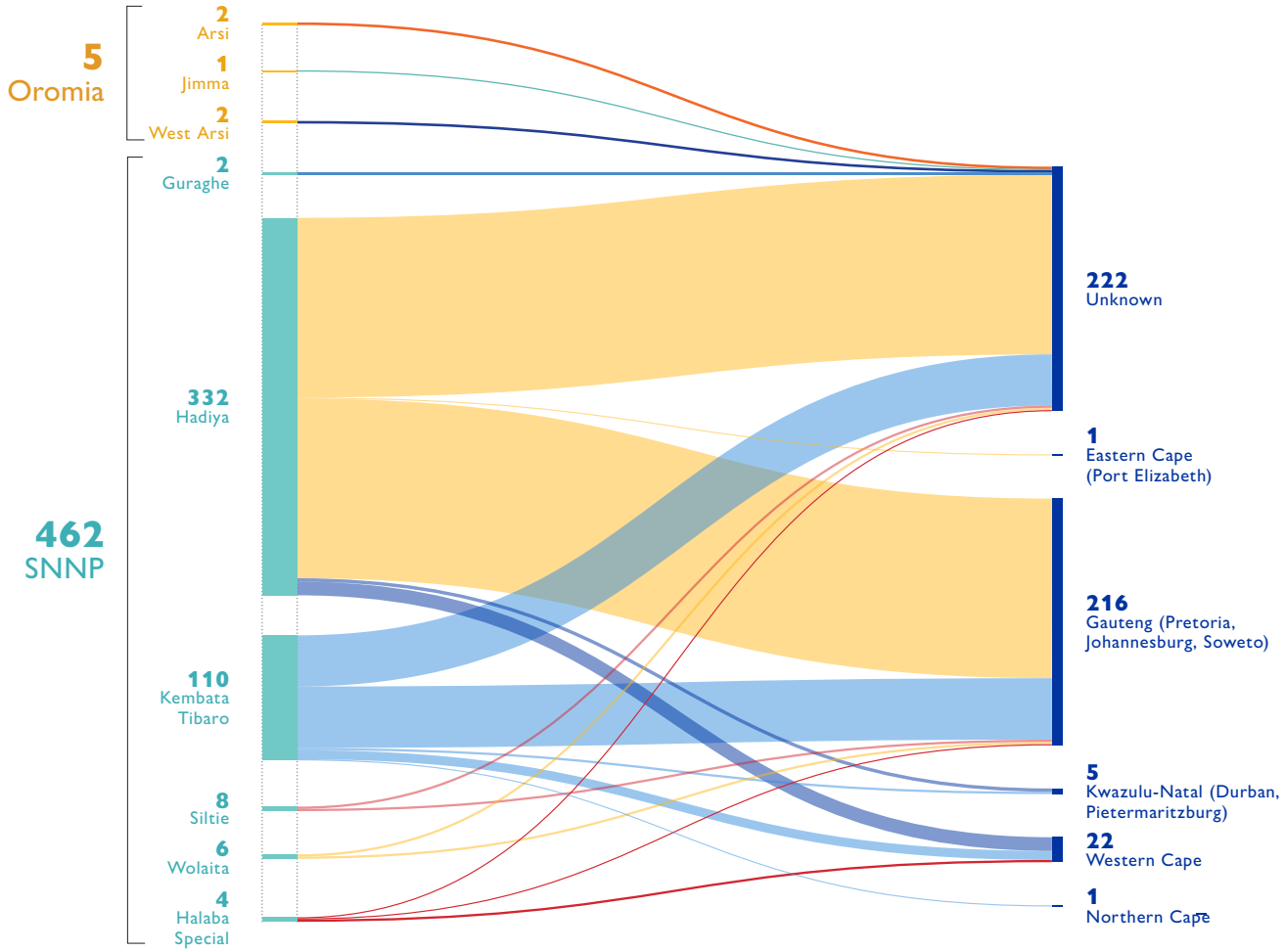
Other EHoA nationals are also present in South Africa, in particular Somalis, Eritreans and Kenyans. Somali migrants in South Africa have mainly settled in Gauteng province, in particular in the Mayfair area of Johannesburg, Pretoria West and Durban in Kwazulu-Natal province. Somalis in South Africa often own or run convenience stores, locally known as 'spaza shops' in townships (Uwimpuhwe & Ruiters, 2018). They also occupy a trading niche in the import, resale and retail of clothing, fabric and other goods, where they make use of organized business networks that allow them to cooperate to buy goods in bulk that are then sold by Somali shopkeepers in smaller amounts at discounted prices. This process allows them to sell goods at considerably lower prices compared to other shopkeepers in the same location. This business practice has fuelled local shopkeepers' perception that Somalis are attracting their customers, which in turn has provoked xenophobic attacks (Waiganjo, 2017).

103 More information on the methodology used for this study can be found in Annex I.

104 The survey covered urban and rural areas of all Ethiopian regions except for Tigray and collected information on migrants who left the country after January 2016 ("recent" migrant) (CSA, 2021).

105 This figure is based on estimates of the number of migrants (irregular and regular) in South Africa as provided by the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), combined with the estimates of the level of remittances individuals would be sending using the data of returnees from Saudi Arabia as a proxy (73% send around USD 1,080 per year) and comparing to the World Bank Bilateral Matrix formal remittance estimates to gather the extent of the informal flow. Using this method, the potential annual remittances sent by Ethiopians in South Africa can vary between USD 51 million (if the lower estimate given by MOFA is used, that is, 65,000 Ethiopians living in South Africa) and USD 158 million (if the upper estimate is used, that is, 200,000 Ethiopians living in South Africa). However, the World Bank's Bilateral Matrix data suggests they are closer to USD 15 million, which means that informal remittances vary between USD 36 million and USD 143 million. Using the same method, remittances from Saudi Arabia could be as much as between USD 394 million and USD 590 million annually, most of which occurring via informal channels - the World Bank only records USD 148 million (IOM, 2017).

Figure 13. Region and zone of origin in Ethiopia and region of destination in South Africa
(Number of migrants interviewed in the United Republic of Tanzania)



"I lost my husband five years ago in a xenophobic attack in South Africa. He lived there for four years before he was killed and was working at his brother's clothing shop. To be honest, whatever money he was making in South Africa and sending to us, was not enough to take care of our children. I always tell my neighbours and friends not to go to South Africa. For some people, going to South Africa will change their lives, but for me, I lost my husband. After he died, I was forced to take care of our six children on my own.

ERITREAN MIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA

Eritrean migration to South Africa began in 2000, when the Eritrean and South African governments agreed to send over 600 Eritrean students from the University of Asmara to South Africa to study, under the condition that these young professionals return to Eritrea once their studies were finished (Mekonnen & Abraha, 2009). However, due to the political situation in Eritrea at the time, most students did not return to Eritrea and settled in South Africa where they applied for asylum and resettlement to countries in the global North. This initial wave of Eritrean migration to South Africa and the establishment of an Eritrean diaspora in the country led to the migration of friends and family members left behind, who settled in South Africa starting small businesses and/or applied for refugee resettlement. Sparked by the success of these pioneer migrants, the favourable asylum application process in South Africa and the hope of resettlement to the global North, many Eritreans have travelled overland along the Southern Route to apply for asylum in South Africa over the past two decades.[106]

> *Eritreans migrate to South Africa to apply for asylum and resettlement because it is an easy country to make a living in by opening businesses and running your own store. Sometimes, when you're going to another country, you need to wait a lot of years for the resettlement process to go through. In South Africa you can work, so it's easier for refugees to wait here as you can just run businesses and make a living and you can send money to your family and children back home. So Eritrean youth mostly see South Africa as a springboard to Europe, especially to the United States and Canada.*[107]

Initially, most Eritrean migrants moving along the Southern Route traveled via Sudan to Ethiopia, although the opening of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2018 facilitated movem`ent along the Southern Route, as evidenced by the spike in Eritreans tracked at the Moyale border point in the months following the agreement. Most Eritreans in South Africa have settled in urban centres such as Johannesburg, Cape town, Durban and Pretoria, which is in line with migrants moving to centres of economic hubs.

106 Key Informant 19; Key Informant 26.

107 Key Informant 19.

"I worked as a babysitter in Saudi Arabia for six years. I used to work all day and night, and was never able to get enough sleep or eat when I was hungry. They used to pour water on my bed if I was tired or pour water on me, straight from the fridge. I came back to Ethiopia because my mental health was not good. When I came back to Ethiopia, I got married and now have a 3-year-old son. I am much happier here.

SEEKING ASYLUM IN SOUTH AFRICA

In addition to the economic opportunities migrants have in South Africa, the country's liberal asylum system and non-encampment policy allowed migrants to regularize themselves and exercise rights in South Africa that would not be granted to them in many other countries. With the fall of the apartheid regime in the early 1990s, the African National Congress led the introduction of progressive asylum laws that allowed asylum seekers to study and/or earn a living while their claims are being processed (ACMS, 2019). Moreover, deportations from South Africa to Ethiopia and Somalia are very rare compared to deportations from other destinations such as Saudi Arabia, although there has been a rise in deportations from South Africa in recent years. The asylum regime is not camp based, granting asylum seekers freedom of movement as well as access to health and education services. Some migrants therefore claim asylum in order to regularize their status and gain access to services. In 2017, MMC found that nearly all irregular arrivals from Ethiopia and Somalia were applying for refugee status despite knowing that most claims would be rejected, as it allowed them to study, work and access social services during the long period it took for their claims to be processed. Many migrants thus reside in a state of 'permanent temporality', which some may endure for decades (Netshikulwe et al., 2022).

Although South Africa offers asylum seekers and refugees a range of rights compatible with international human rights and refugee law, the lived realities of migrants and asylum seekers in the country suggest issues with the implementation of these rights (Khan & Rayner, 2020). South Africa's asylum system has been under strain for many years, with huge applicant numbers and a massive backlog in cases, meaning that applicants may have to wait for years to receive a decision on their case and to renew their permits (Estifanos & Zack, 2020; ACMS, 2019). **A study conducted by IOM (2021c) found that most migrant workers interviewed in South Africa did not hold a legal status due to lengthy processing times, despite most having tried to obtain such documentation.** South Africa's Auditor General estimates a backlog of seven years in processing initial

asylum applications, although many wait longer. Claims are typically rejected, with a 96 per cent rejection rate, which has created a huge backlog in the appeals system as well. Without being able to access protection under the Refugees Act due to capacity constraints in the provision of official documentation, migrant workers are unable to fully exercise their rights and are often left to rely on themselves and their community (Khan & Rayner, 2020). Moreover, this leaves considerable space for bribery and corruption and the targeting of migrant workers who lack appropriate documentation and business-related paperwork is reportedly rampant (ACMS, 2019).

The South Africa Refugee Amendment Act, which came into effect 1 January 2020, has placed further requirements on asylum seekers and tightened the administrative rules on applying for asylum. The Act establishes strict procedural limitations, including stipulations on how the asylum seeker entered the country and the timeframe in which they present themselves to a Refugee Reception Office. Asylum seekers must report themselves within five days of their arrival in South Africa or risk exclusion from refugee status; those who enter South Africa irregularly, which is the case for the majority of migrants and asylum seekers, risk exclusion as well (IOM, 2021a). Asylum seekers are also banned from engaging in political activity in their countries of origin and South Africa, such as voting in their home countries, a violation of which results in a loss of refugee status. Additional grounds for loss of refugee status include seeking consular services such as requesting a birth certificate (Freedom House, 2020).

