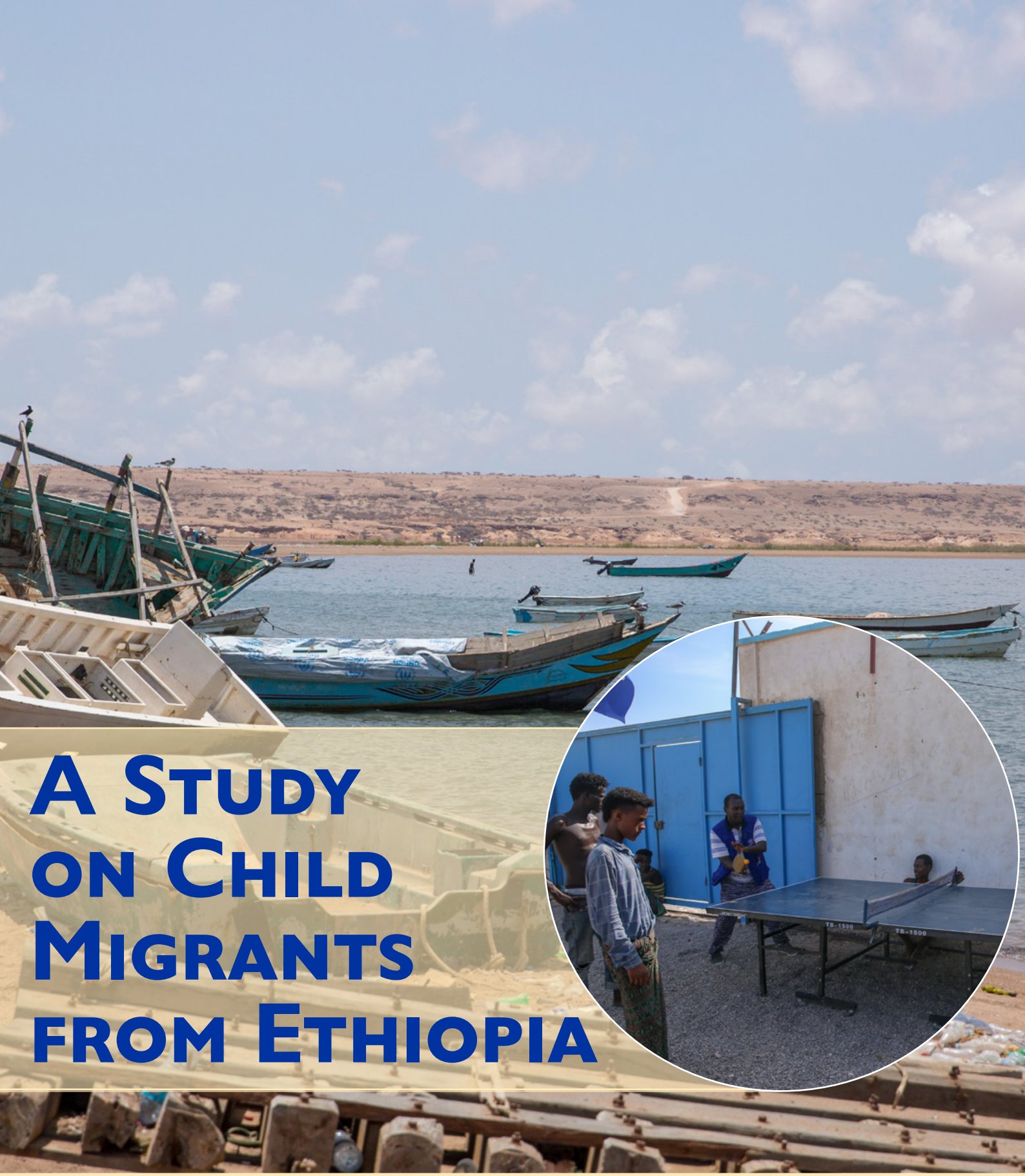

A Study on Child Migrants from Ethiopia

IOM Mission in Ethiopia

December 2020

Project funded by the European Union
Project implemented by IOM

EU-IOM
Joint Initiative for
Migrant Protection
and Reintegration

Launched in December 2016 with funding from the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), the **EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (EU-IOM Joint Initiative)** is the first comprehensive programme to save lives, protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa. The programme enables migrants who decide to return to their countries of origin to do so in a safe and dignified way, and to help them restart their lives in their countries of origin. This is done through an integrated approach to reintegration that supports both migrants and their communities.

The **EU-IOM Joint Initiative** is a regional project with geographical coverage of Khartoum Process member countries and particularly the main migration routes from the Horn of Africa region, with a specific focus on Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. The project will target various categories of returning migrants, including stranded migrants, irregular migrants, regular migrants, asylum seekers who decide not to pursue their claims or who are found not to need international protection, migrants in detention, migrants in vulnerable situations, such as victims of trafficking, elderly people, unaccompanied migrant children and migrants with health-related needs.

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Cover photos: Wrecked boats in Obock, Djibouti, and a group of young Ethiopian migrants playing table tennis with IOM staff at IOM's Migration Response Centre in Obock. They had been travelling to Yemen and hoping to reach the Gulf countries but decided to ask for IOM's assistance to return home due to the difficulties of the journey. © Olivia Headon/IOM

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This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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Acronyms

ACERWC	African Committee Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CCC	Community Care Coalitions
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSCE	Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
RMSS	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive assessment of irregular child migration from Ethiopia based on a case study in five regions: Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) and Dire Dawa. The report first provides an insight into the characteristics of child migration patterns from Ethiopia, with an analysis of the socioeconomic profile of child migrants, the driving forces for irregular child migration, and the children's migratory routes and decision-making processes. Furthermore, the study elaborates on the vulnerabilities of unaccompanied migrant children and the various protection risks they face during their migration journeys, in countries of transit and upon arrival in the destination countries. The report also presents data on existing support mechanisms and concludes by providing recommendations for policymaking and programming to address the special protection concerns of child migrants. These recommendations cover services and activities in the areas of prevention, protection and reintegration, and suggestions for the development of an integrated multidisciplinary response to address irregular migration of unaccompanied migrant children.

Most Ethiopian child migrants come from impoverished backgrounds. The average age of child migrants is 13 to 17 years, while in a few cases, children as young as eight years migrate on their own. Most child migrants are school dropouts and come from large households.

The push and pull factors tend to be subjective and include structural, community, individual and household, and other contingent factors. These factors include economic components (absolute and relative deprivation), culture of migration, geographical location, devaluation of education, natural disasters, poor delivery of basic services, as well as political instability and governance issues. The community-level factors identified include disinterest in rural life among the younger generation, aesthetic attractions and cultural compatibility. Low performance in education, as well as addictions and substance abuse, are individual-level factors. Household-level factors include large family size, low household income, migration histories of parents and family members, and family dynamics such as divorce or death of a parent. Other contingent factors affecting migration dynamics include availability of smuggling and accessibility of information technologies. Most returnee child migrants often resort to re-migration, partly due to unaddressed vulnerabilities as well as the social stigma and ostracization child migrants face upon return.

The findings of the study also show that the journeys of child migrants are rife with protection risks and exploitation. Risks faced involve being held against their will; being forced to work without pay; anxiety due to fear of detention and deportation; living on the streets; and lack of access to services. Other risks also involve trafficking networks, which expose children to hazardous situations or exploitation, especially in cases where the migrant children and their families incur debts to pay smugglers' fees, or, if kidnapped, ransoms. Furthermore, child migrants could be victims of violent crime, including sexual and gender-based violence.

When there are few or no opportunities to move legally, children resort to irregular migration, which involves moving through dangerous routes and, often, hiring smugglers to cross borders. These routes involve several internal and international transit points. The findings indicate that most child

migrants from the study sites, with the exception of Hadiya, often use the eastern route destined to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the Gulf Cooperation countries. Male child migrants from Hadiya Zone often use the southern route to head to South Africa, while female children often travel to the Middle East.

Various actors shape the decision-making process of child migration, including family, smugglers, returnee migrants, migrant family members and peers. Most child migrants conceal their migration plans to their parents except when their family members have to cover the costs of migration.

Gaps in existing reintegration support mechanisms for returnee child migrants were observed. The socioeconomic reintegration support mechanisms offered to returnee children are often short-lived and fail to bring durable solutions. Although child migrants are exposed to various forms of rights abuses and protection risks, psychosocial support is often offered only upon arrival. Concerted efforts must be made to address these gaps, reinforce institutions (namely local governmental institutions working on the reintegration of returnee child migrants and community-based organizations) and their capacity, as well as the existing support mechanisms for reintegration of child migrants.

Photo: A group of migrants from the Horn of Africa arrive in Obock, Djibouti, guided by a local "facilitator". They will wait in the shade of trees for, sometimes, a few days as smugglers organize their travel to Yemen. © Olivia Headon/IOM

01. Introduction

Various United Nations (UN) reports point to the high rate of child migration. A 2016 United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report estimated that between 1990 and 2015, around 50 million children migrated across borders or were forcibly displaced within their own countries.[1] The 2017 UN migration report found that there were more than 258 million migrants globally, of whom 14 per cent were younger than 20 years.[2] The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) equally found that in 2019, 37.9 million migrants were younger than 20 years.[3]

Another UNICEF report from 2017 highlighted that about 300 000 children live in 80 transit countries.[4] According to the African Committee Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), between 2015 and 2017, an estimated 18.2 million children were on the move across the African continent, a figure higher than the entire population of more than 30 African countries.[5] This number, however, does not include the number of irregular child migrants and children engaged in seasonal movements. As child migration is becoming a rising global phenomenon, two recent intergovernmental agreements endorsed in December 2018, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, require signatory governments to place children's rights to safety and protection from violence, abuse and exploitation at the heart of migration management for internal migration and migration across borders.[6]

Despite the availability of considerable literature on migration within the African continent and emigration out of the continent, research focusing on children and youth is lacking, specifically attending

1. Uprooted: the growing crisis for refugee and migrant children. New York: UNICEF; 2016. Available from: https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_92710.html [accessed 2020 Nov 2019].

2. International Migration Report 2017 (ST/ESA/SER.A/403). New Work: United Nations; December 2017. Available from : http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017.pdf [accessed 12 Nov 2019.

3. Child and young migrants. Berlin: Migration Data Portal; 2020. Available from: https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/child-and-young-migrants [cited 10 Feb 2020].

4. A Child is a child: protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation. New York: UNICEF; 2017. Available from: https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_95956.html [accessed 2019 Jan 18].

5. Mapping children on the move within Africa. Addis Ababa: African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; 2018. Available from: https://www.acerwc.africa/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ACERWC_Study-Mapping-Children-on-the-Move-within-Africa-Nov2018-_A4_Website-version.pdf [accessed 2019 Nov 17].

6. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016. The document introduced a two-year process to develop a Global Compact on Responsibility Sharing on Refugees (Global Compact on Refugees) and a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. It was endorsed on 17 December 2018 by the United Nations General Assembly. Available from: https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf

to the patterns of mixed migration in the Horn of Africa region.[7] According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) from the Horn of Africa and East Africa, in July 2019, 225 160 inter-regional movements were tracked. Of these, the majority (about 74%) were Ethiopian nationals, followed by Somalis (20%). Similarly, the DTM report from June 2019 shows that 76 per cent of those on the move are Ethiopians.[8]

The Horn of Africa has a large number of child migrants.[9] A study by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) pointed out that of the estimated 92 446 migrants who arrived in Yemen in 2015, about 89 per cent were Ethiopians; 20 per cent of these were estimated to be unaccompanied children.[10] A study on irregular migration in the Horn of Africa found that the eastern route stretching into Yemen and the KSA is one often used by Ethiopian migrants. The pattern of migration from the Horn and Eastern Africa shows the rise in the number of child migrants described by the RMMS: "Almost half of the international migrants in the Horn of Africa are under the age of 20 [years], and children are usually the majority within forcibly displaced populations in the region." A 2019 UNICEF study shows that there are unaccompanied minors among child migrants using the eastern route.[11]

Unaccompanied children migration is on the rise in Ethiopia.[12] Studies suggest that a significant number of Ethiopian labour migrants and transit migrants in Djibouti are young migrants who often leave their places of origin before the age of 18 years.[13] Another source of data indicating the growing number of child migrants from Ethiopia is the data on returnee migrants. According to the data received from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), since March 2017 a total of 7833 migrants have returned through the European Union (EU) - IOM joint initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in East and Horn of Africa programme. Of these, 1936 were unaccompanied child migrant returnees.

Ethiopia is a source, transit and destination country for children on the move, including internally displaced children, child refugees, asylum seekers and returnees. However, Ethiopia does not have official statistics on migrants or child migrants, and therefore no consolidated database with basic information exists. Although there are no statistics or data on the number of child migrants in Ethiopia and their mobility practices, this study's field research and literature review show the pervasiveness of child migration from Ethiopia. Accounts on children's migration and associated challenges are often rooted in anecdotal or partial, decontextualized evidence and practice. These accounts tend to sensationalize children's experiences and obscure the risks they face.

This report provides a comprehensive assessment on child migration originating in Ethiopia, a rapidly growing yet under-researched phenomenon, and aims to provide insights into the perilous journeys of children moving out of Ethiopia and transiting

7. Young and on the Move; Children and Move in Mixed Migration Flows within and from the Horn of Africa. Geneva: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat; 2016. Available from: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/10080/pdf/young_and_on_the_move_sep_2016.pdf [accessed 2019 Nov 1].

8. DTM monthly regional report Displacement Tracking Matrix - East and the Horn of Africa Regional Mixed Migration Flow Monitoring Network. Nairobi: International Organization for Migration; July 2019. Available from: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/201907_DTM%20Monthly%20Regional%20July%20Report_final.pdf [accessed 2019 Nov 2].

9. Olivia Bueno. "No mother wants her child to migrate" vulnerability of children on the move in The Horn of Africa. Florence: UNICEF office of research, Innocenti; 2019. Available from: https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/1041-no-mother-wants-her-child-to-migrate-vulnerability-of-children-on-the-move-in-the.html

10. Ibid. 7, Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat.

11. Ibid. 9, UNICEF.

12. Sintatyehu Meshshea. child rural-urban migrations and migrant sending families perception towards child migration: the case of Haleha Kebele, Kucha District, Gamogofa Zone, and SNNPR. Master's thesis. Adis Abbaba: Addis Ababa University; 2016.

13. Meron Zeleke. Sisters on the move: Ethiopia's gendered labour migration milieu. Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des études africaines. 2018;53(1):27–46. DOI: 10.1080/00083968.2018.1519451

through different transit points within and outside Ethiopia. The report further investigates child migration patterns, migration trajectories, protection risks, migratory routes and the complex decision-making process. The study was conducted in four regional states: Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP regions, and one city-state, Dire Dawa. Specifically: Habru district of North Wollo Zone of Amhara Region; Saesi Tsadamba district of Eastern Tigray Zone; Shashogo district of Hadiya Zone in SNNPR; Dire Dawa city administration, and two districts from Oromia (Bedeno district of East Hararghe Zone and Sigmo district of Jimma Zone).

The report draws on detailed qualitative studies conducted with children, their families and other stakeholders, showing that children's migration is driven by multifaceted factors, and discusses the different forms of vulnerabilities and protection risks faced en route and at destination countries; it also tracks the migration routes child migrants follow.