EMPLOYMENT AND INSECURITY

As a more affluent African country, South Africa offers significant economic opportunity at decent salaries for Ethiopians and Somalis who successfully reach their destination and finding employment is facilitated by robust diaspora networks in the country. Key Informants interviewed for this study spoke of the 'South African Dream', wherein migrants can fairly easily enter the informal labour market, and many achieve success doing so. **Most Ethiopians and Somalis work in the informal sector as they often lack the refugee status, residence and work permits necessary to work in the formal sector** (ACMS, 2019). The changes in the asylum system, which had been key to obtaining permission to reside and work in South Africa for migrant workers, have further compounded the situation of many migrants residing in South Africa without a legal right to do so. A recent study by Netshikulwe et al. (2022) found that Ethiopian migrants are rarely able to access employment outside of niche, Ethiopian business enclaves, due to lack of documentation and language barriers. Nonetheless, considerable opportunities exist in retail and other small businesses, including street vending, hawking, petty trading and importing of goods.

In the inner city of Johannesburg, Ethiopians have established a retail enclave called 'Jeppe', colloquially known as the 'Ethiopian Quarter', where Ethiopian business entrepreneurs sell low-cost Chinese clothing, shoes, homeware and other goods.[108] Jeppe is a blooming, commercial area that has grown over the past 20 years, from underutilized office buildings into a plethora of shopping centres housing micro-businesses including small shops, stalls and restaurants (Zack & Estifanos, 2015). Jeppe spans across 16 city blocks and hundreds of Ethiopian vendors sell their goods there (Zack & Govender, 2019). In 2017, Johannesburg's Inner City Partnership estimated that 7 billion Rand (around USD 380 million) were being earned in profit annually in Jeppe, around twice the turnover of Africa's biggest shopping centre.[109] According to research conducted by IOM (2021c), Ethiopian migrants were ranked the seventh top migrant business owners in the city of Johannesburg.

Ethiopian traders usually arrive in Jeppe with limited funds but are given short-term shelter and capital to purchase items to sell from sponsoring relatives or individuals connected through shared identities and hometowns. Migrants thus often start out as street vendors and work their way up towards larger businesses by becoming shop assistants until they can afford a small retail store of their own (The Johannesburg Inner City Partnership, 2017). Customers are often intermediary buyers of goods such as hawkers or convenience store owners who go on to sell the goods in townships, smaller towns and rural areas of South Africa (Zack & Govender, 2019). The migrant businesses also create employment in the settlements for other foreign nationals and 17 per cent of South African citizens claimed to have secured employment through the informal enterprises by migrants in the City of Johannesburg (IOM, 2021c).

108 Key Informant 10.

109 Key Informant 10.

Many Ethiopians working in Jeppe and similar spaces work under highly precarious conditions due to them not having a proper legal status and documentation, which also results in their businesses having to operate illegally due to the non-registration of businesses. Pressures include landlords charging high rents due to the informality of the businesses, strict operational guidelines, harassment and extortion by officials threatening to expose them and high crime rates in the area. A study conducted in Jeppe in 2017 found that 99 per cent of vendors reported that the police were threatening their business and 70 per cent reported threats posed to their business by criminals, while around two thirds of vendors reported having been assaulted or attacked in the neighbourhood in which they work and 38 per cent reported having to regularly gift the police and other officials. Almost half of the respondents reported having had to close their shops at some point in recent years due to xenophobic attacks (The Johannesburg Inner City Partnership, 2017).

Insecurity and precarity also characterize the experience of Ethiopian and Somali migrants working outside of co-ethnic agglomerates such as Jeppe and particularly for those working in townships where unemployment rates and crime rates are high. Ethiopian and Somali migrants have become dominant actors in the kiosk (Spaza shop) business, where migrants contend with local vendors who perceive them as competitors. **Violence, extortion by gangs and officials and many other threats to their security are reportedly rampant, while migrants have limited access to state protection and legal recourse, which makes them vulnerable to systematic exploitation by criminal gangs under the guise of 'protection fees'** (Netshikulwe et al., 2022).

Irregular migrants also have no legal entitlement to their own shops due to their lack of documentation, which is a prerequisite for legal recognition of property (Netshikulwe, 2022). **One of the main issues faced by undocumented migrant workers is that they cannot open bank accounts in South Africa, which renders them dependent on cash and highly exposed to violent crime** (ACMS, 2019). An IOM (2021c) study found that most migrant workers in Johannesburg did not have a legal status allowing them to legally run a business or open a bank account in South Africa, with only 6 per cent having business permits and 12 per cent of respondents having work permits, and because of their lack of documentation had to pay bribes to officials and community leaders to continue operating. Despite all the challenges migrants face working in South Africa, interviews with households in Misha woreda suggest that most migrants are successful in securing employment and remitting home. In 94 per cent of households at least one migrant managed to arrive at destination and in 77 per cent of households at least one migrant was able to send remittances. A comparison of data on work at destination between the Eastern and Southern Routes clearly highlights how most migrants in South Africa own small businesses (87% compared to 1% along the Eastern Route), while other forms of labour such as domestic work are only common along the Eastern Route.

A group from Misha gathering to watch an English Premier League football game.

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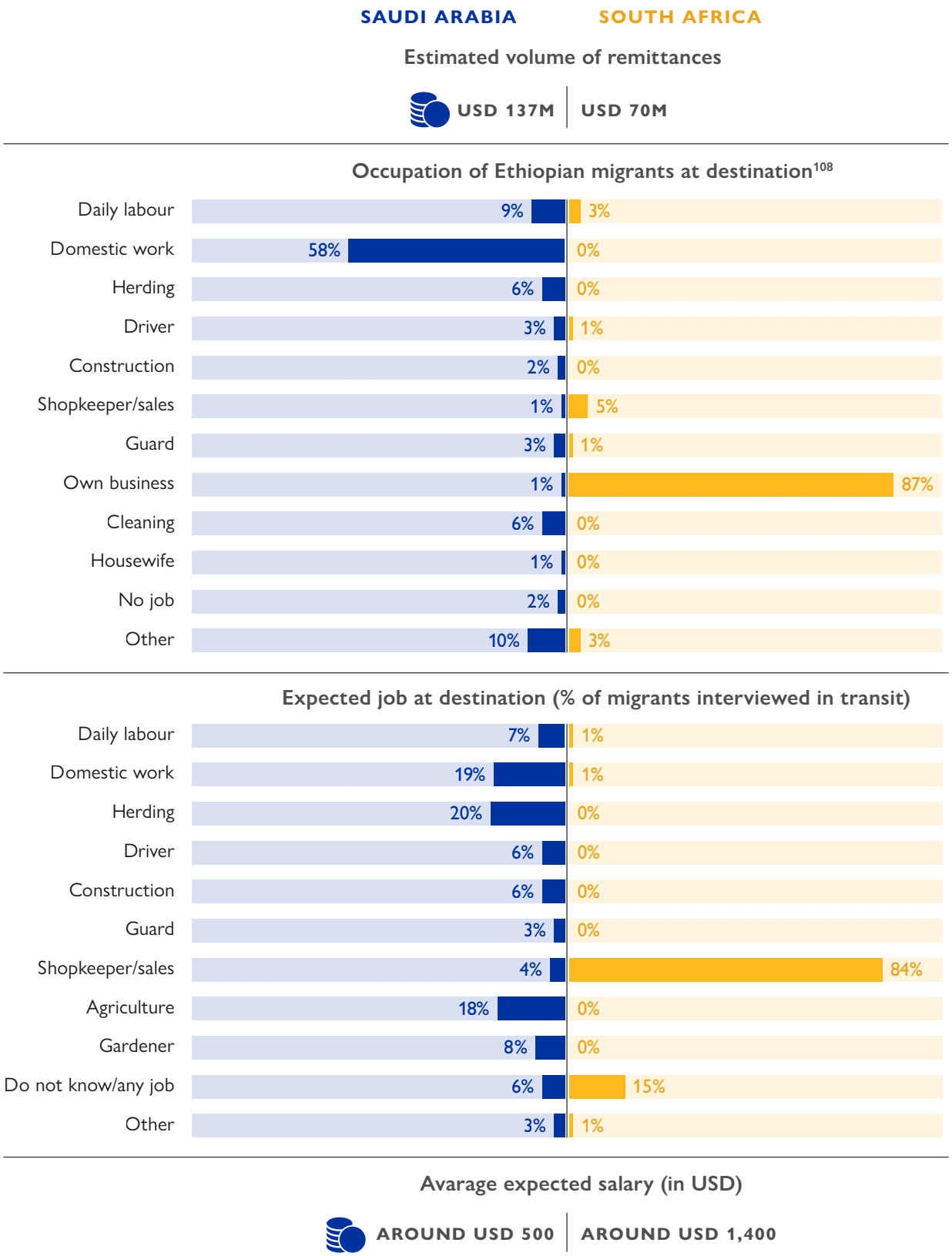
Figure 14. Comparison of migrants work in Saudi Arabia and South Africa
(Multiple responses possible, data from surveys)



PROTECTION RISKS AND XENOPHOBIA

In addition to the challenges migrants face in documenting their status and obtaining paperwork to regularize their stay and work in South Africa, evidence suggest that migrants face several other protection challenges. Settlement and integration processes of new arrivals are influenced by village-based networks, ethnic origins and friendship or kinship ties, which provide food, shelter, contacts and job information to new migrants. Newly arrived migrants (also known as 'borders' in this setting) are either guaranteed a job working in their host's business or provided with initial capital to start their own business. However, the relationship between borders and their bosses usually contains an element of profit making and exploitation of the border (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). **New arrivals who have had their journeys sponsored by businessmen in the diaspora sometimes work as indentured labourers, paying off their debts for many years and often working risky jobs under precarious conditions.** Such exploitation of migrants by migrants can take on different forms, with a recent IOM (2021a) study finding that some migrants reported having been held captive in containers on the peripheries of urban areas until they had worked long enough to pay off their 'loans'.

Moreover, many Ethiopian migrants arrive in South Africa unable to speak English or other South African languages, which makes it harder for them to navigate the complexities of the informal labour market and mediate their relationships with officials (Estifanos, 2017). Migrants also often work and live in neighbourhoods with very high crime rates, and their lack of access to the formal banking system means they have few safe places to keep their earnings, making them particularly vulnerable to robbery and violent crime (Zewdu, 2018).

Moreover, rising xenophobia has led to migrants being scapegoated for a multitude of social and economic problems in the country.[111] In 2008, 62 people were killed and 150,000 displaced in the first big wave of xenophobic violence. Since 2008, periodic waves of xenophobic attacks have erupted in South Africa, most notably in 2015 and 2019, when mobs of rioters across the country harassed and attacked non-nationals, blaming them for crime and unemployment among other things. In September 2019 in Kwazulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape, hundreds organized a shutdown, closing roads, schools and businesses and calling for all foreigners to leave South Africa. The shutdown turned violent and angry mobs looted and torched shops, malls and homes rented by foreigners (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional economic instability to South Africa, which led to unrest in 2020 and 2021, during which migrant workers and their businesses were targeted. One community leader interviewed by IOM (2021a) in Durban estimated that around 80 per cent of Ethiopians he knew had had their shops vandalized, looted or torched in recent riots. This sentiment of growing intolerance and hostility towards migrants is also documented by Mlilo and Misago (2019) who recorded 529 xenophobic incidents of violence between 1994 and 2018, resulting in 309 deaths, 901 physical assaults, 2,193 shops looted and over 100,000 people displaced.[112]

NAVIGATING INSECURITY THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS

Ethiopian migrants in South Africa are able to cope with the exclusion and marginalization posed to many of them by their lack of legal status, precarious working conditions in the informal sector and xenophobic violence due to their strong communal bonding, robust networks and the social capital they can draw on when they are hit by adversity. Migrant workers have formed tight-knit communities in South Africa, wherein they take care of themselves and each other and recreate social services they are unable to access in South Africa due to their undocumented status (Netshikulwe et al., 2022). When a migrant falls sick or is robbed, they can rely on the extensive network of co-nationals to fundraise for them or provide informal loan services based on trust (IOM, 2021a). Studies have also shown that Ethiopians bring a strong sense of tradition and recreate an Ethiopian way of life in South Africa through social institutions, in particular through 'Idir' and 'Mahber', as well as through churches and social clubs (Estifanos & Zack, 2020). Both 'Idir' and 'Mahber' provide for social contributions at times when an individual is in need of support, such as funerals, accidents, illness, damages to property (Idir) and weddings (Mahber).

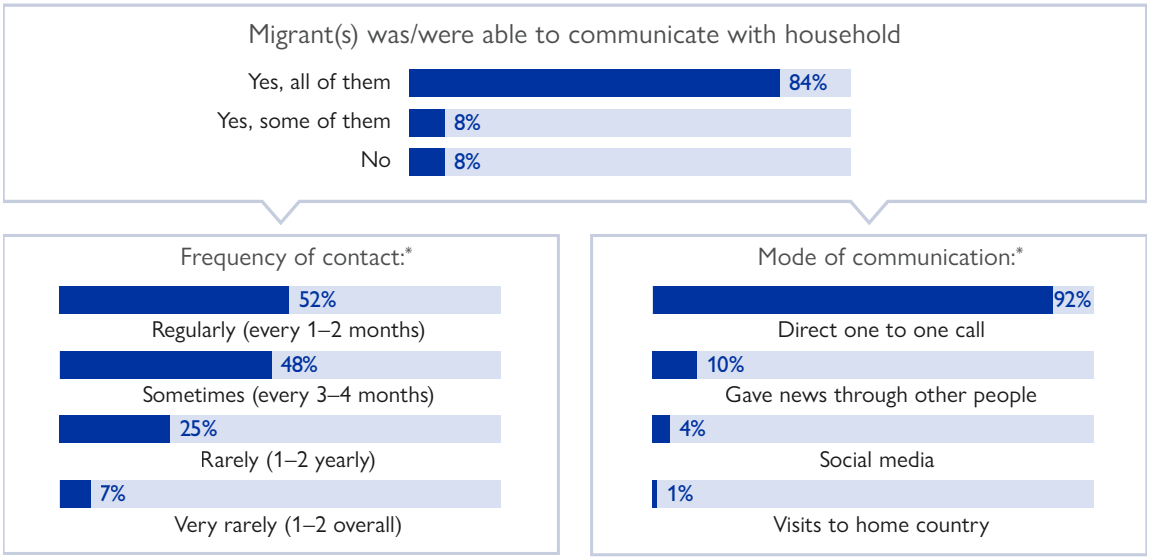
111 Due to an exclusionary immigration law which makes it almost impossible for low-skilled migrants to seek work legally in South Africa, many migrants turn to the asylum system to temporarily regularize their stay. However, the high rate of rejection has fed a narrative that sees migrants as illegitimate claimants with no true protection needs. Ethiopia is among the top five countries of origin of both asylum seekers and documented refugees in South Africa (Khan & Rayner, 2020).

112 The number of incidents is only indicative only of the true extent of the xenophobic violence.

For example, when Ethiopian migrants smuggle in potential wives from Ethiopia, lavish welcome ceremonies and weddings are held during which the community makes monetary contributions, which in some cases are so high that they cover the smuggling fees.[113]

Migrants in South Africa also maintain contact with their families back home and participate in social ceremonies through remittances. Zewdu (2018) found that in the Hadiya and Kembata zones, remittance flows are particularly high during funerals, weddings and Meskel, a major religious holiday in Ethiopia, indicating that Ethiopians in South Africa try to actively maintain family obligations and participate in important social events. When asked about contacts with migrants abroad, households in Misha reported that most migrants took over three months to get in touch with them after leaving home (75%), possibly due to the long travel times and difficulties communicating while in transit. Once at destination, however, most migrants seem to maintain contact with their families at home on a fairly regular basis, mostly through phone calls. Only one household reported that a migrant was able to visit home, likely due to the undocumented status most migrants hold in South Africa, which makes home visits highly challenging as migrants cannot enter and exit the country freely through regular channels.

Figure 15. Occurrence and frequency of contact



* Percentage of households who were able to communicate, multiple response possible in case of multiple migrants

THE IMPORTANCE OF REMITTANCES

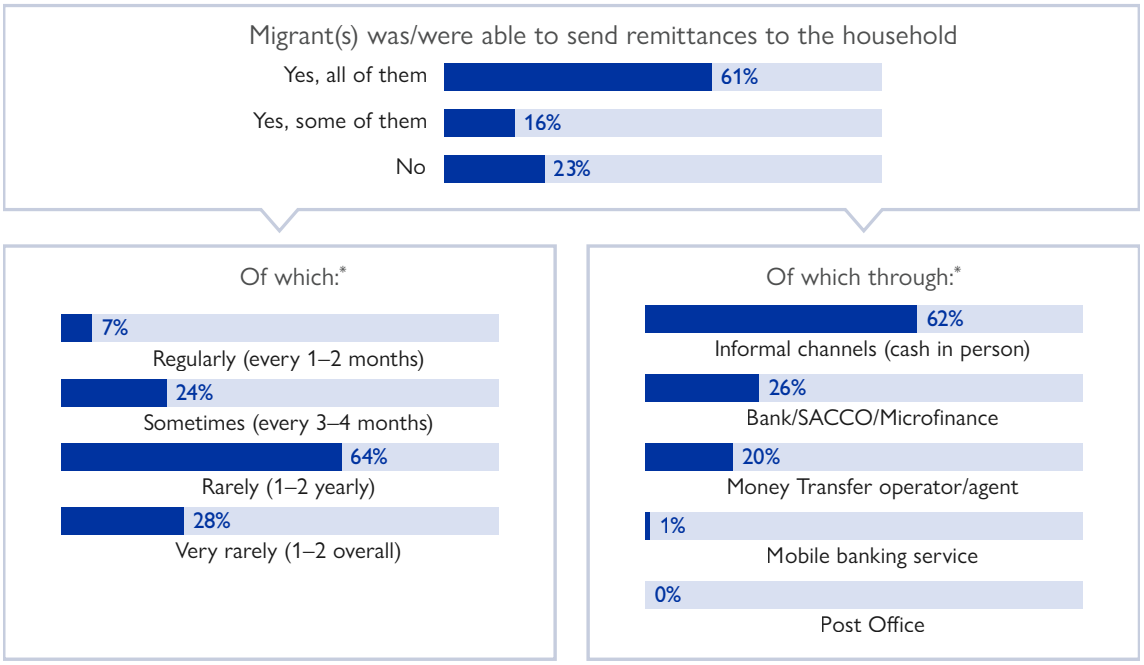
In 2021, a labour migration survey conducted by the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency, estimated a remittance volume of around USD 70 million from migrants living in South Africa. Southern Ethiopia, particularly the Hadiya and Kembata zones have receive a particularly large volume of remittances, evident in the proliferation of banks, businesses, and micro-enterprises in the area and in particular in Hosaena Town. A study conducted by Johannesburg's Inner City Partnership (2017) on migrant businesses in Johannesburg's Ethiopian quarter 'Jeppe' found that 58 per cent of respondents were regularly sending an average of 8,515 Rand (USD 493) home to their families.

Key Informants interviewed in Misha reported that migrants mostly send remittances to their families from South Africa through informal systems such as through brokers and hawala networks, a system of agents in South Africa and Ethiopia. Agents in South Africa collect remittances from migrants and send the money to agents in Addis Ababa through an intricate network of actors including businessmen and airline workers. Once the money arrives with the agent in Addis Ababa, it is changed into Ethiopian Birr before being transferred to local money agents in Hosaena Town, where the recipients of the remittances can collect their money.

113 Key Informant 3.

Surveys conducted in Misha found that most households were able to receive remittances once the migrant arrived at destination (76%), although somewhat sporadically – every three to four months (24%) or once or twice a year (64%). The usage of informal channels outweighed that of formal channels, with only 26 per cent of households receiving remittances through banks, SACCO or microfinance institutions and 20 per cent through money transfer operators/agents, versus 62 per cent getting them through informal channels.

Figure 16. Occurrence and frequency of remittances (Multiple responses possible, data from surveys)



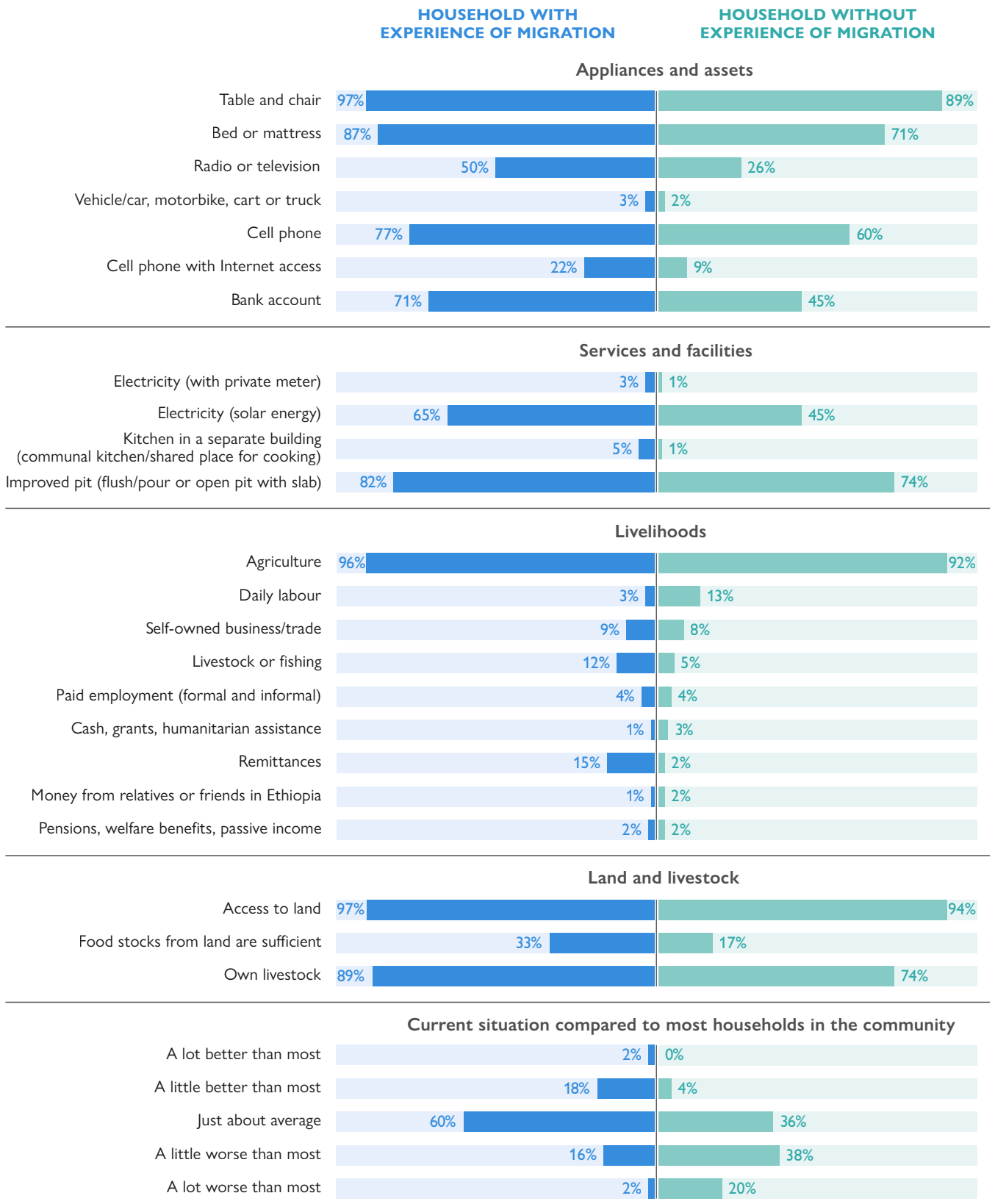
* Percentage of households who were able to communicate, multiple response possible in case of multiple migrants