The report concludes by providing recommendations for policymaking and programming to address the protection concerns of child migrants, drawing on the analysis of migratory dynamics and vulnerability assessments. The recommendations cover wider areas of intervention, from services and activities in the areas of prevention and protection, to partnerships for the development of an integrated response to address irregular migration of children. The findings aim to support the national implementation of global commitments to protect children on the move, by informing and recommending actions and investments to a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, the UN, civil society organizations and other development partners.

Photo: A group of young Ethiopian migrants play volleyball at IOM's Migration Response Centre in Obock, Djibouti. They had been travelling to Yemen and hoping to reach the Gulf countries but decided to ask for IOM's assistance to return home due to the difficulties of the journey. © Olivia Headon/IOM

02. Objectives of the Study

General objective

Identify push and pull factors of migration amongst children in main migration-affected areas in Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions, as well as Dire Dawa's city administration.

Specific objectives

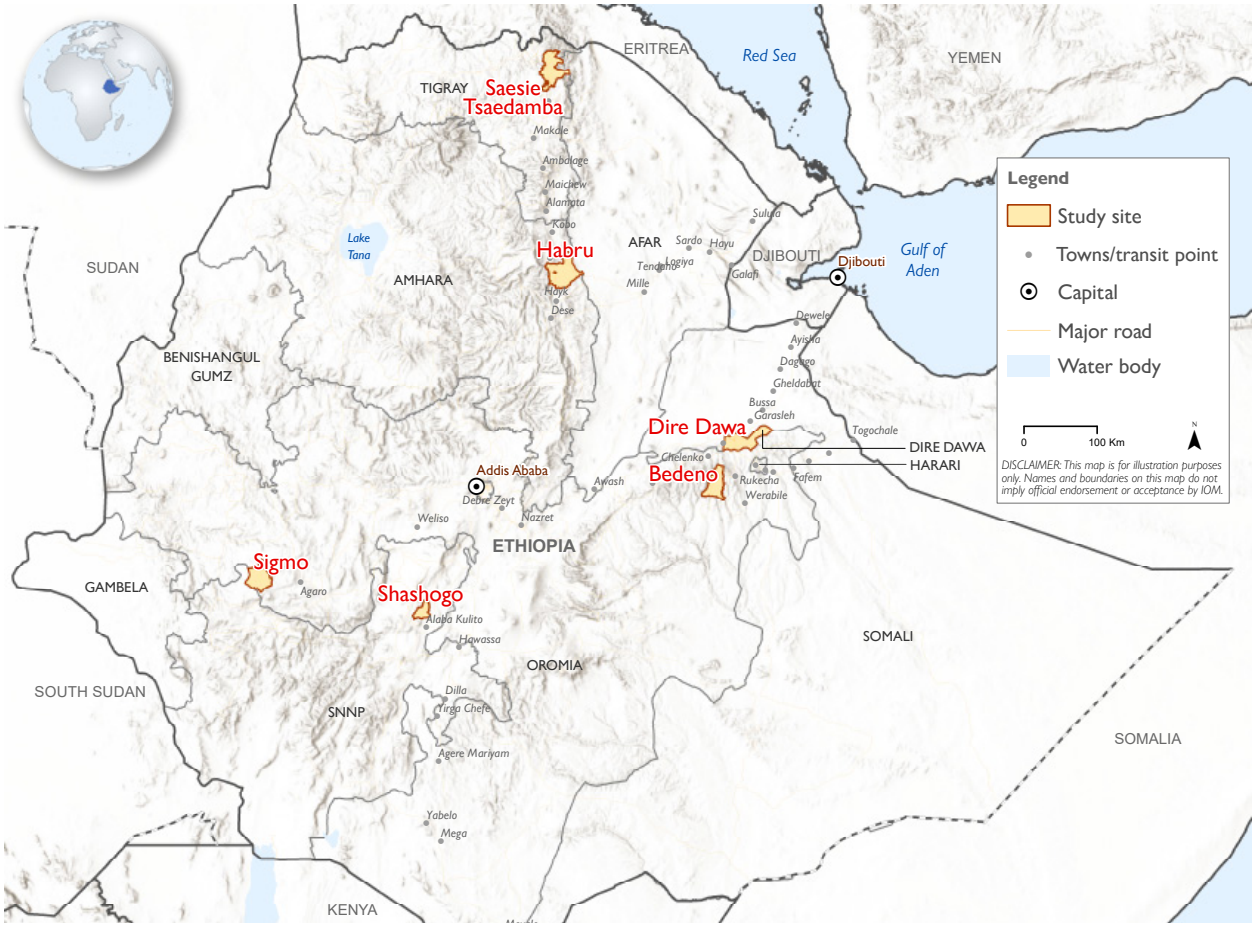
1. Identify the root causes of migration and re-migration including socioeconomic factors (livelihood/employment/education opportunities, relevance of reintegration activities, etc.), environmental factors, protection needs and risks, psychosocial needs, gender, cultural/traditional and religious values and practices, and access to services such as education, legal counseling and health care.
2. Identify the actors and factors shaping the decision-making process of child migration.
3. Understand the migratory routes taken by child migrants in the identified areas.
4. Identify the type of protection risks child migrants and returnee migrants face, and the determinants of vulnerability and protection risks of child migrants; understand whether these factors have an impact on the decision to migrate or re-migrate.
5. Map existing/potential partners such as community-based organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations working on issues related to child migration.

03. Methodology and Research Approach

A. Data Collection Tools and Ethical Precautions

The study adopted a qualitative research method, coupled with an exploratory survey. For the scope of this study, a child is defined in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and hence refers to all people younger than 18 years.

Multi-sited qualitative studies were conducted in the six study sites in Ethiopia. Data collection took place between September and November 2019.



Map 1. Location of the study sites

Triulzi and McKenzie (2013)[14] suggest that in migration studies on undocumented migrants, a subject-centered approach helps to avoid biases by letting the migrants speak for themselves. This study used various data collection tools such as in-depth interviews with key informants, collection of child migrants' biographies and narratives (self-descriptions and definition of the situation), and focus group discussions (FGD). Furthermore, secondary sources of data were consulted (both published and unpublished materials such as government policy documents and reports, IOM reports, and prior studies).

The in-depth interviews with children and their parents aimed at capturing the complexity and nuances of the decision-making process of child migrants from different backgrounds, the various push and pull factors, the routes child migrants anticipate to take or often take, the associated potential and actual risks, the lived experiences of returnee child migrants and prospects of further mobility or settlement. Sixty in-depth interviews (10 in each of the six sites) were conducted. At each study site, five returnee and five potential migrant children were interviewed. The interviews with returnee child migrants aimed to obtain their perspectives on the causes and circumstances that led to migration, the process of migration and individuals involved in the decision-making process, as well as to learn from their lived experiences and migration dynamics.

Furthermore, 30 in-depth interviews were held with parents of potential and returnee child migrants. The objective of these interviews was to understand the extent of parents' awareness on child migration and associated risks, the factors that make parents agree/disagree to their children migrating, their motivations in sending their children away from home, their expectations, and the extent to which parents benefit from their children's migration, among others. The diversity of the pool of informants was ensured, as informants were drawn from both genders, different socioeconomic backgrounds, places of origin (rural-urban backgrounds), age, educational background and family size.

A total of 12 FGDs were held. At each site, two FGDs were conducted with a group of five to six children and five to six community members. The FGDs with community members involved individuals with different backgrounds (teachers, parents, community elders, heads of local community associations such as Idir,[15] representatives of local Kebele,[16] women's forum). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the six study sites, with different key stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Qualitative findings were further enriched through an exploratory survey targeting a total of 297 children of whom 164 (55.2%) were potential migrants while 133 (44.85%) were returnee children across the six sites. The purposive sampling criteria considered the socioeconomic diversity of the child respondents. As much as the contextual situations allowed, an attempt was made to have equal or fair representation of men and women. Despite this effort, women total only 107 (36%) of the survey respondents due to cultural constraints and the pattern of migration in some of the sites, where only boys migrate (particularly in Sigmo district).

Viriginai (2009) suggests that studies on minors require ethically sensitive research strategies.[17] Ethical considerations were included, as the very nature of child migration raises important

14. Triulzi A and McKenzie R (ed.) 2013. Long Journeys. African Migrants on the Road. Leiden: Brill; 2013.

15. Idir is a traditional, member-supported association serving as a base for loan provision and protection in the event of sickness.

16. Kebele is the lowest administrative unit in Ethiopia.

17. Virginia, Morrow. The ethics of social research with children and families in young lives: practical experiences; young lives. Oxford: Department of International Development, University of Oxford; 2009. Available from: https://www.younglives.org.uk/sites/www.younglives.org.uk/files/YL-WP53-Morrow-EthicsOfResearchWithChildren.pdf

issues such as sensitivity of questions, vulnerability of research subjects, and ethical issues that need to be addressed at different stages of the study, including during fieldwork and data analysis. The study has built on UNICEF's Ethical Research Involving Children project and the four key areas for ethical considerations in studies dealing with children, namely harm and benefit, informed consent, confidentiality and privacy, and payment and compensation. Careful research design helps to avoid potential harm to the participants' current and future life; therefore, the study is designed in line with the ethical guidelines of confidentiality, privacy and informed consent of the informants.[18]

B. Methodological Challenges and Limitations of the Study

One of the main methodological limitations of the study is the qualitative nature of the research; results are indicative and cannot be generalized for the entire population. Other methodological challenges included accessing an equal number of men and women informants, narrating lived experiences (since returnee child migrants might have recall bias), and obtaining access to different government stakeholders during the short time of fieldwork. Time in the field was also found to be a limitation, as the five working days per site proved insufficient to carry out the planned tasks (that is, 15 in-depth interviews, five to seven structured interviews, two FGDs and administering 50 survey questionnaires).

Self-reported age, crucial for such an age-sensitive research focusing on children, was another methodological challenge. Respondents were selected based on self-reported age and hence there might be a possible age bias, which might have led to the inclusion of older or younger respondents in each selected age group. Another limitation relates to a common pattern in qualitative studies, whereby not all respondents answer all questions.

Finally, the author acknowledges that there are differences in the data's level of detail for the six study sites.

Photo: A group of young Ethiopian migrants play volleyball at IOM's Migration Response Centre in Obock, Djibouti. They had been travelling to Yemen and hoping to go on the Gulf countries but decided to ask for IOM's assistance to get home due to the difficulties of the journey. © Olivia Headon/IOM

18. Graham A, Powell M, Taylor, N, Anderson D & Fitzgerald R. Ethical research involving children. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti; 2013. Available from: https://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf [cited 2019 Nov 5].

04. Who are the Children on the Move?

The study seeks to answer two basic questions: who are the child migrants, and what is their socioeconomic profile? In all the study sites, the number of children on the move has grown substantially in the past decade. As similar studies elsewhere show, the increasing number of child migrants is a common trend in the Global South.[19]

Discussions on child migration need to start with a definition of who is considered a child. In all six sites, government officials and community members understand that legally speaking, those younger than 18 years are considered children.[20] However, socially and economically, other considerations might be more important; the delimitation of a child's age group is fluid and defined based on the social status of the child rather than his/her biological age. The difference is related to the notion of social age, based on the social norms of a local community and the expectations from those belonging to a given age group.[21] Irregular migration of Ethiopian children is generally rarely undertaken by those younger than 13 years. Irregular child migrants are more likely older than 13 years, particularly older than 15 years, even though sometimes, especially in Dire Dawa, there were cases of returnee children as young as 8 years. The aggregated data from the six sites show no respondent younger than 10 years, with the only respondent (a returnee) aged 11 years from Dire Dawa. On the other hand, the average age of child migrants from Tigray is slightly higher, 13–17 years. Two potential migrants and returnee informants (2/52, 3.77%) are 11 and 12 years old, while 10 (10/52, 18.87%) are 13–14 years, and the remaining (41/52, 77.36%) are 15 and older. This distribution is mainly due to the fact that the decisions to migrate are often made in the place of origin, after a child is physically able to brave the harsh journey, often after completing eighth grade (at around 13–14 years).[22]

One aspect of social age definition, observed from analysis of material collected in the field, is that of defining age based on the physical strength to perform certain tasks. If children are old enough to engage in laborious tasks such as fetching water, herding and cooking, (depending on their physique), then they are not considered children anymore. According to most informants, this shift happens at around 15 years of age, but sometimes as early as 12 years (as in the case of Bedeno). In many cases,

19. Lorenzen Mathew. The mixed motives of unaccompanied child migrants from Central America's Northern triangle. Journal on Migration and Human Security. 2017;5(4):744–767. doi: 10.1177/233150241700500402.

20. This report adopts IOM's definition of a child drawn from Article 1, UN Convention on the Rights of a child, whereby a child is defined as an individual younger than 13 yeas.

21. Christina Rose Clark-Kazak Towards a working definition and application of social age in international development studies. The Journal of Development Studies. 2009;45(8):1307–1324. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220380902862952.

22. Interview with parent of potential migrant.

child labour is also acceptable from an early age, at least after school hours and depending on the seasons, particularly in the poorest households, so children contribute to meeting basic needs, including their own education. Such is the case in Bedeno and Dire Dawa in particular. In Bedeno, in the FGD held with children, reference was made to a common saying on the value of child labour in society: ***"One starts learning after eating,"*** suggesting that learning without fulfilling the basic necessity of food is culturally sanctioned, in a context where children are expected to support income earning activities.

In Sigmo, Jimma, a religious angle complements that of social age. A boy or a girl younger than 7 years is believed to be unable to differentiate between good and bad, and thus is a child, implying that those older than 7 years are better positioned to make this difference. This delimitation seems to be derived from the Islamic stances regarding children's custody. In case of divorce, boys stay with their mother until they are 9 years old, and girls until 12 years or until ***"they come of age."***[23] In Jimma, children as young as 9 or 10 years migrate, often to Harar, Arsi and Illu Aba Bora for religious education, and then pursue long-distance migration out of the country such as to the KSA.

In economic terms, a child is considered as a family member with little responsibility for directly contributing to the household economy. However, in all study sites, children from poor economic backgrounds are often forced to drop out of school to support their families. This happens more likely in contexts of resource scarcity and child labour-intensive local economies, as in Bedeno, where water shortages exist and where children are attracted by labour requirements of the Khat trade. Some of the returnee children mentioned that they were involved in child labour, and perceived themselves as "breadwinners" for their families from impoverished backgrounds.

A more detailed categorization comes from Dire Dawa, with those children younger than 10 years (***daa'imman***) considered young children, those 10 to 15 years (***Ijoollee***) considered children, and those 15 to 18 years defined as potential adults.[24] Another informant called those aged between 15 and 18 years ***"early adults."***[25] In this setting, those younger than 10 years rarely migrate, but are likely to live on streets. Those older than 10 years, particularly older than 13, are more likely to migrate.[26] In Dire Dawa, children as young as 7 years set out to migrate "as an adventure with peers," aiming to reach Djibouti and come back to Ethiopia after a few days or weeks.