Although sporadic, remittances provided an important contribution to surveyed households' living conditions: 51 per cent of households receiving remittances rated them as "very important" and 39 per cent as "somewhat important" to their household. Moreover, when comparing migrant and non-migrant households surveyed in Misha, households with migrants and particularly those with more than one migrant[114] display higher standards of living in terms of ownership of household goods, including furniture and electrical appliances (such as radios and televisions). Migration also seems to have an impact on living circumstances, with migrant families reporting upgraded housing (that is, improved sanitation facilities, the usage of a separate kitchen or private meter or solar energy for electricity) more frequently than non-migrant households. Similarly, data on mobile phone and bank account ownership show how around three out of four households with experience of migration own at least one mobile phone (22 per cent have a phone with Internet access, compared to 60% and 9% for non-migrant households).

Migrant households are less likely to rely on daily labour and more likely to rely on remittances as their main source of livelihood compared to their counterparts with no current migrants or returnees (15% versus 2%). They are also more likely to own livestock (89%) and have access to land (97%). Around one third of migrant households reported that food supplies from the land they were cultivating were sufficient for their needs versus 17 per cent of households without a migrant abroad. Remittances have been found to boost agricultural productivity in rural areas as they allow for the purchasing of modern farming technology, fertilizer and high-yield seeds (Estifanos, 2017). At the same time, data suggest that agriculture-dependent households with male migrants find it most challenging to manage the absence of the migrant due the reduction in the household workforce.

114 For further information on the higher success rates of households with migration of multiple members within the same household see the RDH research report on Network Migration and Transnational Ties in Five Communities of High Emigration in Ethiopia.

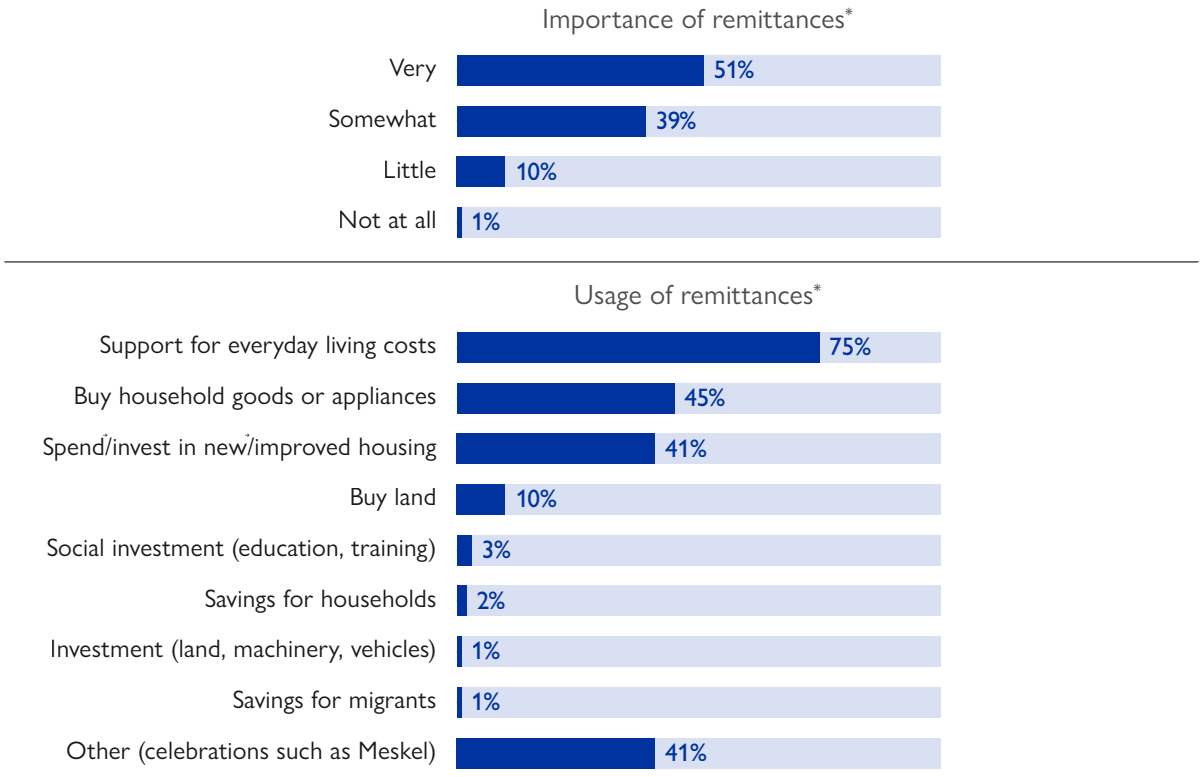
Figure 17. Comparison of household situation between migrant and non-migrant households
(Percentage of all households, data from surveys)



The comparison between migrant and non-migrant households suggests that labour migration to South Africa has impacted the lives of migrants and their families by diversifying income means and is seen as an important livelihood strategy in Misha, where alternative livelihood strategies are insufficient. The majority of parents who participated in FGDs said that migration had significantly improved their lives by creating job opportunities for unemployed children, helping their families to upgrade their houses from thatched to corrugated iron roofs, buy clothing and agricultural inputs and meet their daily needs. Participants across different FGDs stressed that one key usage of remittances was on annual holidays where families buy oxen, new clothes and other necessary supplies that are almost exclusively paid for through remittances. Overall, 20 per cent of migrant households feel that their economic status is better compared to most households in Misha (versus 4% of non-migrant households).[115]

Participants also reported that migrants in South Africa were helping their younger siblings attend school by paying for supplies and fees for private schools or by creating jobs and small businesses for their siblings and other family members, for example by buying motorbikes and vehicles to work in transportation. In his study on the impact of remittances in the Hadiya and Kembata zones of Ethiopia, Zewdu (2018) found that housing and public transport were the two major areas in which remittances had brought about significant change.

Figure 18. Importance and usage of remittances (Multiple responses possible, data from surveys)



* Percentage of households who received remittances, multiple response possible in case of multiple migrants

115 Household survey data collected from migrant households show that in 77 per cent of households at least one migrant was able to send remittances home and these remittances are used, among other expenditures, on living standard improvements such as buying household goods and appliances (45%) and investing in new or improved housing (41%).

“I attempted to go to South Africa three times but could not make it. I was in prison twice, once in Tanzania and once in Malawi. My brother had to pay for a broker to take me out of prison and bring me to Mthatha, South Africa. I was working in a shop in South Africa for six years. Robbers stabbed me while I was working at the shop and I had to have surgery and stay in the hospital for three months. I could not continue working afterwards, because the robbers continued to follow me so my brother sent me back to Ethiopia. It has been eight months since I have been back in Ethiopia and I opened my own shop here. I am happy to be working here again and to be close to my three children.

THE EXPERIENCE OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

This chapter focuses on the return and reintegration of Ethiopian migrants along the Southern Route and how returnees are perceived in their communities

THE EXPERIENCE OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

This chapter draws on data collected in Misha[116] as well as individual data collected among Southern Route returnees who are beneficiaries of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration (Horn of Africa) programme (JI). A total of 698 surveys with returnees from two separate surveys conducted under the JI programme were analysed: a survey on reintegration sustainability (424 respondents; Reintegration Sustainability Survey) and one on mental health outcomes and psychological challenges faced by AVRR returnees (274 respondents; Mental Health and Psychosocial Support survey).[117] Nearly all individual respondents were males (99%) in the 15–29 years age bracket (79%). Most migrants were originally from the SNNP region (94%) confirming both household data collected in Misha and data collected with migrants in transit in the United Republic of Tanzania which suggest that the overland, Southern Corridor is largely dominated by young males from southern Ethiopia, especially the Hadiya and Kembata zones. More detail on the sociodemographic characteristics of these returnees can be found in Annex III.

RETURNS TO ETHIOPIA ALONG THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

According to household surveys collected in communities of high emigration, **household members who migrated to South Africa were almost three times less likely to have returned compared to those who migrated to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.** Even though migration along the Southern Corridor appears to be successful in the majority of cases, many migrants still end up stuck in countries of transit, where they may be detained for years until they are deported, or their returns are assisted by the Government of Ethiopia and/or IOM. Among household survey respondents in Misha who reported that their relative(s) did not successfully reach South Africa, unsuccessful journeys or AVRR from transit countries were the most common reasons for return (43%). FGD participants in Misha who had unsuccessfully migrated to South Africa confirmed having spent years in transit countries in detention, often in inhumane conditions: *"I was detained for four years and tortured naked. I wished I would die as the suffering was too much".*

IOM has been assisting the returns of Ethiopian migrants from countries along the Southern Route through AVRR programmes since 2016. These programmes provide support to migrants whose journeys have taken a different trajectory from what they expected as well as to those who want or need to return to their country of origin but are not able to do so independently. According to data collected by IOM through the JI from countries along the Southern Route, most of the assisted returnees returned from the United Republic of Tanzania (71%). Some migrants were also assisted in returning from Mozambique (9%), Zambia (9%), Malawi (6%), Zimbabwe (5%) and Kenya (<1%). Return operations intensified in 2022 when the Government of Ethiopia, in collaboration with IOM, started a repatriation operation aimed at citizens in dire situations in countries along the Southern Route such as Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

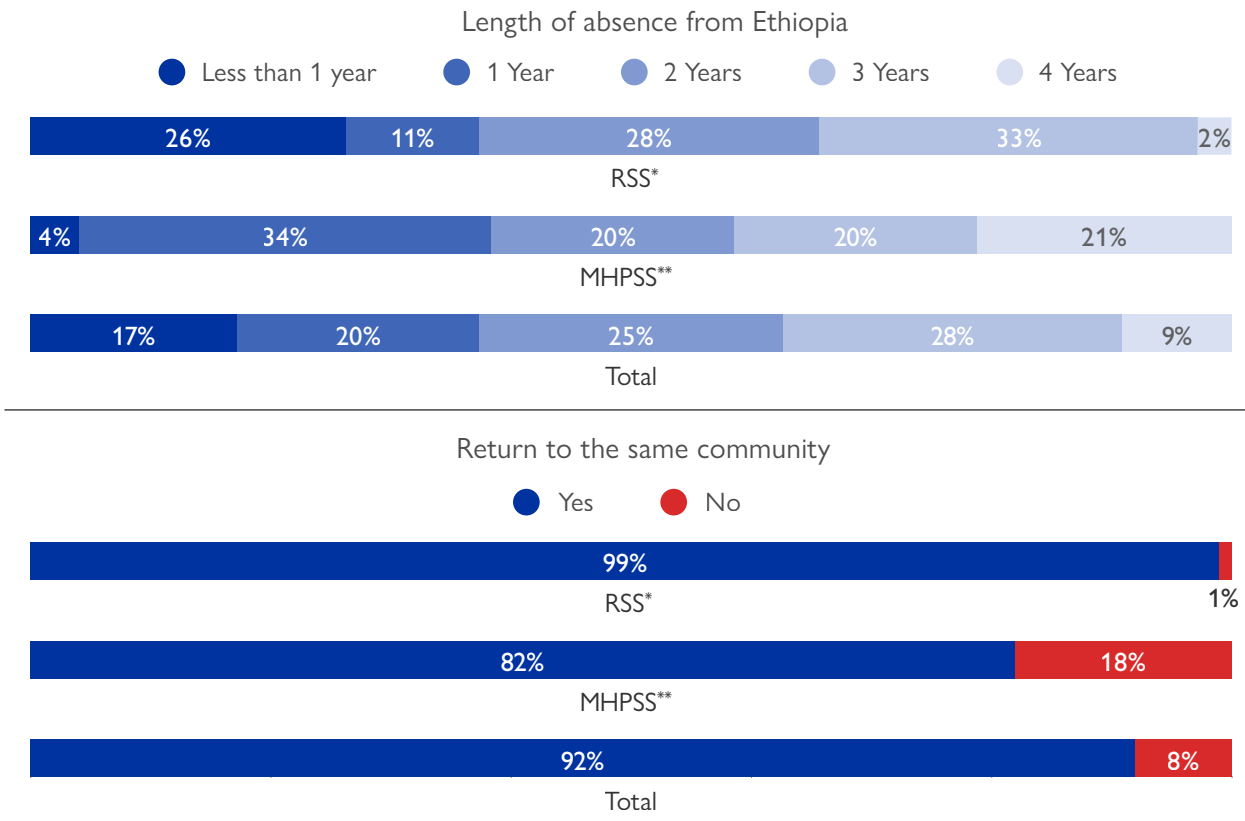
Nearly all individuals returned for negative reasons such as not being able to proceed further. Half of the respondents had been detained in transit countries. Only 2 per cent of migrants returned because they felt they had 'better opportunities in the community of origin'.[118] Most migrants had been absent two (25%) or three (28%) years, which is consistent with data collected in the United Republic of Tanzania that indicate that the average time spent in detention by irregular migrants is two years. Nearly all returned to their communities of origin (92%) and the few who did not stated that they moved elsewhere mainly in search of better opportunities.

116 Overall, 59 households with returnees were interviewed (19% of all households with experience of migration) in Misha, of which 34 households had both migrants abroad and returnees and 25 had returnees only.

117 More information on the methodology used for this study can be found in Annex I.

118 Data from household surveys confirm how returns are most often the result of a unplanned and unwanted circumstances, in the sense that only 15 per cent of households stated that migrants returned because they had "earned enough money" versus 53 per cent who stated that they returned because they did not reach their destination (29%), were deported (9%) or assisted to return (15%).

Figure 19. Characteristics of returns



** RSS: Reintegration Sustainability Survey

* MHPSS: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Survey

Source: RSS and MHPSS surveys, Ethiopia, EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.

"Three of my friends and I started our journey by foot. After we arrived in Tanzania, the broker who was supposed to take us to South Africa left us in the forest for 15 days, and told us he would bring us food. After waiting for 15 days, the police found us and took us to prison. Thirty-three of us were packed into one room and they barely gave us food or water. I was in prison for sixteen months. Now I work at a youth centre in Misha.

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THE PATH TOWARDS REINTEGRATION

The nature of return is key to understanding returnees' reintegration and well-being. All FGD respondents in Misha discussed that when migrants return to Ethiopia without money, it worsens their families' livelihood and status in the community because their families have no assets to establish businesses for their returnee and usually cannot pay back the loans they took on to pay for the migration. Respondents also reported that returnees with unsuccessful migration experiences are often stressed and isolate themselves out of embarrassment for failing in their attempt to migrate, thereby becoming another burden for their families who must try and support them to reintegrate back into the systems of the community, find work and heal from their experiences. **All FGD participants furthermore suggested that returnees who were unsuccessful in their migration attempts often experience conflict with their families due to the sunk costs of the failed journey, especially in families that took on loans for the migration that need paying back.**

> *When I arrived in Hosaena, I met my father, and we started going back to our village. Suddenly, the broker called me and tried to convince me that if I go back, I can at least pay back his remaining money and the loan my father took for me to migrate. When my father heard this, he said why not go back? Then I told him, 'you are not concerned about my safety and you do not know what I suffered during my travel, you are looking only for money not me'.*

Individual surveys confirm that return environments are difficult and household dynamics after return may be challenging to navigate. Even though families mostly initially welcomed them for returning safely, over half of the assisted returnees reported 'sometimes' (47%) or even 'often' (7%) experiencing tensions with their family three months following return. This seems to mainly be the case when the money sunk into the failed journey was collected in a family effort. Such tensions have a great impact on the social reintegration of returnees as well as their mental well-being, with many expressing regret and guilt over the economic hardship their families were enduring as a consequence of their unsuccessful migration: "I have a bad feeling when I think of the money that I wasted for nothing in return. Instead of changing the life of my family, I became the cause for their current poor life."

Three months following return, around one in five Reintegration Sustainability Survey (RSS) respondents also reported feeling "discriminated" (20%) and not really "part of the community" (23%). FGD respondents explained that the most common insults they receive from other community members is that they have wasted their families' money and are often called 'useless' as a result. In some cases, gender discrimination was also reported, with female returnees stating that they felt judged for not staying in Ethiopia and living a more traditional life. Even successful returnee participants suggested that their social reintegration into communal life was challenging, as they had become accustomed to a different style of living abroad: *"I spent more than eight years in South Africa as a wife and I became accustomed to the isolated lifestyle. When I came back, it was hard for me to socialize and participate in communal activities."*

A landscape in Shiro Kebele, Misha Woreda.

The dissonance between returnees who have experienced life abroad and their communities at home was evident during FGDs with parents who reported that their returnee children stood out in the community through their new cultural ways of dressing and communicating. The theme of mental health of returnees was also raised. Shame and stigma upon return were also found to be linked to traumatic issues that migrants experienced during the journey or at destination, such as rape, violence, detention exploitation and other inhumane and degrading treatment, but also to reverting to dependence on their families following return. Returnees are also sometimes framed as mentally unwell, making the process of reintegration even more challenging.

Psychosocial reintegration is often linked to economic reintegration, especially when migration has been financed by the family or through debts with other members of the community. All the returnee respondents who had experienced unsuccessful migration attempts reported that they were suffering economically following their return. They experienced challenges in finding a job, had no money to start their own business and credit organizations and banks were unwilling to give them loans without a guarantee. Returnees who were able to find a job and support themselves were more likely to integrate back into communal life and participate in communal activities, while returnees who have experienced unsuccessful journeys reportedly stay away from social events out of fear that they would have to contribute financially to the event or shame that they were unable to do so.

> *"The community does not invite 'unsuccessful' returnees to participate in different social events because they consider us useless. If someone invites you to have a coffee in his home, he expects you to invite him back, but they know that we can't afford it.*

Given the multitude of reintegration challenges returnees may face upon their return, it is not surprising that our data show that reintegration is a process that takes time. RSS data show that three months after their return, only 20 per cent of returnees had found employment, while 58 per cent had found employment when they were surveyed around 12 months after their return. Likewise, all other indicators related to discrimination, tensions with the household and social belonging to the community improved with time. Nonetheless, some returnees continued to be unemployed and to experience tensions with their families, indicating that reintegration is not always sustainable.

A group of women preparing enset.
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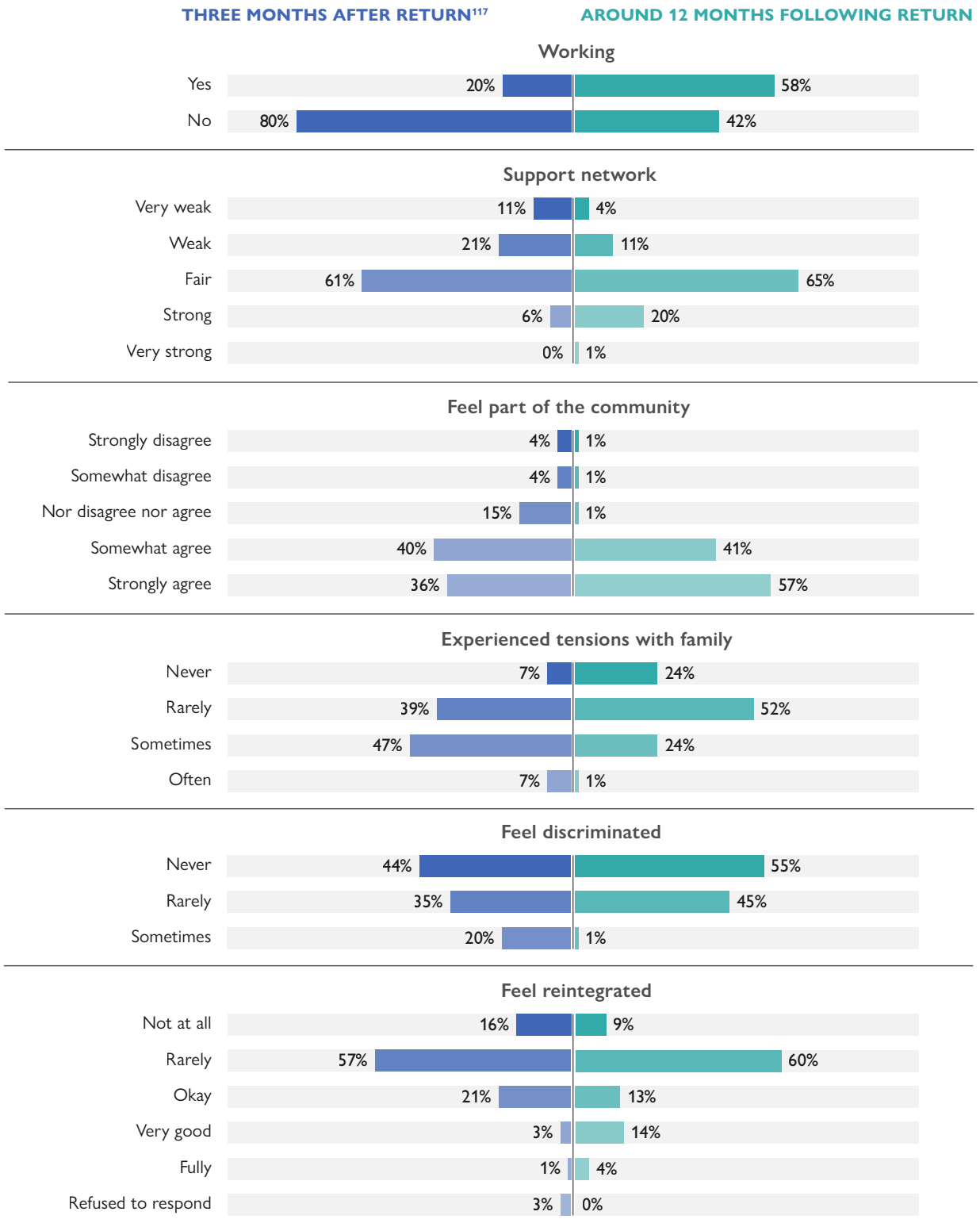
Figure 20. Paths towards reintegration



Source: Reintegration Sustainability Survey, Ethiopia, EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration

119 The question was asked to 308 migrants who had been back for over three months.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS RETURNEES

The data analysed in the first chapter of this report highlight how the diaspora in South Africa is often identified with wealth and prestige and households with migrants abroad are often better off than others due to the remittances they receive. **However, Key Informants and returnees interviewed in Misha reported that returnees are not always welcomed warmly and that those who return after failed journeys are often given less respect and sometimes even mocked by the community due to the money they lost trying to migrate.** FGD respondents suggested that their family's and community's expectations had been that they would achieve success in South Africa and that it was shameful to return to Ethiopia without having found material success, and they felt embarrassed to have had to do so. Although respondents said they mostly did not feel discriminated against due to their failed migration, they felt impacted by the pity they were receiving from fellow community members and were occasionally mocked and stigmatized for not succeeding.