Regarding the socioeconomic profile of the children on the move, most are from impoverished backgrounds. As to gender composition, in four of the case study areas, most respondents mentioned that boys and girls migrate in comparable proportions, while in Sigmo girls tend to not migrate for religious reasons. Rather, the pathway for young girls is early marriage, then labour migration at a later stage. In Shashogo, Hadiya, while the numbers are comparable, destinations differ: women tend to migrate east to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and men tend migrate south, to South Africa. Collected data on the extent to which school enrolment affects migration dynamics shows that the largest majority of child migrants tend to be school dropouts; for example, most child migrants from Tigray are. In the study site in Eastern Tigray, tenth grade is considered a cut-off point, where

23. Mahdi Zahra and Normi A Malek. The concept of custody in Islamic law. Arab Law Quarterly. 1998;13(2):155–177. Other scholars consider the age of 2 years for boys, and 7 years for girls. For this perspective, see Fatima Saleh. A new perspective women in Islam (chapter five), available from: https://www.al-islam.org/a-new-perspective-women-islam-fatma-saleh-moustafa-al-qazwini/chapter-5-child-custody

24. Community FGD, Laga Oda Gununfata.

25. Interview with Bureau Head, Dire Dawa Bureau of Education.

26. Interview with Bureau Head, Dire Dawa Bureau of Education; Interview with Main Inspector Ayelech Tamiru; Interview with the father of a returnee child migrant at Laga Oda Gununfata.

dropping out of school and migrating is almost commonsensical.[27] This is why students call grade 10 Me'erefi Tsadkanat, meaning destination of angels. The underlying message is that there is no need to continue with education, and that it is time to migrate.

The majority of potential migrants and returnees who participated in the exploratory survey in Tigray are/were in primary (second cycle, 5–8 grades) and secondary (9–10 grades) schools; 20/52 (38.46%), and 27/52 (51.92%) respectively. A school principal who participated in the community FGD in Harbu discussed the patterns of child migration in the area. The first pattern is that of relatively mature students, between 16 and 17 years old (7–8 grades) migrating with the help of agents/agencies. The second pattern is that of children younger than 15 years (5–6 grades) migrating, often with the help of local brokers who convince the children to leave. The case study from Shashogo shows the difference in patterns and the fact that the increasing migration of teachers to South Africa motivates children to decide to irregularly migrate as well.[28] Informants mention a changing trend: in the 2000s, when migration to South Africa started from Hadiya, most migrants were school dropouts, whereas recent migrants include groups of graduates and civil servants.

Photo: A woman cooks food for migrants staying at IOM's Migration Response Centre in Obock, Djibouti. © Olivia Headon/ IOM

27. Interview with the focal person for Social Affairs, Eastern Zone.

28. Community FGD, Beramora Kebele.

05. Overview of the Main Push and Pull Factors of Child Migration

The study goes beyond a monocausal analysis of factors influencing children migration and addresses multifaceted factors: structural, community, individual and household factors, as well as other triggering factors. The study found that the causes for child migration are multiple and not mutually exclusive. The factors accounting for the re-migration of returnee child migrants are diverse and complex. By going beyond a mere focus on economic factors, the study further identifies non-economic factors such as environmental and demographic push factors.

A. Structural Factors

Economic factors

One of the main focuses of the study is to understand the drivers of migration for children; it therefore draws on the economic theory of migration as its conceptual framework.[29] This theory is known as the push-pull theory of migration, according to which the causes of migration are a combination of push factors, impelling people to leave their areas of origin, and pull factors, attracting them to certain receiving countries. Across all case studies, poverty, low agricultural productivity, landlessness and high youth unemployment were the common economic push factors mentioned by informants. According to the study by the Central Statistical Agency and UNICEF, an estimated 36 million of a total population of 41 million children younger than 18 years in Ethiopia are multi-dimensionally poor.[30] According to the report, given their large population sizes, Oromia, Amhara, and SNNP regions are the largest contributors to multi-dimensional child deprivation in Ethiopia. These three regions jointly account for 34 of the 36 million deprived children in Ethiopia, with Oromia showing the highest number at 16.7 million, SNNP region at 8.8 million and Amhara at 8.5 million. Dire Dawa is one of the areas with the lowest number of poor children.

Based on the exploratory survey, 42.95 per cent of potential migrants are from the lowest socioeconomic groups, while 35.9 per cent come from poor backgrounds.[31] While 17.22 per cent self-identified as

29. Stanojoska, Angelina and Petrevski, Blagojce. Theory of push and pull factors: a new way of explaining the old. Conference paper, Belgrade: March 2012.

30. Multi-dimensional Child Deprivation in Ethiopia - First National Estimates. Addis Ababa: Central Statistical Agency and UNICEF; 2019. Available from: https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/806/file/Multi-https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/reports/multi-dimensional-child-deprivation-ethiopia-first-national-estimates [accessed 2019 Nov 11].

31. During the exploratory survey we have used the average monthly income and assets as reference points and indicators to identify socioeconomic status. The term "lowest economic status" is for those households with zero monthly income and no property assets; "poor" for those with an average income of up to 500 Birr a month but no property; "medium economic status" is for those who own property, mainly farming land and earn up to 800–1000 Birr per month; "rich" for those who own assets (farming lands,

belonging to average socioeconomic backgrounds, only 3.38 per cent said they were from wealthy backgrounds.[32] Communities in all six case study areas are perceived as largely underprivileged for a variety of reasons. Poverty in the study sites mostly relates to the difficulty of securing a reliable source of livelihood – owing to land scarcity or landlessness. The issue of land is a national one, as the last comprehensive land distribution took place four decades ago.[33] This issue is more pronounced in the case of Hadiya, with one of the highest population densities in the country. In Dire Dawa, resource scarcity is tied to excessive inflow of people from surrounding areas, mainly from Hararghe highlands. However, while child migration is often attributed to poverty, in all six case study areas a few child migrants also come from relatively well-to-do backgrounds. The most important factors mentioned by more than 80 per cent of informants are economic in nature (Fig. 1).

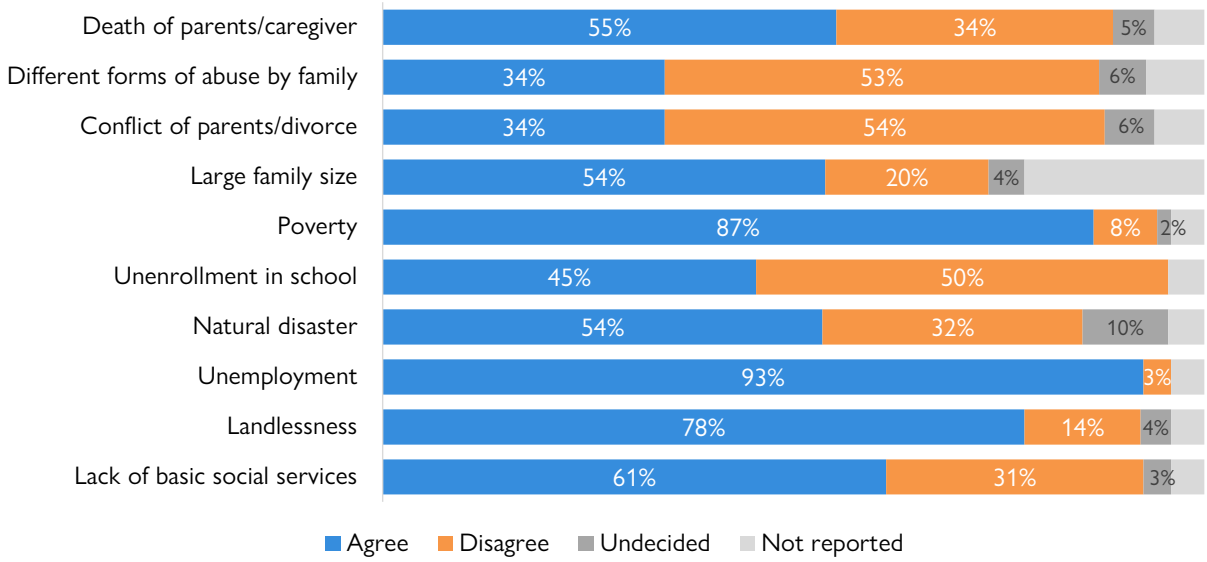


Figure 1. Push Factors (Source: survey data)

Furthermore, returnees stressed that food, the most basic of needs, is a struggle in Dire Dawa, while it is not an issue in Djibouti, where obtaining free food is possible. One FGD participant in Dire Dawa said: "*Unlike here, food is not an issue in Djibouti. Sometimes we even get free lunches/bread and tea in Djibouti.*"[34] One returnee migrant interviewed in Dire Dawa said that poverty is making children "exchange [their] soul for hope of better life."[35] Moreover, the structural problems associated with absolute poverty include lack of access to drinking water in Bedeno. In Sae'sea Tsaeda Emba district, poverty is linked to acute land shortage. Furthermore, youth landlessness and unemployment are very high in the district;[36] in this context, migrating is viewed as "*better than staying idle.*"[37]

cattle), and have monthly income of 3,000 Birr.

32. See note 31.

33. Fantu Cheru et al. The Oxford Handbook of the Ethiopian Economy; Oxford University press; 2019.

34. FGD with returnee child migrants, Dire Dawa.

35. Interview with returnee child migrant.

36. Interview with community elder and teacher.

37. Interview with the mother of a potential migrant.

Even though absolute poverty and associated sense of deprivation of basic needs appears to be a push factor for the largest majority of children, the study also found that for a significant number of children, the relative sense of deprivation plays a quintessential role,[38] particularly when children observe the improvement of the standard of living of returnee migrants. The statement from a 15-year-old potential migrant interviewed in Habru captures the nuances of relative deprivation as a factor of migration: "*If it were not for seeing what other kids have and what I am deprived of (lack), I would have hardly thought of leaving my family behind*."[39]

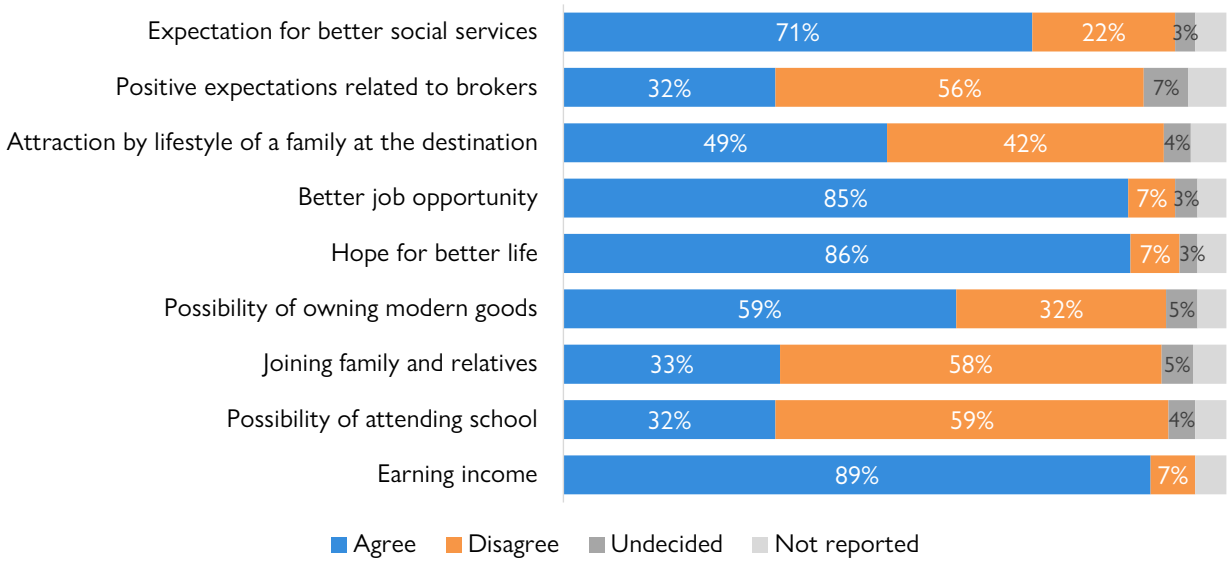


Figure 2. Pull Factors (Source: Survey data)

Figure 2 presents the various pull factors associated with child migration, which are mainly economic, such as obtaining a well-paying job (by Ethiopian standards) in the destination country (made further attractive by the strength of the Riyal, the Saudi currency). Economic success of prior migrants (reflected in ownership of property and consumption pattern of their family) is what potential migrants aim to replicate. The most important pull factors, mentioned by at least 75 per cent of respondents, include the possibility to earn an income, having a better life in the destination country, better job opportunities, and the strong belief that migration offers a better life. The economic push factor is also one of the leading elements for returnee migrants. A returnee informant explained: *"When one migrates to Djibouti he/she faces several problems; when one lives in Djibouti he/she encounters a number of problems; when one comes back home, he/she returns to the original problem that pushed him/her to migrate."*[40]

Culture of migration

"[The] culture of migration is a context whereby migration is socially accepted and pervasive in the society, and decisions about migration are rooted in everyday experiences" (Cohen 2004, 5).[41] The stronger networks between the sending and destination districts facilitate the flow of information,

38. Interview with a 14-year-old child informant, Dire Dawa; FGD with children, Tigray.

39. Interview with a 15-year-old informant, Habru.

40. Interview with a returnee, Laga Oda Gununfata.

41. Cohen Jeffery. The culture of migration in southern Mexico. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.

ideas, money and migrants. Irregular migration will be culturally accepted by the majority as a viable alternative in life, a stance close to the "culture of migration."[42] All six case study sites are among the regionally/nationally known main "sending areas" of irregular migrants, creating a migration system.[43] The study found a pronounced culture of migration in all the six study sites, especially in Shashogo, Habru, Jimma and Saesi Tseada Amba. Data analysis shows that some of the factors accounting for the outmigration of children are structural.

In the study sites, migration is often presented as a viable livelihood alternative. For instance, a parent said that: "*It [migration] is better than sitting and warming seats/chairs [sitting idle] here.*"[44] In Sigmo, the alternative is described as "*roving as a herd and chewing Khat.*"[45] Likewise, in Tigray the strong culture of migration is expressed in two common sayings raised during the FGD and interview: "*Better to die shot, than of hunger [here].*"[46] "*Wey sanduk kirshi wey sanduk riesa*" (either box of money or box of dead body).[47] Both sayings throw light on people's risk perception in their imagination, there is hope of improving one's life through migration, despite the associated risks. In areas where migration is deeply rooted, such as in Habru, socioeconomic conditions and lived experiences are heavily influenced by migration. Migration influences all aspects of socioeconomic life (food, clothing, school expenses), and contributes to increasing inequality between migrants' families and others, further fueling the cycle of migration. Another aspect of the engrained culture of migration is reflected in the fact that in all study sites, the 60 children interviewed confirmed there was at least one migrant from their extended family or neighbourhood.

Geographic layout affecting child migration

Geographical location affects the migration dynamics of child migrants. In the case of Dire Dawa, its proximity to Djibouti and its unique position as a transit point for migrants to the Middle East contributes to high child migration. For some children, migration from Dire Dawa is short term (for the summer school holidays) and is mainly destined to Djibouti.[48] Migration might hence be undertaken more than once, to the extent that migration to Djibouti is "*not considered migration.*"[49]

Moreover, its long-held position as a trade and industry hub attracts many children from the surrounding East and West Hararghe highlands, who end up living on the streets before migrating to Djibouti and beyond. Likewise, as the case material from Shashogo clearly shows, the location in the southern Ethiopia-Kenya border is one of the factors for child migrants from SNNP region to opt for the southern route instead of others.

Natural disasters and service delivery

Other important push factors mentioned by more than 50 per cent of respondents are natural disasters – more important in Shashogo where there is lack of access to social services and

42. Timmerman Christiane, Hemmerechts Kenneth, De Clerck Helene Marie-Lou. The relevance of a "culture of migration" in understanding migration aspirations in contemporary Turkey. Turkish Studies. 2014; 15(3):496-518.

43. Bakewell, Hein de Haas, Agnieszka Kubal. Migration systems, pioneers and the role of agency. Working Papers, Paper 48. Oxford: International Migration Institute, Oxford Department of International Development; 2011. Available from: https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:c5b723c0-4de2-44e1-afd7-6f346ee0df0d/download_file?safe_filename=WP48%2BMigration%2Bsystems%2Bpioneers%2Band%2Bthe%2Brole%2Bof%2Bagency.pdf&file_format=application%2Fpdf&type_of_work=Working+paper

44. Interview with the mother of a potential migrant, Saesi Tseada Emba.

45. Interview with the father of a potential migrant, Sigmo.

46. Interview with the parent of a potential migrant.

47. Interview with an expert, district's Bureau of Education.

48. Interview with returnee child migrant, Dire Dawa; interview with potential child migrant, Laga Harre, 08 Kebele.

49. Interview with Bureau Head, Dire Dawa Bureau of Education.

high risk of flooding. In some cases, the places of origin of child migrants were found to have limited opportunities due to structural issues related to geographical location, lack of physical infrastructure and low public service delivery, especially in Sigmo, Jimma. In Bedeno, accessing drinking water at the end of the rainy season is difficult. The case study from Bedeno shows that in the aftermath of the 2016 El Niño phenomenon and subsequent food shortages, many children left their birthplaces to migrate. FGDs held with local community members in Bedeno show the link between migration of children and acute water shortages. In many cases, children and their parents have to walk for as long as three hours to and from Gara Muldhata, the closest place where they can get water from. According to a World Food Programme report from 2016, *Ethiopia Food Security Outlook*, West and East Hararghe zones are prone to water scarcity and related chronic food insecurity.[50]

Less value for education – perceived higher "value for money" of migration

One of the study's findings points to recent trends and developments in rural Ethiopia, by and large showing the changes in "the value for money" equation, with a significant shift from investing in children's education to investment in migration, as the value of education is undermined. An investment in migration is considered wise because it is seen to have better "value for money". There is also the commonly held opinion (in all the case study locations) that a life change through education and employment is not possible in Ethiopia. This belief stems from the broader crisis in the education system and the inability of the job market to match supply, although the Ethiopian government is credited with a significant improvement of the education sector as part of the expansion of social services. In rural areas, this effort has led to better access to elementary education, while urban areas have seen a dramatic expansion of tertiary education, with the establishment of close to 50 public universities. Budget allocations for education reflect the government's commitment to educational development. Spending on higher education increased steadily to reach more than 25 per cent of total government expenditure on education, and 5.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012. The Ethiopian Parliament approved a federal government budget with planned expenditure of 387 billion Birr for the 2019–20 fiscal year. Education has the highest spending allocation in this year's federal budget, at 50.6 billion Birr, with funding mainly allocated to about 50 federally administered universities. However, the big leap in access to education does not match the country's job creation capacity.

Various studies have pointed out that the percentage of graduates' unemployment relative to total unemployment has increased.[51] Unless the education system aligns with the job market, the crisis will continue unabated, further contributing to the increase of child migration. The research mapped the dreams of child informants, asking about the children's aspirations for their future. Most responses reflected a negative opinion about being educated and earning a living as a result.

A child key informant in Dire Dawa said:

> *"Most educated people end up being jazba [good for nothing]. They waste their time going to colleges and at the end of the day they end up begging their parents for money to buy Khat. On the other hand, their mates of the same age who have been to Jeddah run businesses here, sometimes giving sadaqa to the so-called the educated ones. So, tell me which one is wiser*

50. Large-scale food security emergency to continue through September. Addis Ababa: World Food Programme; February–September 2016. Available from: https://fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/Ethiopia_OL_2016_02_0.pdf [accessed 2019 Nov 14].

51. Ethiopia's 2019-20 budget. CEPHEUS Research and Analytics; 10 July 2019. Available from: https://cepheuscapital.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Budget-Review-FY-2019-20.pdf [accessed 2020 Feb 21]. See Nigusse Weldemariam Reda and Mulugeta Tsegai Gebreyesus. Graduate unemployment in Ethiopia: the 'red flag' and its implications. International Journal of African Higher Education. 2018;(5):31–43.

– those who go to Jeddah at a younger age or those who waste their time in colleges?"[52]

This view is shared by older residents of the area. A sixty-year-old said:

> *"A few boys from our neighborhood went to university and spent four years in Haramaya. It has been two years since two of them graduated. They couldn't find job and spend their days chewing Khat. Can you tell us what value studying will add to changing one's life? What we and our kids need is bread, not paper, as one can live on bread and not on paper."*[53]

Sometimes, as the data from Tigray show, the education system is thought to be poor and unable to equip students with the necessary skills to lead independent lives, as these parents explain: "*People in our community do not give value for education. They do not believe that education will help them change their lives meaningfully. As a result, many children/students in the eighth or tenth grade give up schooling and migrate*."

Political instability and governance

The case of the protracted ethnic conflict, specifically the Oromo – Somali ethnic conflict, has been raised as one of the main factors for migration in the case of Bedeno. Moreover, structural issues related to governance and political pressures were raised in Sigmo and Dire Dawa. In Dire Dawa, informants from rural Kebeles stated that they are not well served by the city's administration, which neglects rural parts of Dire Dawa, suggesting this neglect might be a contributing push factor.[54]

Finally, government officials, unlike the main subjects of the study (children on the move), tend to focus more on attitudinal factors than structural, individual- and community-level push factors. The case made is that children want to take shortcuts to become wealthy as fast as they can, and do not appreciate the opportunities in their country (this was emphasized in Tigray, but also in Bedeno, Jimma and Shashogo to some extent).

B. Community-Level Factors

Some of the community-level push actors presented in this section include generational attitudes and social norms and behaviours.

Disinterest in rural life

The study's findings show that agriculture is not attractive to youth anymore. Hence, youth's low interest in joining the rural sector is one of the major community-level factors accounting for migration. Conceptions of modernity are drawing young people to urban areas. The infrastructure needed to create jobs and help youth do not exist in rural areas. In this context, child migration is starting to be viewed as a means of livelihood, as this 14-year-old informant from Hararghe explains:

> *"What is attractive about life here? Everything is full of challenges, from the basic things you need, such as water, to a desk to sit on and learn. To study, what a child needs is the school materials and an enabling environment. The enabling environment for example is having electricity, which would allow kids to study and do their homework. There is nothing here… everything here is backward."*[55]

Aesthetic elements

In addition to the economic pull factors, aesthetic attraction towards returnees is described as a factor. Some respondents in Habru mentioned that returnees have better (fairer) skin complexion and better looks. In a few cases (mainly among young women informants), the intention of becoming

52. Interview with a 15-year-old child informant, Dire Dawa.
53. Informal discussion with community elder during chat session.
54. Community FGD, Laga Oda Gununfata.
55. Interview with a14-year-old child, Bedeno.

modern, like returnees, was mentioned as a pull factor. The aesthetic element is part of the broader discourse on skin-tone in Ethiopia as it relates to social identity. Informed by the historical Ethiopian exceptionalism that depicts the country "in Africa rather than of Africa", fair-skinned people, (or red people in the Ethiopian parlance), are presented as the pure Ethiopians.

Cultural compatibility

Religious similarity between places of origin and the preferred destination, the KSA, further facilitates migration, with religious justification and aim of studying the Quran. Religious compatibility has been raised as a factor in Muslim-majority parts of the research sites, especially Sigmo and Bedeno. In Sigmo, the common religion (Islam) and the intention to learn Arabic and the Quran are mentioned as a possible pull factor by community members, although no potential migrant or returnee mentioned this as a factor. This aspect of cultural compatibility is a structural pull factor, as it fuels the hope of a preferential treatment based on shared religious identity.

C. Individual- and Household-Level Factors

Low educational performance

One of the key individual-level factors identified in the study is that of low school performance. Some child returnee migrants interviewed mentioned that their poor academic performance at school is one of the key factors making them consider migration as a viable alternative.

Addiction and substance abuse

Some child returnee migrants interviewed in Dire Dawa mentioned that one of the key factors of their migration was their exposure to different types of drugs. Some child migrants mentioned smoking weed and cigarettes, and being under the impression that these are cheaper and more accessible in Djibouti.

Family size

The household and family factors in the context of child migration include family size, socioeconomic status, migration history of parents and family members, livelihoods and family dynamics.

Household or family factors highly affect child migration dynamics. In most cases, child migrants come from large families and disadvantaged households. Extrapolating from the survey respondents (N=164), 15.22 per cent of potential migrants come from small families (3 or fewer members), 28 per cent from average family sizes (here understood as 4–6 members), 42.21 per cent from moderately large families (7–10 members), and 13.49 per cent from large families (more than 10 members). This mother of eight children, two of whom still in Yemen, and one of whom recently returned home in Bedeno, said:

> *"I have eight children. I couldn't fulfil their needs. Because I couldn't cater for their basic needs, my children migrated without my knowledge. Two of my children have emigrated while their younger brother just returned recently. My son told me that he was beaten badly, his ribs are broken, and he couldn't even work (…crying). The one with me had his hand broken and he couldn't work (…sobbing). Because of my inability to fulfil their needs, I am losing my children."*

Families are particularly large in Bedeno and Sigmo as a result of polygamy in these areas – which religion allows. Children born and raised in such polygamous households often shoulder the responsibility of supporting their family early on, as this mother in Bedeno explains:

> *"In most households in our area it is common to find a man with two to three wives and to have many children from different wives. This has an implication on the capacity to provide for their needs. In most cases, when a man marries a second or third wife, he will tend to neglect the first one and her children. This forces the children to migrate, to sustain themselves."*[56]

56. Interview with the mother of a child migrant.

Family networks and household migration history

Children from families with a history of migration are more likely to aspire for migration compared to other children. In Habru, for instance, several children are raised by single parents or grandparents because one or both parents have migrated. The presence of at least one migrant from the extended family or neighbourhood suggests that narratives about migration are part of life, that is, of all the immediate experiences, activities and contacts, a pattern further buttressed by the presence of a large number of returnees. On top of these, peers and brokers agitate further migration flows, in some localities during extended Khat chewing sessions, which offer the platform for exchange of information as the cases of Habru and Jimma show. During these exchanges, brokers use selective narrative, highlighting the positive aspects of migration and blaming negative situations on bad luck. Migration networks play a significant role. In Habru, children often have one sibling and/or one parent with a migration experience, as this key informant indicates:

> *"Do you see these children playing? I bet they are not older than eight years. You know what? If you could speak Arabic to them, I am sure that they would answer in Arabic. They are born and raised here in Habru and have never been to Saudi Arabia. So, how on earth could they learn Arabic? Most children you see here are being raised by a single parent because one of their parents lives there. Since their infancy, the clothes they wear and the toys they play with are often those sent to them from Saudi. So migration has been part of their growing up."*[57]

Household income

This study addresses poverty as a push factor and emphasizes the need to pay attention to absolute and relative sense of deprivation among children and to adopt a subjective approach. The inability to meet basic requirements such as food and clothing is described as a push factor in most cases, but especially for those seasonal child migrants from Dire Dawa and Hararghe to Djibouti.

Family dynamics

The second household factor is the loss of the main breadwinner in a family. The general pattern observed in the six study sites shows that more vulnerable groups, such as orphans and children from single-parent households, tend to migrate more. Children at the different sites mentioned that vulnerability reinforces poverty, leading to children's migration. Close to 60 per cent of respondents mentioned death of one or two parents as a push factor, while 36.56 per cent mentioned conflict within the family/divorce as a factor as well. Furthermore, informants emphasized that family breakdown (e.g. loss of the breadwinner or head of household) worsens children's economic situation, forcing them move elsewhere.

Household duties

Sometimes child migration is related to child labour exploitation, whereby children are forced to undertake different tasks, as illustrated by a potential child migrant interviewed in Bedeno:

> *"My parents are forcing me to fetch water and I travel for about an hour and half on foot once or twice a day. My mother is sick and because I am the eldest, I am expected to do that on her behalf. At times I arrive at school late and the teachers won't allow me to enter class. I also get exhausted and decide to stay at home. I had a dream to be a doctor, which I no longer have, as I know that to become a doctor one has to study well. I am planning to go to Harar and from there travel to Saudi Arabia. If I do not study and become someone as I always wanted, the other option I have is to migrate."*[58]

57. FGD with community members.

58. Informal discussion with women potential migrants.

D. Other Contingent Factors

Additional elements accounting for child migration in Ethiopia exist, including:

Incidental factors

Immediate triggering factors affecting migration dynamics need to be considered in addition to the structural factors. For example, in Bedeno respondents mentioned that child migration increased after the 2016 El Niño caused drought and food insecurity. On the other hand, in 2017 the Oromo-Somali conflict is believed to have contributed significantly to the return of many child migrants from Djibouti. Their return was also triggered by protection risks Oromo child migrants faced in Djibouti due to their ethnic background. This situation is linked to the protracted ethnic tensions and conflict between ethnic Oromo and Somali groups. The conflict has a transnational dimension and a spillover effect in countries where ethnic Somalis dominate, such as Djibouti, Somaliland and Somalia. Likewise, recurring and growing displacement following flooding from Lake Boyo in Shashogo, Hadiya, is taking place, leading to internal migration and ultimately becoming international migration.

Information and communication technology

Increased accessibility of information, with enhanced flow of information about migration, migration means, routes and pull factors at destination countries plays a role in migration. Information circulation takes different forms, from exchange of information during informal gatherings such as Khat chewing gatherings in Habru to information exchanged with family members living overseas. The role of communication technology, especially telephone, is described as significant in the southern route in data collected from Shashogo. The information exchanged about the positive aspects of life overseas, based on selective narrative on top of local high unemployment, contributes to changing life aspirations at home. Few people now believe that they could make a decent living without emigrating, at least briefly, influenced by the strong migration system linking the case study areas to the destination areas, and the ease of communicating real-time information across the globe.

Availability of smugglers

The existence of an enabling environment, mainly through smuggling services, is also mentioned as a key factor in the rise of child migration. To reach their respective destinations and overcome potential obstacles in their journey, child migrants often rely on the services of smugglers. For instance, in Dire Dawa, the brokers' role is not significant, since children use the eastern route via Djibouti. But those (mostly adult migrants) going through Addis Ababa, Metema, to Sudan-Egypt/Libya-Europe[59] and to South Africa, do use smugglers.[60] Smuggling fees vary according to destination and associated risks.

The smugglers in Habru, locally referred to as Lebaw (thief), target children from well-to-do families and those with relatives in the KSA. Smugglers do so because the parents and relatives of these children would be more likely to pay ransoms quicker, unlike poorer families. Often, the ransom is requested by criminal groups who have strong ties with the local smugglers. Generally, child migrants are detained in Yemen, and parents are forced to pay ransom for their release. The ransom requested varies between 20,000 and 75,000 Birr.