> *"My family got the loan by giving their land as collateral to send me to South Africa. Therefore, after I came back, they didn't hurt me psychologically but did not help me financially because they have no money. I became so stressed when the neighbourhood children insulted me by saying, 'you wasted your father's property, why don't you go back, oh sorry… you already wasted your father's money.'*[120]

These findings are confirmed by the somewhat negative attitude towards returnees among household survey respondents in Misha, where 61 per cent of respondents agreed to the statement that 'returnees are a burden to their household and the whole community'. Furthermore, almost half of the households surveyed (48%) felt that 'debts taken on to migrate are rarely worth it as most migrants come back empty-handed.'[121] Attitudes towards returnees are slightly more positive when it comes to the knowledge or skills that they may have acquired abroad and may be willing to share with the community. In around half of the interviewed households in Misha, respondents reported that they had "learned/heard many interesting things from returnees" (47%).

These findings suggest that returnees may not always be accepted by all members of the community upon their return, while they may be simultaneously experiencing the physical and mental health challenges and financial stress of return. **These findings could also be indicative that the culture of migration, that is very evident among young Ethiopians and discussed in more depth in the first chapter of this report, may not extend across all generations.** Perceptions towards returnees do indeed seem slightly influenced by age, with older respondents more likely to perceive returnees as 'a burden', or feel that they cannot learn anything from them, compared to younger survey respondents.

Figure 21. Attitudes towards returnees (Misha household survey data)

120 FGD participant in Misha.

121 Interviewed households, regardless of the presence of a migrant, returnee or both, strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement.

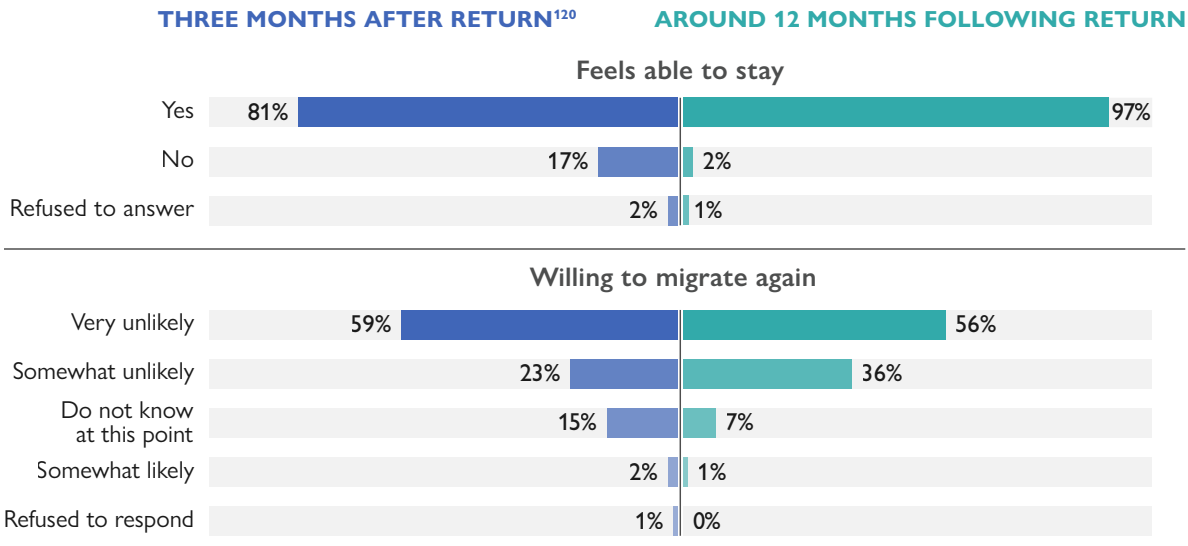
FUTURE INTENTIONS

Despite the numerous challenges returnees reported facing upon return to their communities and the **mixed feelings they expressed about their return, nearly all RSS recipients feel that they are able to stay in their community of origin, a feeling that seems to intensify as time goes by and they reintegrate more (81% after three months and 97% after 12 months following return).** When asked about their future intentions, only 8 per cent of RSS respondents reported that they were undecided (7%), or they were willing to migrate again (1%) around 12 months after return, while the overwhelming majority planned on staying in their community of origin. Data collected among households in Misha confirm the above findings, with only 15 per cent of households with at least one returnee having one member who was thinking about remigrating. These findings cannot be generalized to returnees in general, however, as RSS recipients receive reintegration assistance (often support to start a microbusinesses).

MHPSS data shed more light on the willingness of returnees to remain in their community of origin and suggest that the decision to stay does not necessarily imply that returnees want to remain in their communities after return. Although nearly all interviewees reported that they planned to stay (93%), around one in two of these returnees 'wanted to stay' (54%) while the rest 'had to stay' (46%) for different reasons, such as that it was impossible to migrate again due to responsibilities towards their family, lack of money etc. These findings may indicate that some returnees may experience a state of so called "involuntary immobility", that is, having the aspiration but not the ability to migrate (Carling, 2002; Lubkeman, 2008). Among the 6 per cent who reported wanting to leave, nearly all reported 'needing to leave' due to lack of earnings, security issues or family pressure, which may point towards the drivers of migration being very severe in these cases.

During FGDs conducted in Misha, returnees explained their unwillingness to migrate again, either because they had already achieved their goals and earned enough money in South Africa to live comfortably or, in the case of returnees who have experienced unsuccessful journeys, because they could not afford another journey and they feared being detained in transit again. Even though the vast majority of FGD respondents reported that they found their life in Ethiopia challenging, most agreed that if they worked hard and managed to secure some money to start a business, they would be able to build a life back home. The female FGD participants in Misha also emphasized that raising their children in their own culture is very important to them.

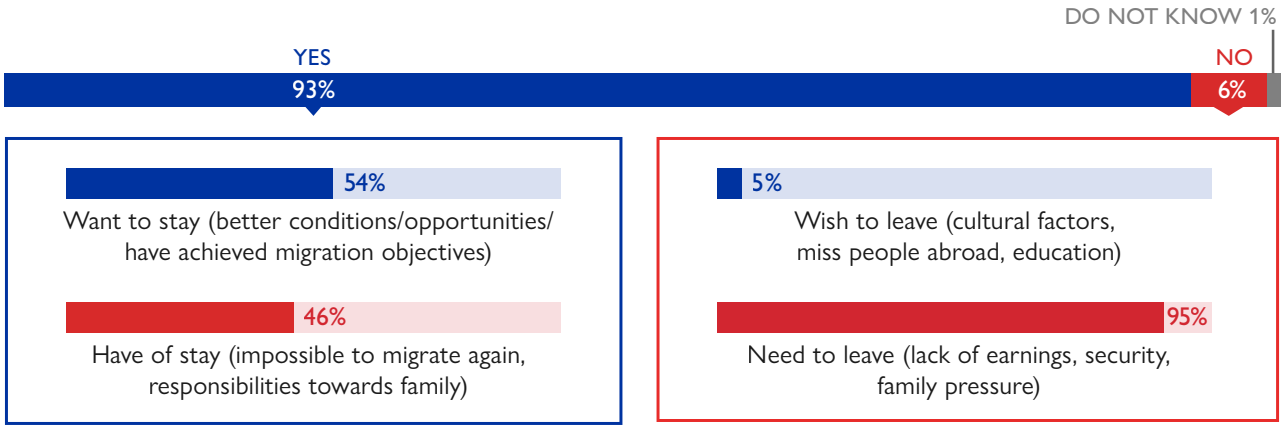
Figure 22. Future intentions



Source: Reintegration Sustainability Survey, Ethiopia, EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration

122 Question asked to 308 migrants who had been back for over 3 months.

Figure 23. "Do you feel that you are able to stay and live in this country?"



Source: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Survey

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Southern Route migration remains very relevant and continues to be travelled on by thousands of migrants each year. A key aspect of this route is that it is largely intra-African, as the great majority of interviewed migrants do not intend to move onward outside the continent but rather intend to settle in South Africa. The main pull factor of Southern Route migration is an established economic system with successful diaspora in South Africa that acts as both a catalyzer and safety net for this migrant population. Throughout this report, it can be deduced that the Southern dream is rooted in well-documented historical moments and legislative processes; it is localized in terms of trends at origin and destination; and it is subject to restrictive migration policies across several countries along the way that make this journey particularly risky, covert and lengthy.

Horn of Africa migrants heading south are driven by a multitude of factors including political instability, insecurity, violence, lack of economic opportunity and climatic shocks such as drought in the case of Somali migrants, and political pressures, forced conscription, lack of economic opportunity and the hope for refugee resettlement for Eritrean migrants. In the case of Ethiopia, all research findings indicate that migration largely occurs from SNNP region, from areas that are predominantly agricultural yet suffering from land and population pressures such as soil degradation, a rapidly growing population and many landless youth. Simultaneously, limited opportunities exist in sectors other than agriculture, resulting in high youth unemployment or underemployment in low-wage jobs, even for those who have completed university degrees. In this context, migration is often seen as the most viable

A group from Misha gathering to watch an English Premier League football game.

livelihood strategy to gain an income and secure a better life. These drivers will unlikely change in the short and medium term as they reflect complex socioeconomic and climate conditions in areas of origin. It is therefore expected that future generations of young men will continue to take the risk of embarking on this long overland journey dreaming of a better future in South Africa.

Findings have further highlighted the plethora of risks to their physical and mental well-being that migrants endure during the journey. Physical hardships include exhaustion from spending long hours on foot or in cramped spaces, lack of access to basic services as well as violence, abuse and exploitation by a variety of actors migrants may encounter en route. The increased securitization of migration and intensified border controls in the region have resulted in in the proliferation of unsafe smuggling practices such as travelling long distances in cramped vehicles without stopping, hiding migrants in airless fuel tankers and containers, circumventing checkpoints on foot through areas with rough terrain and spending nights outside in woods and other areas with dangerous wildlife. Incidents of mass deaths along this route have been more frequently reported in recent years and are often linked to such practices. Nonetheless, south-bound migration is likely to continue, facilitated by complex networks of smugglers and widespread corruption practices. At the same time, the route is characterized by limited access to and availability of migrant protection safeguards.