Brokers can be returnee migrants who are networked with the smugglers at different transit and destination countries and who recruit local child migrants, or structured criminal networks. The brokers or smugglers have sophisticated networks across multiple transit points and countries, and assist with the journey and provision of temporary shelter for the migrants en route and means of transport. They also facilitate the crossing of borders through bribery networks

59. FGD with children, Dire Dawa.

60. Community FGD, Laga Oda Gununfata; interview with Deputy Bureau Head, Justice Office.

with officials. In all the study sites, it was clear that some potential child migrants knew the brokers well. Prospective migrants either directly establish contact with the broker or are referred by peers and family members. Another mechanism used by the smugglers in the five study sites destined to the Middle East is that of a migration facilitation fee, which the parents or relatives pay upon the child's arrival in Djibouti. The study shows that local communities seem to protect brokers; for instance, in Jimma, neither migrants nor parents were said to cooperate with the police in providing information about the brokers.[61]

The re-migration of child migrants is sometimes facilitated by brokers. Failed migration attempts highly impact the reputation of a smuggler:

> *"Brokers would lose their prestige and potential gains for not bringing in the migrants successfully to Saudi. Hence, the brokers use whatever methods to convince the returnees to re-migrate so brokers can rebuild their prestige and make up for the lost income for previously failing to bring migrants into Saudi."*[62]

Role of returnees

Because these case study sites are part of a well-established migration network, information is available through this network and through the many returnees or failed migrants who know well the experience, risks and opportunities of migration. One of the major factors in the perpetuation of migration is the very high likelihood of returnees to re-migrate. Returnee child migrants are actively engaged in encouraging and facilitating child migration journeys, becoming "circuit children", meaning they pursue their own mobility and guide migrants in exchange for monetary compensation for the assistance provided.[63] Re-migration of returnee child migrants is described in Dire Dawa: "*Children think that dying abroad is better than dying at home*."[64]

The phenomenon of re-migration is mostly due to the fact that children are forced to re-migrate because of the unaddressed vulnerabilities that originally forced them to move, including poverty, family fragmentation (for example in case of parents' divorce), and other factors. In Sae'sea Tsaeda Amba, the re-migration of returnee child migrants is described as an addiction. The case study from Tigray shows that the notion of social hierarchy forces returnees to re-migrate, because returning without significant assets would be considered a failure.[65] A key informant said: "*Migration is not about improving life, it is about social status. Therefore, they migrate and re-migrate continuously [until the desired social status is achieved]*."[66]

Of the several push factors for re-migration mentioned by returnee child migrants, the most important include: helping parents, debt bondages, refunding the property sold to finance migration, psychological and emotional challenges, unwillingness to get married (for women returnee migrants) and having come back to the same circumstances that pushed into migration. Re-migration is also related to the fact that child migrants do not save or remit a sufficient amount of money during the period they were abroad. When child migrants go back to a deteriorating rural economy, they are forced to reconsider re-migration.[67] When they decide to leave again, more children decide to join them.

61. Interview with Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs, Sigmo.

62. Community FGD, Habru.

63. G Sanchez. "Circuit children": The experiences and perspectives of children engaged in migrant smuggling facilitation on the US-Mexico border. Anti-Trafficking Review. 2018; 11: 103–119.

64. Community FGD, Laga Oda Gununfata.

65. Interview with Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs.

66. Interview with Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs

67. These savings would only meet the immediate sustenance needs of the children before their return. FGD with children; head of Women's League, Laga Oda Gunuunfata.

Another factor for re-migration raised during the FGD held with community members in Tigray is the absence of a psychosocial support system. Parents often lack the skills and resources to help returning children reintegrate. The Head of East Tigray zonal Women and Youth Affairs Department mentioned lack of investment skills as one of the leading factors for re-migration of child migrants: "*They spend the hard-earned money for nothing. They have no training or special skills to create innovative job, so they could not settle, and they re-migrate to the same.*"

Another factor associated with re-migration of children is limited opportunities.[68] A returnee child migrant interviewed in Tigray said that despite the 180,000 Birr saved during his four-year stay in the KSA, he felt that "*nothing is enough to change [one's] life here [Tigray/Ethiopia]*," and decided to re-migrate.[69]

Role of religious figures

One of the community-level factors is that of pastors and churches, especially in Shashgo. Churches and religious figures play a significant role in the migration project at the community level. The case material from Shashogo shows that Ethiopian migrants living in South Africa send significant remittances to churches, which is communicated to followers during Sunday worship, where migrants attribute their successful migration to divine intervention, indirectly motivating young children and adults. Local pastors in Shashogo offer prayer services to prospective migrants.

Photo: A child moved by a live drama about the dangers of irregular migration and smuggling during an event on International Migrant. © IOM Ethiopia

68. Interview with potential child migrant.

69. Interview with returnee child migrant.

06. Migratory Routes of Child Migrants

The three major destinations for migrants from the Horn of Africa are the Middle East, Europe and South Africa. Migrants reach these destinations through four major routes: the western route via Sudan into Libya and across the Mediterranean; the northern route via Egypt to Israel; the southern route through East Africa towards South Africa; and the eastern route transiting through Yemen to the KSA and beyond.[70] According to an IOM 2018 report, between January and December 2018 more than 160,000 Ethiopians and Somalis travelled on the Eastern route heading to the Middle East, a far higher number than in 2017, with 99,516 migrants.[71] According to the World Migration Report (2018), the majority of African migrants in South Africa are from the Horn of Africa, specifically from Ethiopia and Somalia. In most study sites (Sae'sea Tsaeda Emba, Sigmo, Bedeno and Habru), child migration is almost exclusively bound to the Middle East.[72]

Expressed intentions during the survey, however, were more diverse, as respondents were more focused on preferences, which in many cases are for North America and Europe, especially for those from Dire Dawa. Most potential migrants (about 71.34%) mentioned the KSA as their preferred destination. Likewise, the largest majority of returnee child migrants mentioned the KSA as being their desired destination. For instance, Sigmo is nicknamed "Little Saudi," and in Girana in Habru district, informants said that

> *"[even] a fetus knows about Saudi and Saudi Arabia is among the first words of a child."*

The migration routes child migrants take in all the six study sites involve several stopovers of varying duration, in different places, often referred to as transit places. The transit points involve both internal transit points and international ones. For example, child migrants from Sae'sea Tsaeda Emba destined to the Middle East often descend to the adjacent Afar lowlands before going to Djibouti. Child migrants in Tigray often use two main routes. The first one is the route through Afar region, leading to Djibouti and further. From Firewiny or Edaga Hamus, child migrants head to Mekele, from where the smugglers arrange for transport either to Chifera, Milie, Logia or Dicheautos in Afar Region. From these areas, children travel to Djibouti in containers and trucks or on foot, at night.[73] From Djibouti in Obock

70. Regional Mixed Migration in East Africa and Yemen in 2017: 1st Quarter Trend Summary and Analysis. Danish Refugee Council and Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS); 2017. Available from: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/regional-mixed-migration-east-africa-and-yemen-2017-1st-quarter-trend-summary-and [accessed 2019 Nov 11].

71. A Region on the Move; Mobility Overview in the Horn of Africa and the Arab Peninsula. Nairobi: IOM Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa; 2018. Available from: https://displacement.iom.int/reports/region-move

72. See figures 4–9 for further details on the routes child migrants from the six study sites use.

73. Interview with returnee girl child migrant.

they take small boats to Yemen. The last leg, from Yemen to towns in the KSA, could take 17 days on foot in the desert; many children die there.[74] The second route is longer, through Somaliland. One returnee migrant narrated his experience through the second less trekked route:

> *"From Firewiny town I took a bus to Mekele, where I spent the night. From Mekele I went to Addis Ababa, and after a few days waiting for more migrants from different parts of the country, with the help of the broker we left for Jigjiga in a mini bus and from Jigjiga they took us to Hargeyssa and to Yemen and then to Saudi Arabia."*[75]

The route often taken by child migrants from Habru is: Habru-Kombolcha-Geriba (around Bati)[76]-Logiya (in Afar)-Decci Otto (at a place called 'Wuha Limat')[77]); walking from Decci Otto-Galafi (border with Djibouti)- from Galalfi using a transport to reach Obock- from Obock to walk to Hayu-Djibouti's coast)[78] from Hayu they take a boat to cross to Yemen's coast.[79] Most child migrants use public transport until they reach Logiya. From Logiya to Decci they often travel in trucks. From Galafi to Obock they use local transportation arranged by the brokers. In Hayu they wait for the boat to cross over to Yemen. The cost of accommodation, food and water, and brokerage fees are most often paid as a lump sum.

Child migrants from Sigmo have to pass through Jimma and Addis Ababa before reaching Dire Dawa and proceeding to Djibouti. Similarly, migrants from Habru mainly transit through Djibouti via Afar. In all these three cases, child migrants rarely migrate through Somalia. After reaching Dire Dawa, mainly by bus, child migrants use a combination of train and walking to reach Djibouti, from where they take a boat to Yemen's coasts. From Yemen, they either use vehicles or walk to reach Saudi towns.

For children relying on smugglers, crossing into the KSA from Yemen is at an additional fee, to be paid to Yemeni smugglers – higher for girls than boys.[80]

Unlike child migrants from Dire Dawa, who often stay in Djibouti, child migrants from Jimma often continue to the KSA. From Djibouti to Yemen, migrants cross the sea in often-overcrowded boats, in scorching heat. From Yemen, they take buses[81] to reach the Saudi border. Another possible route to Yemen is through Somalia, though not commonly used by child migrants from Jimma.[82]

The case of Bedeno is different because child migrants also take the Somali route to reach Yemen. Moreover, child migrants do not directly reach their destination, making several stops in Harar, Jigjiga, Wucale and Bossaso to work and save money to cover the fees for the next leg of travel. The poorest migrants take the longest and riskier route, and it takes them much longer to reach their destination.

Most child migrants from Dire Dawa – those originally from Dire Dawa and those who are living on the streets in the city – aim to go to Djibouti for a few months. For those who were living with their parents, they tend to travel after the end of the school year. The trip is relatively short, and the means of transportation include train, trucks and walking. The destination of child migrants from

74. Interview with returnee girl, Illii Darartuu Kebele.

75. Interview with returnee child migrant.

76. Here child migrants wait for a few days until there is a larger group of migrants and for a more opportune time to continue.

77. Organized group of smugglers operate from here.

78. Those migrating through Somalia (through Bosaso to Yemen) are adults; all children take the Djibouti route.

79. FGD with community members.

80. Interview with a potential migrant.

81. Child migrants have the possibility to work on Khat fields in Yemen (watering and spraying pesticide) if they want to save for the next (and last) leg of the migration (interview with returnee child migrant).

82. Interview with the parent of a returnee child, Seriti Kebele.

Dire Dawa used to be Djibouti and it is only recently that child migrants from Dire Dawa are further extending the journey to Yemen and the KSA.[83]

Women migrants using the migratory routes starting from Shashogo, Hadiya, aim to reach the KSA. Men often migrate to South Africa through Hosanna, Dilla and Moyale, before crossing into Kenya, then through Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique/Zimbabwe before reaching South Africa. While most of these migrants mainly travel on foot or in a vehicle, those who can afford it fly for part of (or all) the journey. However, children rarely take the plane, as they cannot board without an adult family member. However, findings from Hadiya show that young women, often as young as 15 years, who travel as prospective wives to successful migrant businessmen in South Africa often manage to get travel documents that allow them to fly alone, forging their dates of birth. Marriages are most often arranged, with the groom's parents selecting the young potential wife.

When migrants travel longer distances, the costs of smuggling tend to be higher, as shown in cases from Habru, Shashogo, Sigmo and Tigray. Longer routes involve several stopovers and hence smugglers charge higher fees. The smuggling market is often more focused on long-distance migration, involving sophisticated operations that require broader networks to transport migrants over long distances.[84] For instance, the data from Habru show that smuggling fees for longer travel go up to 80,000 - 90,000 Birr, paid in three installments. The first (about 35,000 Birr) is paid after arriving in Yemen, at a desert campsite called Hoch. After reaching a place called Alsabet, a second installment of 35,000 Birr is paid. The last installment is paid after the child migrant crosses into the Saudi territory.

Photo: Djibouti's Coast Guard provides transit support to IOM, helping the Organization's staff make the sea journey from Djibouti city to Obock where most migrants leave from to travel to Yemen. © Olivia Headon/IOM

83. FGD with community members, Laga Ambo.

84. Alice Mesnard and Emmanuelle Auriol. To control migration flows and defeat human smuggling, sell visas. CGD Policy Paper 090. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development; 2016. Available from: http://www.cgdev.org/publication/control-migration-flows-and-defeat-human-smuggling-sell-visas

07. Decision-Making

The analysis of the decision-making process considers the interplay of various actors and factors that affect child migration dynamics. The decision to migrate (or to stay) is not exclusively based on structural push-pull factor considerations – these give more weight to the financial determinants of the migration dynamics, failing to capture the agency and decision-making of various actors at the household and individual levels.

Not all children aspiring to migrate do migrate, as they need to have the capability to do so. The dominant discourse of normative victimization portrays child migrants as subjects who lack agency to decide about their mobility. This capability, at the very least, could come in the form of age and physical readiness of the child to brave the harsh journey. In the case of short and inexpensive trips, such as from Dire Dawa to Djibouti, this might be the only capability needed. Children often make the decision and migrate without the knowledge of their parents. For example, the case material from Sigmo district shows that more than half (51.85%) of potential child migrants made the decision themselves. Moreover, as parents could potentially stop them, child migrants from Dire Dawa prefer to not tell them – if they are not already living on the streets.

The survey data also corroborate that children are the main decision-makers across the six sites. Close to 55 per cent of the potential child migrants and returnees say that they make the decision to migrate (or not) themselves. The next most important actors in the decision-making process are parents (22%), friends (13%) and relatives (10%). This pattern conceals regional differences, especially the absence of the child's agency in the riskier and more expensive route to South Africa from Shashogo. In this case, despite findings from the interviews and FGDs, the survey shows that friends (60.42%) have greater influence on decision-making than parents (28.08%). Relatives come in as the third most important actors, with 11.5 per cent. Data show a pattern whereby children attempting to migrate through riskier routes hide their plans from their families. Some young potential migrants seem to have been intercepted by their parents and family members.

For longer routes, for instance headed to South Africa, the involvement of family members becomes essential. With longer distances, risks and financial requirements increase. If and when involved, parents prepare (by selling a property, taking a loan, arranging with a relative in the KSA to cover ransom payments and other expenses) ahead of time.

However, as potential migrants get older, if parents are likely to disapprove of the intention, they could decide to migrate without telling their parents. Furthermore, when children are from poor backgrounds, their chances of consulting their family is lower and hence they tend to make the decision and look for ways of financing their trip. This is common in Bedeno, where migration happens in a phased manner. The study shows that when parents are part of the decision-making process, migration tends to be quicker, more straightforward and will involve a broker from the very start in Bedeno. Other potential child migrants might decide based on consultations with peers and brokers. In the case of boys from Shashogo heading to South Africa, parental involvement is necessary, given the expensive nature of the journey. Parental involvement is needed if parents cover the trip's expenses, but the migrating child could also agree with the brokers to provide free services as compensation, after reaching South Africa. In Jimma it is common for children to decide to migrate on their own, and then convince their parents to support their journey. Sometimes support offered by a family goes beyond financial support and includes holding prayer rituals (du'a.)[85]

Sometimes child migrants make a spontaneous decision. A 15-year-old returnee child migrant interviewed in Habru explains that:

> *"I was on my way to school when I came across my neighborhood friends, who were leaving our village to migrate. They told me to join them; I dropped my school materials there and joined them. Despite their encouragement, I would say that the final decision for my migration was exclusively mine."*[86]

The study shows different patterns in the family's involvement in the decision-making, ranging from an active role (pooling resources to fund migration), to a more disengaged and uninformed one. Thus, despite differing types and degrees of parent involvement, the decision of informing and involving parents in the migration project is made by the child migrant. This finding calls to question the predominant perception about children and their decision-making regarding such complicated and life-changing issues. White et al. (2011) mention that the focus on adult migrants often leads to ignoring the agency of young migrants.[87] The agency of child migrants has been discussed in studies, showing how children are actively involved in decision-making during migration.[88] Siblings play an essential role in the decision-making of child migrants. In an interview in Sigmo, a mother said: *"If a parent supports the first son, the second will be supported by the first. That is how it works."*[89] The reason why siblings often co-migrate or sponsor their younger siblings is related to the regular remittances child migrants send, and to burden sharing. Sponsoring a younger sibling to share responsibilities becomes a practicable solution.

This study has also gathered evidence of different and extreme practices. In the case of Shashogo, a parent decided for his daughter to marry a migrant working in South Africa, thus making two decisions for her: an arranged marriage and migration. This is an extreme case of girls showing little agency in the decision to migrate. In such cases, parents might make the deal and take bride wealth payments without the knowledge of their daughter. Thus, the girl is not only being forced to migrate, but also to marry the person who will

85. Interview with returnee child migrant.

86. Interview with a child returnee.

87. Allen White, Caitríona Ní Laoire, Naomi Tyrrell & Fina Carpena-Méndez. Children's roles in transnational migration. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. 2011;37(8): 1159–1170. Doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2011.590635.

88. Timéra, M. Child mobility from and within West African countries. In: Research Handbook on Child Migration (J. Bhabha, J. Kanics and D. Senovilla Hernández, eds.). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing; 2018.

89. Interview with the mother of a returnee, Seriti Kebele.

be covering her full migration expenses.[90] These arranged marriages might result in exploitative relationships and increase the risk of gender-based violence, as sometimes bride wealth payment is a factor accounting for intimate partner violence.

Similarly, in Habru there are reported cases of abducted and forced migration of children with the aim of extorting ransom from parents/relatives. In this case as well, the decision is not made by the child, but by a broker/smuggler. Both boys and girls are targeted in comparable proportions, but a higher ransom is demanded for girls.

There are also cases of children making the decision and migrating in groups, a reportedly common occurrence in Dire Dawa and Sigmo, where children co-migrate in small groups of five to 10 migrants.[91] Co-migrating shows another instance of agency of decision-making by the children. Moreover, there are reported cases of spontaneous migration by children, for example in Habru district and Dire Dawa. Some community members, potential child migrants and returnees report that in the case of younger children (that is, younger than 15 years), there is a tendency of joining a group without any prior planning or thought.[92] By going beyond a mere normative victimization narrative of child migrants, and by drawing on their lived experiences, this study indicates the agency of child migrants and the strategies they employ in planning their migration and in negotiating their precarious and vulnerable position.

The degree of involvement and role of brokers in decision-making of child migrants varies across the study sites. For instance, most child migrants from Dire Dawa who are aiming to reach Djibouti for a temporary stay do not use brokers. In other cases, such as Tigray and Sigmo, brokers/smugglers use different incentive mechanisms, such as offering free smuggling services for those who bring along children to co-migrate with. This method is identified by Reitano and Tintit's analysis of the business model of migrant smuggling, which is said to mainly benefit from economies of scale facilitating the mass movement of people.[93] The study found that smugglers offer free smuggling services for those who migrate with children for two main reasons. First, families of child migrants end up paying ransom to the smugglers – who sometimes are part of the criminal trafficking network, showing a pattern of strong ties between smugglers and human traffickers en route. Second, those who employ child migrants and benefit from child labour exploitation pay the smugglers.

In Habru, child migration has evolved into a criminal activity, with reports of children being smuggled without their consent, or abducted. In this location, children from relatively wealthier households, and households with a relative in the KSA are particularly targeted, as the intention is to extract ransom by holding the child hostage in Yemen. Sometimes the decision to migrate is motivated by previous migrants within the family or network of friends, rumored or witnessed success stories, or even community members with connections who encourage migration.

A different dimension of migration decision-making would be habitual behaviour. "Any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be reproduced with an economy of effort and which is apprehended by its performer as that pattern. Forming a habit further implies that the action may be performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort."[94] Findings from Sae'sea Tsaeda Emba reflect this pattern, with the term addiction often used to refer to the re-migration of returnees. Informants from other areas also express similar views. After the first migration, it appears that the level of reflection or risk assessment declines, and the decision to migrate becomes an unconscious decision through a process of routinization.

90. FGD with children, Beramora Kebele.

91. FGD with returnee child migrants, Habru; FGD with potential child migrants, Dire Dawa.

92. FGD with community members, Habru, and interview with returnee child migrants, Dire Dawa.

93. Tuesday Reitano and Peter Tinti. Survive and advance: the economics of smuggling refugees and migrants into Europe. Institute for Security Studies Paper. 2015;289:1–31.

94. Berger Peter and Thomas Luckmann. The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge. New York: Anchor books.

08. Protection Risks for Child Migrants

The study found compelling evidence of child migrants being often exposed to protection risks during various phases of their journey. Child migrants face numerous risks at country of origin, en route, and in transit and destination countries. Unaccompanied migrants often face detention, kidnapping for ransom and extortion, and are sometimes vulnerable to sex trafficking.[95] All returnee respondents (100%) to a self-administered questionnaire reported having been physically and psychologically abused at least once. One of the most relevant findings is that risks do not differ across the origin areas (with the exception of Sae'sea Tsaeda Amba), but are rather determined by the routes taken.

The most common risks faced by child migrants are hunger, thirst (leading some to drink sea water and die as a result), physical exhaustion from long journeys in very hot climates, disappearance/death, contracting diseases and snake bites. The duration of the journey and the length of the transit pathways influence the different forms of rights violations and protection risks child migrants face. A FGD with child informants in Dire Dawa pointed at the rights violations children face during their migration to Yemen and the KSA. In longer journeys that involve relying on brokers, children are often verbally abused, beaten and tortured for ransom. Tortures for ransom include burning the child migrant's skin with melting plastic.[96] The main protection risk factors are:

Emotional distress

For most child migrants, the very first experience out of the comfort of their homes and care of parents (despite poverty and lack of resources) is the most unpleasant experience. Most often, they are not mentally prepared enough for the challenges they face, and tend to rely on luck and fate.

Perilous journey

When journeys involve vehicles, they tend to entail more risk. 'Panya routes' are often used to avoid being detected; vehicles are often crammed and passengers suffocate; sometimes smugglers drive at night with the lights off, increasing the risk of traffic accidents. Furthermore, when migrants cross the Red Sea to Yemen, the boats used are in bad conditions and overcrowded. If the sea becomes rough, traffickers often throw migrants in the sea to reduce the boat's weight and the risk of capsizing.

Impact of migration policies throughout the route

The structural risk factors for child migration include the strict immigration policies in place. Particularly

95. Meron Zeleke. Too many winds to consider; which way and when to sail! Ethiopian female transit migrants in Djibouti and the dynamics of their decision-making. African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal. 2017;12(1):49–63. DOI: 10.1080/17528631.2017.1412928

96. Interview with the father of a returnee migrant.

after crossing national borders and becoming "illegal", the risk of police brutality increases. Imprisonment (sometimes for many years) is likely if captured in the KSA, as well as en route to South Africa. If a child migrant attempts to escape, Saudi police could as well shoot him/her as explained by some returnees.[97]

The strict immigration policies of the transit countries such as Djibouti and of destination countries often expose undocumented child migrants to be rounded up and imprisoned. One protection risk is incarceration in detention facilities, which exposes child migrants to increased risk of physical and sexual abuses. Migrant children are most often detained in prison cells with adults, sharing overcrowded cells and underfed. Returnee child migrants who participated in a FGD in Dire Dawa mentioned that they witnessed abusive behaviour of immigration officials; some said they were sexually abused while others were subjected to various forms of labour exploitation such as cleaning prison cells (for more details see the case study from Dire Dawa).

Child migrants often end up in challenging conditions due to their irregular immigration status, exposing them to sexual and gender-based violence. Perpetrators are sometimes law-enforcing agents, mainly the police. Child returnee migrants interviewed at all study sites reported such experiences.

Sexual violence

The study found that child migrants (both boys and girls) face risks of sexual violence, en route and at destination. Exposure to sexual violence sometimes starts in Ethiopia, but increases after crossing national borders, especially into Yemen. Girls face the risk of being (gang) raped and of sexual exploitation, in some cases becoming sex slaves (see the case of Sigmo). According to the information gathered in Dire Dawa, it is common for girls to return pregnant after being raped.[98] There are also reports of female child migrants taking contraceptives to avoid getting pregnant if raped. Girls who migrate face greater and qualitatively different risks than boys. Sexual violence also increases the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Even though it is not commonly discussed because of the taboo associated with homosexuality in Ethiopia, boys also are at risk of rape, a risk that they sometimes try to avoid by sleeping in groups.[99] In all study sites, returnee child migrants emphasized the grave violations of rights they experienced, as one child migrant interviewed in Dire Dawa explains:

> *"They treat us like dogs. Once a police officer forced us to line up naked and dance for him. When I refused he was offended and forced me to wash his clothes. During our 10-day stay at the prison we were only given bread and sometimes it was so dry we could not swallow it. They lied to us and said that if we behaved and served them they would allow us to go back to the street and work but this never happens. During my stay on the street I met a young boy from Jimma area who was raped by two policemen."*[100]

Involvement in criminal acts

A unique risk associated with migrants from Sae'sea Tsaeda Amba is that of serving as drug mules. Smugglers in Yemen transport Khat, other drugs and alcohol into Saudi towns, using child migrants. If the children are captured, they could be imprisoned, and in worse-case scenarios, could be exposed to police abuse and being shot. Child migrants are often involved in these illicit activities to earn an income to pay for their migration – mainly the cost of travel from Yemen's border to Saudi towns. A returnee child migrant from the area explains:

97. FGD with returnee child migrants, Sigmo.

98. Interview with Police unit Main Inspector Ayelech Tamiru.

99. FGD with children, Dire Dawa.

100. Interview with child migrant, Dire Dawa.

> *"Upon arrival to the border town of Ragu between Yemen and Saudi, there is a possibility to earn money by smuggling drugs and Khat to Saudi Arabia walking through rural areas. This gives one a chance to earn money while en route. We hear about these possibilities either while we are en route or while we are here at home."*[101]

Child migrants are sometimes exposed to substance abuse, particularly use of marijuana, and glue sniffing (for more on this see the case study from Dire Dawa).

Ethnic identity-related attacks

One of the individual risk factors associated with child migrants is their ethnic identity, especially in the context of the geopolitics of the recent ethnic conflict between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups. The ethnic identity of the child migrant becomes an individual risk factor in transit places such as Djibouti and Somaliland (for more on this see the case study from Bedeno). Child migrants interviewed in Dire Dawa and Bedeno recalled targeted attacks on Oromo child migrants carried out by brokers of Somali origin.[102]

Debt bondages

Another protection risk is that of debt bondage and being forced to stay in a given location, due to the brokers' 'go now, pay later' arrangements. In Habru district, children are also at risk of being trafficked against their will by a network of traffickers and smugglers, locally called lebaw.[103] Brokers are often rooted in the communities of origin, recruiting and luring potential migrants into migration.

When children owe brokerage fees, they go into debt bondage, leading to further (labour) exploitation, which changes the nature of their migration, as they face ransom and extortion from brokers who were supposed to facilitate their migration. A relationship most often started in a consensual way (with smugglers at place of origin) might end in abusive experiences after crossing the Red Sea.

Ransom

The most obvious and inevitable risk after crossing the Red Sea is being captured and beaten/tortured for ransom, as well as being exposed to sleep deprivation. An informant from Habru called Yemen *"hell for child migrants."* Moreover, payment of ransom does not guarantee safe arrival at destination or safe return to villages of origin. To cross the Yemeni border through Aragua in to the KSA, Yemeni smugglers force the migrant to commit to a "Michiwar" [contract] for their smuggling services; if the migrant can afford their services, they will smuggle him/her by car from Aragua in Yemen to the city of Ta'if in the KSA. For those migrants who do not use smugglers' services, continuing migration after having reached Yemeni coasts depends on payment of ransom. The migrants' relatives (in Ethiopia or in the KSA) are in most instances coerced into paying ransoms.[104] Smugglers prefer calling the relatives of the children living in the KSA rather than their parents in Ethiopia as the former are believed to be in a better position to pay the ransom. They often call the migrants' families and make them hear their children screaming, until the parent/relative deposits the money. If families fail to pay, the girls could be kept as sex slaves, while boys could risk organ harvesting and eventual death/disappearance.[105]

More rarely, child migrants are freed by the traffickers to continue their way towards the KSA on their own, while those whose families

101. Interview with returnee child migrant, Tigray.

102. Interview with returnee migrants and potential migrants, Laga Harre, 08 Kebele.

103. Informants in Habru often use the term lebaw (thief) to refer to smugglers.

104. Interview with the mother of a potential migrant.

105. FGD with community members, Habru.

paid the ransom are often escorted across the desert.[106]According to the district public persecutors account in Bedeno, there are reported cases of children not reaching their destination even after ransom is paid.

Child labour exploitation

At a very young age, child migrants find themselves in a situation where they have to be self-reliant, and they have to take up different jobs. This situation exposes them to other forms of rights violations, mostly child labour exploitation and being subjected to forced and unpaid labor. Risks faced by child migrants working in Yemen and the KSA as well as in Djibouti range from long working hours in unsafe conditions, to being denied payment, having no legal protection and facing sexual exploitation. The main risk faced in the KSA is exploitation, whereby children are forced to work for long hours, about 12 a day.[107] In most cases, the structural factor accounting for the exploitation of child migrants is that of their migration status. Most returnee child migrants mentioned their "illegal" migration status prevented them from being able to work legally and hence was forcing them into exploitative working arrangements. The children from four study sites (Habru, Dire Dawa, Bedeno and Sigmo) also said that they were subjected to worse forms of child labour, including hazardous work in farms in Yemen and the KSA, handling pesticides daily. Labour exploitation is gendered: boys and girls are subjected to different types of labour, whereby boys are often forced to herd cattle and work on farms while girls are forced to do domestic chores.

An additional aspect is that of indentured labor, that is, exploitation of migrants by migrants, particularly in South Africa. Many Ethiopian migrants have established or worked in retail businesses in a high-rise district of the city centre city of Johannesburg, where they have created a retail enclave. The little-known Ethiopian Quarter, also known as Jeppe, is a retail space where cheap Chinese merchandise is sold to customers from surrounding townships, from rural South Africa and from sub-Saharan Africa.[108] Desperate to enter the labour market upon arrival, new migrants, called "borders," are vulnerable to labour exploitation, often working for free in return for protection, hope of employment in the future or to avoid being exposed to the South African authorities.

Sometimes this form of labour exploitation takes place at transit countries such as Djibouti, where older migrants from Ethiopia force the younger migrants to work for them.