Above all, data highlight that most migrants and their households are aware of the risks of migration yet migrate nonetheless due to the strong prospects of economic improvement for those who successfully reach their destination. Aspiring migrants and their families are making calculated choices and weighing the risks and benefits of migration against staying at home with unmet dreams. Migration to South Africa is very common in SNNP and normalized as a viable strategy to improve livelihood prospects and there is a strong conviction, especially among young people, that migration is key to escaping poverty and widespread youth unemployment and underemployment. Furthermore, our data suggest that most migrants who reach South Africa are successful in finding employment and sending remittances, which provide important lifelines to their families in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, migrants often pay a high price for their financial success. Most irregular Ethiopians and Somalis living in South Africa work in the informal sector under highly precarious conditions wherein they are often exposed to violence and abuse, while lacking access to formal protection mechanisms.

A significant share of migrants along the Southern Route do not succeed in reaching their destination, oftentimes because they are detained in transit countries along the way. Our data have shown that the nature of return to Ethiopia, whether they return before or after having earned money abroad to pay off loans incurred to migrate, and what kind of experiences they endured prior to their return, can predict reintegration outcomes. Return can prove challenging for migrants who return after 'failed' journeys as they are not in the same economic or social position as when they left their communities and the emotional and physical hardships many have endured during their journeys and at destination may affect their psychosocial well-being and further define their reintegration experience. Social and economic reintegration can therefore take months or even years and returnees may feel the urge to remigrate if challenges and expectations from households and communities become intolerable.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the protection risks that migrants endure during this lengthy overland journey, the following policy recommendations are proposed.

1. Enhance understanding of migration dynamics, migrant profiles as well as protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities of migrants along the Southern Route

The Southern Route has received less attention in migration dialogues, in part because of the limited evidence available about the smuggling dynamics and the risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrants along the journey. More understanding of the routes taken, of migrant profiles, of how smuggling networks operate from the countries of origin to those of destination as well as of the protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities of migrants will be key to strengthen the evidence-base of these migration trends – which will further inform the development of sound policies, programmes and advocacy.

a. IOM and other key stakeholders engaged in mixed migration evidence generation should coordinate efforts on data collection and analysis to foster a holistic understanding of the various stages of this migration process, with a particular focus on the mobility hotspots in countries of transit. This goal could be achieved through mapping the main data and knowledge gaps and facilitate the design of dedicated data collection mechanisms and research initiatives in close liaison with local partners and academia. Existing coordination mechanisms such as the Information Management Working Group under the Regional Migrant Response Plan[123] will be instrumental in this regard. Equally, the Migrant Protection Working Group can be pivotal in enhancing the collection and analysis of protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities of migrants.

b. A special mention is warranted for **strengthening the identification and reporting of migrants' death and disappearances during this migration journey.** The IOM Missing Migrant Project (MMP) is an initiative implemented since 2014 to document deaths and disappearances of people in the process of migration towards an international destination. As collecting information is challenging, all figures remained undercounted and incidents' locations are often approximate.[124] As such, current figures are indicative and do not fully represent the nature and scale of the problem. These data are used to inform the sustainable development goals indicator 10.7.3 on the "[n]umber of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination." The MMP is also a concerted effort towards informing the Global Compact for Migration's Objective 8, which commits signatory States to "save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants." Between 2014 and 2021, the MMP recorded a total of 685 deaths and disappearances during migration in Southern Africa, many more are likely to happen unnoticed and unrecorded in the region.[125] Enhancing the capacity of local stakeholders, government counterparts and partners to identify and report cases of missing migrants and to support responses to such cases is paramount. Responses include dignified recovery, identification, appropriately notifying and assisting families and dignified transfer and burial of the remains of the deceased.[126]

123 More information on the IOM Regional Migrant Response Plan is available at https://eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/regional-migrant-response-plan-horn-africa-and-yemen.

124 More information on the IOM Missing Migrants Project is available at https://missingmigrants.iom.int/.

125 International Organization for Migration (IOM). Southern Africa, Missing Migrants Project, Annual Regional Overview (2014 to 2021).

126 Mengiste, T.A. *Families of Missing Migrants in Ethiopia: Their Search for Answers, the Impacts of Loss and Recommendations for Improved Support.* IOM. (Geneva, 2021).

2. Enhance migrant protection services along the route through Migrant Response Centres

To address the pressing humanitarian and protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities of migrants, IOM has supported the establishment of Migration Response Centres (MRCs) in strategic locations along key migration routes such as those established across the Eastern Route.[127] The services at these MRCs include but are not limited to identification of the specific needs of migrants, provision of basic needs and services, protection interventions and assisted voluntary return.[128] In addition, MRCs work in collaboration with government and non-governmental service providers in ensuring referral of cases. These MRCs, which also serve as community-based centres, are a key resource for migrants in vulnerable situations given the life-saving nature of interventions provided there.

a. IOM, partners and Member States should consider the establishment of MRCs in strategic locations along the Southern Route. These facilities can either be fully managed by government entities or co-managed with IOM and partners. Relevant government and non-governmental entities providing protection and assistance in the selected locations should be engaged to enhance responses in line with the specific need, risks and vulnerabilities that migrants present.

3. Expand return and reintegration support for migrants in vulnerable situations who are considering to voluntarily return to their countries of origin

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes in the Horn of Africa have been providing life-saving assistance and protection to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in host or transit countries and who decide to voluntarily return to their countries of origin.[129] From 2019 to 2022, over 4,300 migrants were assisted by IOM to return from countries along the Southern Route to the Horn of Africa, mostly to Ethiopia. Upon arrival, returnees also received reintegration support to aid the process of re-establishing themselves economically, socially and psychologically. At the time of writing this report, funding availability for AVRR initiatives assisting Southern Route migrants is insufficient considering the needs, largely due to a limited support base (of donors and the broader international community). As such, resources and programmes available to assist migrants in need along this route are increasingly limited.

a. The donor community, guided by the humanitarian imperative to respond to human suffering wherever it is found should be cognizant of the vast needs and gaps along this route and consider targeted support towards assisting migrants stranded, detained or in vulnerable situations. Sustained commitment to facilitate access to life-saving assistance, specialized protection services and providing options for assisted voluntary return and reintegration schemes are critical to assist migrants in vulnerable situations along this route.

b. IOM in close liaison with Member States should expand the availability of AVRR services along the Southern Route and strengthen outreach activities to migrants in vulnerable situations to facilitate access to such assistance. The proposed MRCs can further serve as points where the needs of migrants to wish to return are identified and supported. In addition, Member States should establish measures including allocation of funding from their national budgets to support the return and reintegration of their nationals. Finally, national reintegration systems should be established and/or strengthened to among others, ensure that human rights standards are upheld in processes and procedures related to the nature and/or type of return; pre-departure arrangements in host or transit countries are made; and movement, reception and post-arrival arrangements as well as sustainable reintegration assistance upon arrival in countries and areas of origin are provided.

127 An overview of the existing Migration Response Centres in the East and Horn of Africa is available at https://eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/migration-response-centres.

128 For more information please consult the *Strategy for Migration Response Centres in the East and Horn of Africa and Yemen 2021-2024.*

129 For a broad overview of IOM AVRR activities, please consult the *Return and reintegration key highlights 2021.*

4. Promote inter-state consultative cooperation on migration along the Southern Route

Irregular migrants from the Horn of Africa invariably transit through the United Republic of Tanzania on their way down south passing through Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia en route to South Africa. As a result of border patrols and immigration law enforcement in these countries, migrants including children are often arrested and detained under criminal law for long periods, often without due process. The decriminalization of irregular migration, pursuit of alternatives to detention in particular for vulnerable groups including children, swifter return and reintegration assistance and better cooperation across States should be promoted to reduce the vulnerability of populations, alleviate the burden for host governments and enhance the protection of migrants regardless of their status.

a. Member States should promote bilateral and regional agreements to aid the return of their respective nationals in a safe, orderly and humane ways that include clear processes for identification of irregular migrants, identification and response to immediate needs, ascertaining voluntariness to return, movement to reception or transit centres and facilitated return. Concerned embassies should be directly involved in this process to support the verification process of their nationals, provide travel documents and facilitate the return.

b. IOM and partners should facilitate inter-State dialogue to jointly address the challenges of irregular migration and strengthen cross-border collaboration, in an effort to enhance migrant protection along the route. Efforts should include but not be limited to strengthening the policy environment and human rights protection of migrants at the regional and national level, promoting migration governance schemes and direct service provisions to vulnerable migrants along the route, and providing sustainable reintegration assistance to returning migrants. Furthermore, they should facilitate cross regional cooperation mechanisms in immigration procedures, border governance and consular support by including migration in existing regional cooperation processes due to the cross-cutting nature of migration dynamics and their impact.

5. Establish a regional smuggling task force

In 2004, the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air adopted by General Assembly Resolution 55/25 entered into force. This protocol supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and constitutes a significant advancement because it provides an international definition of smuggling of migrants, detailing safeguards to prevent and combat this practice, while providing measures to protect the rights of migrants.[130] As of 2022, the protocol was ratified by South Africa (2004), the United Republic of Tanzania (2006) and Mozambique (2006), while it was accessed by Kenya (2005), Zambia (2005), Malawi (2005) and Ethiopia (2021).[131] Somalia, Eritrea and Zimbabwe have not signed the Smuggling Protocol.

Member States party to the protocol should collaborate in facilitating the implementation of the protocol along the Southern Route by also establishing a regional smuggling task force with the objective to reduce human smuggling and crimes against migrants. This body could facilitate information exchange on migrant routes and smuggling practices, referrals for migrants' authentication processes, legal guidance to preserve and promote the rights of the smuggled migrants, as well as facilitating training and technical cooperation to specialized agencies in dealing with the smuggling of migrants. This should also include more effective measures to fight corruption or abuse practiced by law enforcement actors, which data show can directly be involved in the migration industry and can therefore hamper the effective implementation of regional and national migration and protection schemes.

130 For a more in depth analysis of the protocol and considerations related to its implementation along this route, please see In Pursuit of the Southern Dream.

131 Please see the United Nations Treaty Collection. "Accession" is the act whereby a State accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other States. It has the same legal effect as ratification. Accession usually occurs after the treaty has entered into force.

6. Enhance the availability and accessibility to regular pathways for migration

This research as well as previous publications of the Regional Data Hub on the Eastern and Southern Routes have showed how migrants' desire to change their life and improve living conditions for themselves and their families at home have proved to be highly decisive in driving these decision-making processes. Neither major shocks and related impacts, such as the mobility restrictions instated by governments across the region in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic repercussions, nor incidents of deaths and disappearances while in transit seem to significantly influence these migration decisions. The will to migrate might be temporarily reduced in times of crisis or diverted to more expensive and risky routes, but recent data show how flows inevitably pick up again. At the same time, well-established migration networks continue to spark aspirations and facilitate irregular movements.

a. All stakeholders involved should collaborate in advancing more formalized safe, orderly and humane pathways for migration.

b. Member States should promote more regular pathways to migration and take ownership in shaping legal, administrative and other aspects of these recruitment and selection processes. This could include the negotiation of a wide range of Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) that can better tap into the socioeconomic needs of destination countries through harmonized Labour Market Information Systems and skills matching opportunities with gender-responsive perspectives.

c. IOM and partners should facilitate the convening, exchange and dialogue on regular migration pathways, including through initiatives that bring together the public and private sectors in identifying market gaps and opportunities, while providing legal and technical guidance on comprehensive approaches to labour migration. Such approaches can include pre-departure training, ethical recruitment standards, travel documentation and overseeing mechanism during the employment migration programmes, such as legal aid, medical assistance and emergency repatriation for migrants in vulnerable situations.