> *"Sometimes even our fellow countrymen are the ones causing us so much trouble. They force us to do works they are paid for. Together with four children from my neighbourhood I used to serve an older guy from Eastern Hararghe who is a gangster and has been in Djibouti for over 10 years. He used to threaten us saying that unless we worked for him for three hours a day, every day, he would report us to the police. He did this for the first two months of our stay. He does this to a number of new child migrants arriving to Djibouti, and targets young newcomers."*[109]

Child migrants take different types of jobs while in transit. For instance, in Djibouti, very young children, about 8–9 years old, often work as shoe shiners, which allows them to earn an average income of about 50 Birr per day.[110] Older children often engage in washing cars or serving in restaurants, earning about 150 Birr a day.[111]

One parent from Jimma explains that:

106. Interview with a returnee child migrant.

107. Interview with returnees and FGD with children, Dire Dawa.

108. Zack, T. Seeking logic in the chaos precinct – 'jeppe'. In Rogue Urbanism: Emergent African Cities, edited by E. Pieterse & A. Simone, 283–291. Johannesburg: Jacana Media & African Centre for Cities; 2013.

109. Interview with an 11-year-old returnee child migrant.

110. Ibid. 101, interview with Ayelech Tamiru.

111. Interview with a returnee child migrant, Dire Dawa.

> *"The risk [in destination countries] is serious. Saudis make our children slaves. It is not a country where children should migrate to; […] Saudis would never consider Ethiopians as human beings. It is lack of money [poverty] that has dehumanized us […] they do not pay them enough. When the police catch these children, they are not given the chance to pick up their belongings and their money, which often remains behind with their employers. There were children caught by the police and returned without receiving two months' salary. The police confiscated mobile phones of the child migrants, imprisoned them and cut them off any communication means.*[112]

Physical violence

Child migrants face different forms of physical violence such as beating – at their country of origin, en route and at the destination countries. Beatings take place in Yemen to extract ransom money from parents. To do this, Yemeni smugglers outsource Ethiopian migrants of different ethnic origins, as a returnee explains:

> *"From Sae'sea Tsaeda Emba we travelled to Afar Region; first to Logia and then to Dicheto, which is a desert. We travelled on foot for over five days until we reached Djibouti. From Djibouti we boarded a boat to Yemen, but they told us to leave because the boat had a technical problem. We entered the boat for the second time. Throughout the journey, we were mistreated until we reached Yemen. Upon arrival in Yemen, we were detained by Yemeni authorities who put us in prison, and we were beaten. First, they classified us based on our ethnicity. It is someone from another ethnic group who beats you. For example, if you were Tigrean, they would assign someone from another ethnic background like an Oromo or Amhara to beat you! That is why we were first asked which part of Ethiopia we came from. Yemeni soldiers then asked us for the telephone number of our relatives, whom they called while they were beating and torturing us. The intention was to force our families to pay ransom."*[113]

One of the major protection risks raised during the FGD in Bedeno is that of physical disability caused by torture:[114]

> *"I was beaten by Abdulkawi*[115] *in Somalia. My 17-year-old brother, who was in grade 10, was killed by the Abdulkawi in Yemen en route to Saudi Arabia. The Abdulkawi held me hostage in Yemen. I was chained with other children in a concrete room where we were beaten the whole night and hosed down [so we could not fall asleep]. When we thought that we had few chances to stay alive, we decided we would die trying to escape rather than staying there. While the traffickers were sleeping, we broke out in mass and ran. They fired and many children were killed as a result. We also saw many dead bodies along the way."*[116]

When children travel on their own without the support of brokers, they tend to face severe challenges such as (gang) rape, water and food shortages, beatings to extort money out of parents and sleep deprivation for consecutive days.[117]

Lack of access to social services

Other protection risks include lack of access to health-care services en route and at destination countries. Several barriers to accessing health

112. Interview with the parent of a returnee, Seriti Kebele.

113. Interview with a returnee child migrant.

114. Community FGD.

115. The term Abdulkawi refers to traffickers (usually Somalis, but also Yemenis), who receive money in local Ethiopian bank accounts. Most of these bank accounts are opened in Ethiopia by young female returnee migrants. who collaborate with the Abdulkawi. These accounts are used by the traffickers to receive ransoms.(Head, Bedeno district Prosecutor's Office).

116. Community FGD.

117. Interview with returnee child migrant.

care and legal services exist, placing child migrants at greater risk of poor health and making them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Child migrants are sometimes reluctant to approach community organizations because they fear that their migrant status might preclude them from receiving basic social services, or that information on their status might be shared with immigration authorities. A returnee child migrant from Bedeno explains that:

> *"Upon arriving at Djibouti, I fell seriously ill with malaria. I couldn't get any medical care because of my status as an immigrant. I was afraid to go to a health post in Balbala area and get arrested. After spending days on the street, an Ethiopian man working as a guard in an Ethiopian-owned hotel took me to a Catholic Relief centre called Caritas, where I got medical treatment."*[118]

As highlighted during a consultation meeting between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Ethiopian migrant communities in South Africa during the Premier's visit to South Africa in January 2020, the lack of access to education of migrants' children in destination countries is a major problem because of the precarious immigration status of their parents.[119]

Photo: A group of young Ethiopian migrants dance to pass time at IOM's Migration Response Centre in Obock, Djibouti. © Olivia Headon/IOM

118. Interview with a returnee child migrant, Bedeno.

119. Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed addresses Ethiopian community in SA. YouTube. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m59p8qPqrHE [accessed 2020 Feb 22].

Protection risk in transit

Other protection risks faced by child migrants relate to those encountered while in transit. For child migrants from Shashogo (southern Ethiopia at large) to South Africa, protection risks are the highest in the various transit routes. The migration route along the corridor is particularly complicated for those crossing much of the continent by land. Migrants deal with a number of intermediaries along the way. They often face uncertain transport arrangements and changes in the routes, and even where intermediary arrangements are more formalized, the journey is complicated by the immigration regulations of the countries they cross, and by the migrants' irregular status. Many have spent long periods in jail or in refugee camps, and some have paused their journeys to raise money for the onward journey.

For child migrants who travel from Dire Dawa to Djibouti, oftentimes child migrants end up on the streets, where they are exposed to various risks. In most cases where child migrants come from very poor households that cannot financially support their migration, they have to take up jobs to raise funds. This is the case, for instance, in Shahsgo, Bedeno and Jimma, from where children migrate to towns like Hosanna or Addis Ababa. Children take up different types of jobs as shoe shiners, street vendors or car washers.

For example, children from Hadiya Zone migrate to Addis Abba and Hosanna, and join an Iqub, to sponsor the migration project of a child.[120]

> *"As a way of realizing the migration dream, those child workers in Addis Ababa, who most often are from the same village, form an Iqub. I am so interested in joining an Iqub. Of the savings made while working on the streets, each child contributes about 1000 Birr a month."*[121]

This type of self-sponsorship has also been described in Jimma:

> *"I first went to Chora (a desert) then Yayu (in Illu Aba Bora). From Yayu I left for Dawo, where I worked for about six months to save money for my planned trip to Yemen. [In Dawo] I worked in a coffee farm, saved and bought a cow for my parents. The cow gave birth to a calf, but both were later sold to pay for my migration. I paid 10,000 Birr; 8,000 to brokers, and 2,000 for transportation and meals until I reached Djibouti.*[122] *In Yemen I worked for five months and finally made it to Saudi. I was caught and deported only two months after reaching Saudi."*

Child returnee migrants interviewed in Dire Dawa mentioned the risks they faced while living on the streets in Djibouti – from rape to forced labour exploitation, both by locals and older Ethiopian migrants residing in the transit countries. At the community level, risk factors are those of social prejudice towards child migrants and their criminalization. Street working children are considered potential delinquents. The FGD held with child returnee migrants in Dire Dawa highlighted that the nature of duties and the duration of the detention period (if imprisoned) was not the same for child migrants from Ethiopia and those from Somaliland (see the case study on Dire Dawa), for racial reasons.

Deception

Child migrants are deceived by brokers in different ways. One of the expert interviews held with a senior researcher, who has conducted a study under the Research and Evidence Facility of the European Union trust fund, points to the smugglers' techniques:

> *"Brokers put migrants passing through Dire Dawa in a hall near the Old Industrial neighborhood. These illegal brokers sell migrants one loaf of bread for 10 Birr. Sometimes they bring the young migrants to this place and tell*

120. Iqub is a traditional rotating credit and savings association.

121. Potential child migrant.

122. Interview with returnee child, Seriti Kebele.

them that they have arrived in Djibouti. They release them at the gate of Dire Dawa National Cement Factory, pretending the lights of the factory are the promised land of Djibouti or Arab countries. Some young migrants are abandoned there after they pay the brokers' fees."[123]

Failing the migration journey

After facing all these challenges and risks, migrants could still fail to reach the desired destination or be detained and deported to their country of origin. This exposes returnees to readjust to local realities, which could have been further eroded by the sale of family property or loans taken to meet the returnees' migration expenses.

Societal prejudice and stereotypes in home country

This community-level risk factor relates to societal bias and stereotypes towards child migrants in general and victims of sexual violence (boys in particular). Boys who have been victims of rape face psychosocial risks when they return, mainly related to shame and isolation. Returnee child migrants explain the double victimization of male child survivors of gender-based violence, who decide to stay behind in Djibouti for good, for fear of social stigma. Ethiopian culture stigmatizes homosexuality although sexual violence seems to be an everyday reality for many of the male child migrants. There is considerable social stigma attached to returnee child migrants in general and victims of sexual violence in particular, which has a devastating impact on the psychological wellbeing of the victims.

According to returnee accounts and information gathered from FGDs with community members, returnees are often viewed as having failed in life, leading to mental/psychological instability and feelings of hopelessness. The challenges returnee child migrants face include psychological problems associated with fear and self-doubt. Children returnees are often told by the community that "*they do not stand a chance of succeeding after failing in a land of opportunity.*"[124]

The local stereotype about returnees was highlighted during the FGD in Tigray where returnee children are described as ill-disciplined, referring to their migration history and having left home at an early age.

> *"Restlessness and instability are a common character of the returnees. Even if they come back with money, most of them spend it extravagantly and go back. A belief and intention of changing life with whatever saving/capital they have at home is rare among these returnees."*[125] *Returnees are viewed as "instable [fighting with family and friends]*[126] *and difficult to manage, coming back with different attitudes and religious values, and violent and deviant social and sexual behaviour… contributing to social disharmony, cultural disturbance, crimes and many other social crises."*[127]

As such, returnees are often depicted as addicts, alcoholic, restless and disturbing the local peace, before they eventually decide to re-migrate.[128]

The FGD conducted in Habru highlighted these social views:

> *"Returnee child migrants are unruly in so many ways. Most of them left home without consulting their parents, which says a lot about their disobedience. They return back home with immoral lifestyles, most of them haram. Even young girls start smoking shisha and chewing Khat. They tend to pass this on to other children*

123. Interview with Dereje Feyissa, researcher in a REF-EU study, Addis Ababa.

124. Interview with the parent of a potential migrant, Seriti Kebele.

125. Interview with a community member.

126. Interview with focal person for Social Affairs, Eastern Zone.

127. Interview with community elder.

128. Interview with the parent of a potential migrant; FGD with children.

in the neighborhood and this is why we consider them as a threat."

Female returnees/deportees face the additional risk of being undesirable for marriage, due to the societal perceptions of sexual exploitation during the journey. According to data collected from Bedeno, women returnees are also accused of being prostitutes and infected with communicable diseases. Community members at all study sites mentioned psychological stress as the major problem returnee child migrants face, due to different degrees of trauma, disruption and violence.

Social ostracization of returnee child migrants is stronger in cases of failed migration/return, particularly after parents made large investments to finance their child's migration. A returnee child migrant explains his parents did not welcome him back:

> *"Families that send their son with the hope of receiving remittances will not warmly welcome a son who did not send a penny. It is give-and-take these days, as parents tend to have a softer heart and preference for a child who has something to offer and supports them, rather than the likes of me who do not have anything to offer."*[129]

Sometimes, upon returning home, returnees might not find the money they sent as a remittance. Furthermore, the local community considers returnees as threats because they fear that returnee child migrants might encourage their peers and recruit potential child migrants. This has been a common trend in the study sites in Amara regional state and in Tigray.

Re-migration attempts

Having experienced some challenges and knowing the risks too well, returnees often tend to re-migrate. Generally, views of life in these communities are fatalistic, as these statements from informants in Tigray illustrate:

> *"Get rich or die trying;" "I will either come with a box full of money, or my body in a coffin;" "If my day has come, I will die irrespective of where I am;"*[130] *"It is a matter of chance. If you win the game, you may buy a car or build a house. If not, that will be the end of the story."*[131]

In Habru, informants mentioned that the choice is between "*survival and death*," while in Shashogo one informant stressed that "*rather than dying here in misery, it is better to die in South Africa, at least bodies come in a better casket*." In Bedeno one informant said that life in "*[a] Saudi prison is better than life here in Ethiopia*."

The paradox of migrating despite knowing the potential risks, especially in the case of male child migrants, partly relates to the existing sociocultural values regarding a new culture of masculinity. A young potential migrant boy interviewed in Bedeno said: "*I am a boy and I shouldn't be a coward. If I decide to remain behind, fearing the consequences of migrating, my peers would make fun of me.*" Furthermore, several others who are set out to migrate despite their awareness of the risks say that the risks they face will depend on luck, and the divine.

Sometimes, child migrants decide to go back home, but most often because they are forced to. For some, return is informed by the difference between perception and reality, whereby they find the living and working conditions tougher than expected. Sometimes return is due to health-related issues, mainly malaria.[132]

Risk expectations

The children interviewed during the course of the study seem to have some prior information about the risks involved. Similar to the common

129. Interview with a returnee child migrant, Tigray.

130. Interview with the parent of a potential migrant, Tigray.

131. Interview with a returnee child migrant, Tigray

132. Interview with a returnee child migrant.

trend observed among adult Ethiopian migrants, child migrants seem to simply leave it to luck.[133] However, the reality of experiencing these risks was found to be challenging.[134] The aggregated survey data do not tell us much about the risk expectations of potential migrants, mainly as the risks expected vary from site to site. In Bedeno, the major expected risks during the journey and at destination are those of cultural differences such as linguistic barriers and religious differences, sexual violence and illness en route. Financial issues come a distant fourth, while inability to access social services, lack of basic/sustenance fees and unemployment are not significant risks. In Sigmo, the only prioritized risks were sexual violence and cultural differences, with the others not so significant. Both in Habru and Sae'sea Tsaeda Amba, the main risk is financial (being held for ransom), followed by inability to receive basic needs (food and water), remaining unemployed and cultural differences. While in Tigray sexual violence is mentioned as more important than remaining unemployed, in Habru no respondent mentioned it as a risk. In Dire Dawa, the greatest risk is falling ill, followed by unemployment, inability to meet sustenance needs, cultural differences and sexual violence. In Shashogo, sexual violence is ranked as the most important risk, while imprisonment was not included.

Most informants had little prior information about associated risks. Some 70 per cent of the survey respondents did not have sufficient information about the destination country before making the decision to migrate. The study also shows that most child migrants have mistaken perceptions and little awareness about the associated risks. A 15-year-old child returnee from Yemen says that she thought that "[going to] *Yemen/Saudi would be like going to Djibouti,"* and recognized only later that *"she was not [fully] prepared*."[135] Another potential child migrant interviewed in Dire Dawa mentioned that she could migrate to Saudi, get permission from school, make 3,000 Birr per month and come back.[136]

These statements resonate with the finding of the study by Bhaba et al. (2016), that few migrating children know the dangers and risks of migration, including trafficking and sexual violence.[137]

Coping strategy

As informants emphasize, child migrants cannot do much to reduce/manage these risks. The most important measure to reduce exposure to extended periods of beatings and torture in Yemen is paying the money early enough. For instance, extended stays at Tajura coast in Djibouti claim the lives of many due to the high temperatures and little can be done to mitigate this risk. Returnee child migrants from Jimma say that avoiding complaining and staying calm despite the hard and congested conditions of the boat crossing could save a child migrant's life.[138] Using a reliable broker/smuggler is also part of risk management. The other strategy used by child migrants is sleeping together and moving in groups in Djibouti as a way of reducing the risk of rape. Furthermore, the data show that for those travelling in a group, the risk decreases substantially.