Students in a classroom at Shiro Primary School.

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ANNEX I: METHODOLOGY

This report builds upon several data sources including household-level data collected in a community in southern Ethiopia with a high migration rate towards South Africa; data on individual migrants collected in the United Republic of Tanzania, a key transit country along the Southern Route; data collected from a variety of key informants at origin as well as in transit countries and at destination; and data on AVRR returnees to Ethiopia from countries along the Southern Route. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the migration dynamics along this route as it looks at the route from origin to destination, thereby exploring not only the data on individual migrants but also the environments in which migration is taking place.

DESK REVIEW AND KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Despite being one of the most dangerous and challenging migration routes on the continent, the Southern Corridor has largely been understudied. In 2020, the RDH launched a scoping research project to create a foundational understanding of the migration dynamics and migrant characteristics of Ethiopians and Somalis along the Southern Route. This scoping research included an in-depth literature review and mapping exercise to in form future data collection and identify Key Informants whose work touches upon this corridor.

Following this initial phase, the RDH conducted remote, Key Informant interviews with over 50 experts in Ethiopia, South Africa and transit countries along the route. Key Informants included a variety of migration stakeholders capturing a range of experiences and knowledge, including academics, individuals who work directly with migrants on this route such as non-governmental organization representatives as well as government and law enforcement officials. Migrants were not interviewed as part of the scoping study, due to COVID-19 access limitations.

DATA COLLECTION IN MISHA – A COMMUNITY OF HIGH EMIGRATION

To better understand the environment in which migration is taking place, the factors that drive migration and the impact Southern Route migration has on families left behind, the RDH conducted household surveys in Misha woreda in SNNP region in the first half of 2021. Misha woreda was selected because it is a community with a strong history of migration towards South Africa – following an analysis of existing literature, IOM Flow Monitoring data and Key Informant interviews with key stakeholders in the area. Data collection was carried out by JaRco Consulting PLC.

Rapid assessment

The first stage of data collection in Misha was a rapid assessment that was carried out to assess whether the woreda was suitable for the research and to generate a community profile. The rapid assessment involved both primary and secondary data collection on the socioeconomic, environmental, security and migratory landscapes in Misha and contributed to a better understanding of the local environment; defining the geographical boundaries of the data collection site; identifying research areas within the woreda (areas with a high concentration of households with at least one member who is currently abroad or has returned);[132] generating an understanding of local migration dynamics; and identifying Key Informants (KIs) such as community leaders and former migrants for the qualitative part of the research.

Household sampling

A listing was carried out in Misha to understand the distribution of migrant households and identify the potential households to interview. Listing was conducted prior to data collection and a number of households greater than the target sample size was identified. The target sample was set at 600 households, half with and half without experience of migration to allow for comparison. In addition to the presence of migrants and returnees, information on gender, age and intended destination of migrants was also collected. Overall, 805 households were listed, with a total of 761 migrants identified of whom 193 were returnees.

Quantitative data collection

Based on the listing, a sample of 600 households was randomly selected, with an equal proportion of migrant households to non-migrant households. The survey

132 The area of research in Misha covered five kebeles.

covered information on the characteristics of households, their living conditions, attitudes towards migration, direct experience of migration, the impact of COVID-19 on migration and migrant or would-be migrant future intentions. Tools were translated into Amharic and Oromifa by JaRco and surveys were administered individually to heads of household following their informed consent by trained enumerators. To ensure that data collected were as accurate and reliable as possible, interviews were conducted individually and out of earshot of other community members; data collectors of the same gender as participants conducted surveys, as this is deemed more culturally acceptable in a traditional Ethiopian context and helped to create safe, comfortable environments in which respondents felt able to speak more freely and answer honestly.

Qualitative data collection

Qualitative data were also collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to obtain more in-depth views from different perspectives and allow for a more nuanced understanding of the household survey findings. Tools were developed to assess parental attitudes towards migration; risk awareness, information sources and knowledge gaps among aspiring migrants; returnees' ambitions and return experiences; migration dynamics before and during COVID-19; the importance of remittances and how the remittance system works; and transnational communication and technology. Tools were translated into the relevant local languages to ensure that the appropriate local vernacular was used, thus enabling participants to understand and respond to questions easily.

Overall, eight KIIs and eight FGDs were conducted in Misha. FGDs were conducted in groups of six to eight participants who were purposefully selected based on their profiles and willingness to participate. All FGDs were separated by gender due to cultural sensitivities and to promote an environment where all participants felt free to speak openly. FGDs were also grouped homogenously in terms of social backgrounds and employment histories to ensure everyone's opinion was heard and participants could feel they were discussing in a safe space. Key Informants were identified during the rapid community assessment and included representatives of community groups, informal foreign exchange providers, returnees, teachers, community elders, local officials, youth representatives and other relevant stakeholders.

DATA COLLECTION WITH INDIVIDUAL MIGRANTS IN TANZANIA

In 2021, the research project was further expanded to include interviews with migrants who were intercepted while in transit along the Southern Route and detained in the United Republic of Tanzania. Irregular migrants from the Horn of Africa migrate through the United Republic of Tanzania on their way down south, using the country as a transit corridor to Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia en-route to South Africa. As a result of border patrol and immigration law enforcement by the United Republic of Tanzania, many migrants are detained and tried under the country's Immigration Act and its clauses pertaining to irregular entry. IOM Tanzania has continuously conducted verification visits to different detention facilities throughout the country where irregular migrants are held.

During verification visits conducted between August and September 2021, IOM administered surveys to migrants in nine different prisons in Mbeya, Morogoro and Tanga regions and at a Salvation Army shelter in Dar es Salaam. Overall, 793 Ethiopian migrants were identified, of whom 382 were interviewed. Further interviews were carried out with migrants receiving AVRR from the United Republic of Tanzania between July and November 2022. A total of 467 surveys were analysed for this report. The tool IOM used for data collection was developed by the IOM Regional Data Hub (RDH) in Nairobi in coordination with IOM Tanzania. The mission was carried out by a team of officers from the Tanzanian government, the Ethiopian Embassy and IOM. The survey was designed to collect data on the sociodemographic characteristics of migrants along this route, the main drivers of migration, the decision-making process including information on the actors involved, information on the route as well as migrants' experiences and the protection challenges they faced during their migration.

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS DATA

IOM regularly collects data from beneficiaries of AVRR initiatives, for operational purposes, monitoring and evaluation or research. Between 2017 and 2022, a prominent AVRR initiative in the region, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (JI HoA), assisted around 3,300 Ethiopian migrants who found themselves stranded while travelling on the Southern Route. A number of these individuals were interviewed as part of research initiatives undertaken by the JI HoA programme.

The IMPACT study (Impact Evaluation of the JI HoA programme) employed a semi-experimental design to estimate the net effect of IOM's reintegration assistance on the reintegration outcomes of the assisted returnees. Fourteen Key Informant Interviews conducted with Southern Route returnees as part of the IMPACT study have been used to complement the other sources used for this report and triangulate the findings. Overall, 424 Reintegration Sustainability Survey interviews with returnees were re-analysed, to complement or triangulate the findings of the data collected specifically for this report.

JI HoA programme beneficiaries in Ethiopia were also administered a survey to estimate the incidence of Common Mental Disorders among them and analyse various aspects of the psychological challenges faced by returning migrants during the reintegration process, including how they relate with the migration experience (very often involving detention and different forms of violence and abuse), coping mechanisms and reintegration trajectories. This report presents findings from the analysis of 274 survey interviews (from a sample of 600 JI HoA programme beneficiaries in Ethiopia) which were conducted with returnees who travelled on the Southern Route.

"Hossana has become a more developed city because many people who worked in South Africa came back here and built schools, hospitals, hotels and other businesses. My father returned after working in South Africa for six years and built a small hospital here. He supported me through medical college and I now work at our family's hospital.

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ANNEX II: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS IN MISHA

Table 1. Sociodemographic profiles of households (Data from surveys)

		% of households
Number of members	1–2	7%
	3–6	59%
	7+	35%
Average household size	6 members	
2–3 dependent members or more[133]		25%
At least one child 7–14 years old out of education[134]		29%
At least one NEET[135] (15–29 years old not in education, employment or training)		55%

Table 2. Population pyramid (Data from surveys)

		Male	Female
Age group (years)	0–6	9%	8%
	7–14	12%	11%
	15–29	15%	16%
	30–59	11%	14%
	60+	3%	2%
	Total	**50%**	**50%**

133 Dependent members are individuals younger than 15 years or older than 59 years, who are considered economically inactive.

134 Only households with at least one member aged 7–14 years.

135 Only households with at least one member aged 15–29 years.

Table 3. Characteristics of the Head of Household (Data from surveys)

Sex	*Male*	61%
	Female	39%
Age (years)[136]	*15–29*	10%
	30–59	72%
	60+	18%
Marital status	*Married*	80%
	Widowed	14%
	Divorced or separated	1%
	Single	5%
Level of education	*None*	48%
	Lower primary	14%
	Upper primary	25%
	Secondary or above	14%
Occupational status	*Farms land*	79%
	Unpaid care and domestic work	12%
	Daily labour	2%
	Own business/trade activity	2%
	Employed (formal and informal)	2%
	Inactive (student, retired, not looking for a job)	2%
	Unemployed	<1%

136 Heads of Household who were minors were not interviewed.

ANNEX III: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF JI RETURNEES

Characteristics of returnees		Percentage of migrants		
		RSS	MHPSS	Total
Age at arrival in Ethiopia (years)[137]	*<18*	9%	0%	5%
	18–29	79%	78%	79%
	30+	12%	22%	16%
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Sex	*Male*	99.9%	99.9%	100%
	Female	<1%	<1%	0%
Woreda of origin	*Hadiya (SNNP)*	66%	65%	66%
	Halaba Special (SNNP)	5%	1%	3%
	Kembata Tembaro (SNNP)	24%	24%	24%
	Sidama (SNNP)	<1%	1%	0%
	Wolayita (SNNP)	2%	–	1%
	Gurage (SNNP)	–	1%	0%
	Bale (Oromia)	<1%	–	0%
	East Shewa (Oromia)	<1%	1%	0%
	Jimma (Oromia)	2%	1%	2%
	West Arsi (Oromia)	–	1%	0%
	Addis Ketema (Addis Ababa)	–	1%	0%
	Kolfe Keranio (Addis Ababa)	–	1%	0%
Education	*None*	2%	1%	2%
	Primary school	56%	47%	52%
	Secondary school or Diploma	38%	49%	42%
	Vocational education	2%	1%	2%
	Undergraduate	<1%	2%	1%
Country of return	*United Republic of Tanzania*	79%	58%	71%
	Mozambique	8%	10%	9%
	Zambia	7%	12%	9%
	Zimbabwe	4%	7%	5%
	Malawi	1%	13%	6%
	Kenya	<1%	0%	0%

137 Note that the age reported is that at arrival in Ethiopia, which brings the number of minors to 86 at the time they travelled along the Southern Route, corresponding to 36 per cent of all migrants. Data on age collected for 241 migrants only.

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