The study points to the divided views on migration among community members, as most informants mention that migration exposed their children to different forms of rights violations. Other community members, on the other hand, mentioned that given the high rate of unemployment and growing inflation, migration offers a better life opportunity than staying.

133. Interview with the mother of a potential migrant, Sigmo.

134. Interview with a returnee child migrant, Sigmo.

135. Returnee 15-year-old migrant girl.

136. Potential migrant girl 13- year old Laga Harre, 08 Kebele.

137. Bhabha, Bohne, Digidiki V, Donger E, Frounfelker R, Glenn, and Seervai S.. Children on the move: an urgent human rights and child protection priority. Cambridge: Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights; 2016.

138. Interview with a returnee child, Seriti Kebele.

09. Existing Support Mechanisms for Vulnerable Children and Reintegration of Child Migrants

To get a better grasp of the different stakeholders supporting vulnerable children and returnee migrants, the researcher mapped the different programmes, projects and initiatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations in all study sites. These findings show that there is a gap in support mechanisms for vulnerable children, and where they exist, coordination is lacking. Data revealed that several governmental and non-governmental actors are involved in the effort to stop irregular migration of child migrants.

Role of governmental organizations

The Role of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA) has two major responsibilities in relation to returnee migrants' support and reintegration efforts.

"The ministry or the authority shall, in cooperation with concerned bodies, facilitate reintegration supports for Ethiopian overseas workers deployed and return in accordance with this Proclamation; the details of which shall be specified in the directive." (Article 64 (4) of the Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016).

The Ethiopian Overseas Employment Directorate General Department (within MoLSA) has the responsibility of promoting overseas employment to protect migrants. The reintegration team within this directorate general is mandated to work on psychosocial and economic reintegration of returnees into domestic economy. The ministry or relevant authority shall provide legal assistance to workers victimized in connection with overseas employment.

Furthermore, the Manpower Research and Employment Promotion Directorate within MoLSA is mandated to work on labour market information analysis and in-country employment promotion.

Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MoWCY)

MoWCY is one of the institutions actively engaged in supporting child returnees. Some of its undertakings include assisting in family tracing and reunification of unaccompanied migrant children returning to Ethiopia, reintegration, sensitization and coordination. [139]

MoWCY also coordinates and collaborates with key stakeholders in setting up structures to respond to the needs of migrant returnees, particularly returning migrant children. The ministry works closely with partners in establishing and strengthening community-based mechanisms to prevent risks of irregular migration and strengthen protection services at the grassroot level.

Other key roles of MoWCY are facilitating and fostering closer cooperation amongst migration actors to strengthen referral mechanisms and link returnees with other existing programmes, available resources and service providers (access to education, medical support, access to finance, employment and shelter services).

Data obtained from Jimma show that most district-level government sector offices have plans, provisions and support schemes targeting vulnerable groups of the local community. Each sector allocates 2 per cent of its annual budget for funding support activities in its area. Vulnerable groups often supported by these institutions are orphans, students from poor families, disadvantaged women, older people, those living with HIV/AIDS and other people who have other severe illnesses. Examples of support offered include providing educational materials, purchasing school uniforms, covering costs of medication and business establishment.

The most notable governmental actors are the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency, Women and Children Affairs Bureau, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Agency, Justice Bureau and the Police and Prosecutor's Office. Most of these activities target youth – older than 18 years – especially for job creation. In Tigray, for example, the government's offices are partnering with local non-governmental organizations (Tigray Youth League and Women's League, Adigrat Catholic Diocesan Secretariat, Relief Society of Tigray, Women's Support Association). Given the unique case of migration from Dire Dawa, the city's administration has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the East and West Hararghe Zones, where most street children in Dire Dawa and migrants start their journey.

Bureaus of Justice and Police

The bureaus of justice and police at the study sites are engaged in efforts to investigate cases of child smuggling and file charges against smugglers/traffickers, as well as in public awareness activities. The bureau's awareness raising activities often take place during public gatherings, informally. Therefore, only awareness raising initiatives implemented in collaboration with the Bureau of Education, in schools, can directly reach children. Except for awareness raising activities in schools, these interventions do not particularly benefit potential child migrants. Moreover, awareness raising is unlikely to be effective, as the children are more exposed to information and narratives from the migration networks in their district. Moreover, the structural (mainly economic) factors that push potential migrants to leave do not change with awareness raising attempts. Thus, without a change in the economic determinants of migration, awareness raising will not succeed.

The role of the National Partnership and Coalition

The 'Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178/2020' sets out basic rights and privileges of vulnerable migrant returnees. As per this new proclamation, the National Partnership Coalition (NPC), the operational body in charge of

139. Kibri Hailu Director, Child Rights Advocacy and Wellbeing at MoWCY, 22 June 2019

implementing activities of prevention, prosecution, protection and monitoring and evaluation, was established at the national level.

The NPC, chaired by the Federal Attorney General, is accountable to the National Council. The latter is presided over by the Deputy Prime Minister and composed of representatives of all the major federal public agencies whose institutional profile and mandate have direct relevance in the overall process of supporting and reintegrating vulnerable Ethiopian returnee migrants.

The NPC is primarily responsible for coordinating and leading the support and reintegration efforts of all the main governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Legislation requires the Office of the Federal General Attorney to lead and coordinate the work of the NPC regularly. The NPC is further divided into six working groups, each presided over and composed of public and non-governmental institutions that are relevant to the major task/s of each work team. The six groups include: Prosecution, Prevention, Protection, Diaspora Engagement and Development, Migration Data Administration and Education and Research

According to the proclamation 1178/2020, MoLSA is one of the stakeholders working on the overall protection of irregular migrants. According to Article 23(3) of the proclamation, MoLSA and its sub-offices at all levels shall, in collaboration with the appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations, return victims to their localities (both those rescued internally and those repatriated).

Furthermore, article 24 (4) states the Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency (FUJCFSA) and other entities working on rural job creation, in collaboration with appropriate governmental and non-governmental bodies, may provide necessary reintegration support to returnee victims residing in urban or rural areas.

Part of the support offered by FUJCFSA involves providing a sustainable development safety net support to vulnerable community members. FUJCFSA actively works in promoting and capacitating micro and small enterprises engaged in urban agriculture and service sectors, with the goal of enhancing their capacity. FUJCFSA therefore boosts these sectors' competitiveness and creates employment opportunities in urban centers. The Agency's Job Creation Directorate leads the national protection working groups for the reintegration of returnee migrants.[140] Although the agency does not have a specific unit working on child migrants, a unit within the agency focusing on women, children, and youth does exist. Part of the support offered to returnees, in coordination with stockholders, includes supply of food, educational material, transportation, medical treatment and psychosocial support.[141]

Community Care Coalitions

Various interventions by governmental and non-governmental organizations that support poor and vulnerable children in Ethiopia exist. The Community Care Coalitions (CCCs) is a case in point. CCCs is a global model for groups of individuals and/or organizations at the local level joining together for the common purpose of expanding and enhancing care for vulnerable people including vulnerable children. CCCs is a new concept in Ethiopia, recently established at Kebele level and headed by the Kebele executive. According to the National Social Protection Policy of Ethiopia (2015), CCCs shall be strengthened and expanded to play a role in implementing productive and social safety net programmes. Social protection is part of the social policy framework that focuses on reducing poverty, social and economic risks of citizens, vulnerability and exclusion, by taking measures through formal and informal mechanisms to ascertain accessible and equitable growth to all.

140. Amsalu Bashe Senior, Trade and Service Job Creation Expert & Protection Working Group Technical Person at Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency.

141. Ibid.

Child protection is a component of social protection, and is focused on system-based measures to address the challenges facing vulnerable children. Social policy gives special attention to vulnerable children and other groups. The major child protection services that CCCs have provided to vulnerable children are health, nutrition and education. In Ethiopia, services provided to vulnerable children are formal (provided by professional, remunerated employees, such as by governmental and civil society organizations), and informal (provided by local community members and social networks); most importantly, both operate independently. Since 2015, the two have attempted to work in an integrated manner, whereby a manual has been developed for joint actions of formal and informal support systems. CCCs are active in Sigmo (Jimma) and Saesi Tsadamba (Tigray), where CCCs are engaged in awareness raising and community discussion forums to discourage irregular migration.

International and local civil society organizations

International and local civil society organizations are also engaged in providing support to vulnerable children in the study areas. In Saesi Tsadamba Wereda, CISP (International Committee for the Development of People) is supporting vulnerable children, especially orphans, through financial support to foster parents. In Dire Dawa, Forum for Street Children supports foster parents and families who adopt children. The Forum also supports a shelter for the vulnerable – including children. Vision for Ethiopia implements a childcare project in Habru Wereda in partnership with the Wereda administration. In addition, it has a women empowerment project, as poverty is identified as one of the major drivers of child migration in the area. Mekaneyesus also implements a similar women empowerment project in the Habru Wereda while it runs a shelter for returnees in Jimma Zone. In Jimma, GIZ, through Better Migration Management, runs drop-in centers for minors and other vulnerable groups, with a focus on children; the Red Cross is engaged in intercepting child migrants and repatriating migrants in Dire Dawa and Habru. The exception is Bedeno district, where no impactful intervention exists, except school clubs that implement awareness raising activities in collaboration with the Bureau of Education.

A commendable government initiative to support vulnerable groups in the study area is Dire Dawa's Women's Rehabilitation Center. Violence against women in rural Dire Dawa is so rampant that in 2012 the Dire Dawa Administration established the Women's Rehabilitation Centre, the first such centre in Ethiopia that is entirely funded by and managed with government resources. The centre supports women who migrate to Dire Dawa from rural areas and women transit migrants who have been victims of abductions, early marriages, bigamy and other violations.

In the study sites, other than the activities and programmes run by IOM, specifically IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme and the reintegration support system offered to returnee child migrants, there is no meaningful support system to facilitate protection of vulnerable children and reintegration of child migrants. There is also lack of psychosocial support despite the severe social and psychological challenges returnee child migrants face; in all study sites a gap in mental health care for returnee child migrants was found. This gap hinders returnees' reintegration, and further fuels their desire to re-migrate. A research showed Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) response as severely undersized in Ethiopia.[142]

142. Shannon Golden. Assessing refugee mental health in Ethiopia; a representative survey of Adi Harush and Mai Ayni Camps. Washington, DC: The Center for Victims of Trauma; 2017.

Photo: Migrants playing at the IOM MRC in Obock. Photo: © Alexander Bee/IOM

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has presented the diverse socioeconomic background of child migrants from Ethiopia and discussed the complex factors accounting for child migration. The report does not purport to be exhaustive but could serve as a preliminary study that contributes to identifying the key trends of child migration within and from Ethiopia, decision-making, protection risks and response mechanisms to inform future programming.

The assessment of migration factors went beyond a monocausal analysis of factors influencing decision-making of potential young migrants, rather focusing on the interplay between different factors. Child migration is situated within broader societal issues involving a more complex decision-making process, although economic pressures are commonly cited at the different research sites – including poverty, unemployment, lack of land and limited access to saving and credit services. The study found that returnees are more likely to lead a life as street children, have lower chances of going back to school and are more likely to be engaged in criminal activities.

The migration routes followed by child migrants involve several stopovers at different transit points. Despite some positive actions to address the protection concerns of child migrants and to combatting smuggling and trafficking, the challenges remain immense and complicated. There is a general consensus that psychological support should be a priority to support returnees and reduce re-migration.

These recommendations should be modeled as one comprehensive and long-term intervention, which would reduce fragmented, short and often unsuccessful interventions. Various actors could work on a particular aspect for a given period, giving special attention to sustainability. This approach could be coordinated by MoWCY and implemented in close partnership and coordination with IOM, federal and regional authorities, as well as non-governmental stakeholders. For operational purposes, the recommendations are divided into four categories: at the individual, household, community and structural levels.

I) Prevention

Prevention measures at the individual level

- Role modelling: Engage local successful youth, both returnee and non-returnee, as peer role models and mentors, and work with them in outreach to potential child migrants and support to returnees. Role modelling would contribute to address the main push factors regarding the value

shift from education to migration observed in most study sites.

- Providing basic educational resources: Accessing basic needs such as food and school materials is one of the push factors; therefore, providing socioeconomic support such as school feeding programmes, provision of basic school materials such as stationary uniforms is needed.
- Academic performance: Since low academic performance is mentioned as push factor, schools need to accommodate and respond to children's different levels of academic performance. Children with low academic performance need to be supported and encouraged.
- Reach out to potential migrants as partners, not as "criminals in the making": It is crucial that information sharing includes practical tips to deal with multifaceted protection risks. Such mechanism will help to enhance informed decision-making and protective practices.
- Age-tailored risk awareness campaign: Child migrants from various age groups have different risk perceptions, meaning it is necessary to go beyond the conventional awareness raising, focus on generalized risk awareness campaigns and incorporate these in school curriculums.

Prevention measures at the household level

- As out-migration is sometimes encouraged by family members and the community, any attempt to promote reintegration of returnee migrants and to bring about sustainable solutions should be community-based.
- Community-based preventive strategies need to incorporate mechanisms such as giving financial support to families, for example as loans for micro-enterprise and support to set up work cooperatives. This would contribute to addressing the major push factor – economic pressure. As most child migrants often say that their goal from migration is to provide for their family as much as for themselves, such strategy would help to address one of the major drivers of child migration.

Prevention measures at the community level

- Pay attention to the specificity of migration dynamics in each study area. Although there are similarities in the migration trend observed in the six migration-prone areas covered by the study, the few underlying differences pinpointed by the study show the need to have target-tailored interventions.
- Support community-based alternative care systems. Although orphans are the main group of child migrants, institutions providing effective support to potentially vulnerable children such as orphans in the study areas is very limited. Therefore, identifying and supporting community-based institutions that support vulnerable groups, particularly orphans, is needed. Such alternative community-based care systems are more appropriate and more cost–effective than institutional care (which is inexistent). Hence, there is a need to conduct an assessment on alternative community-based care systems.
- Support social protection schemes targeting the poor to effectively address the push factors for child migrants. This support could include public employment or access to credit; insurance and savings schemes should also be provided.

Prevention measures at the structural level

- Support to improving quality of education in local schools. One of the push factors is that of education being outvalued by migration, which is associated to "higher value for money"; therefore, addressing

this perception is essential. The quality of education needs to be enhanced, making it relevant to local and international labour market needs. As interventions in the area of education and training are capital intensive, programmes would require substantial resource mobilization from various stakeholders including the government, private sector, civil society and the international community. Support to the education sector needs to be aligned with the government's job creation agenda targeting youth. Ethiopia has made job creation the centrepiece of major economic reform programmes and in October 2019 the government unveiled a Plan of Action for jobs creation, an ambitious project that envisages providing 20 million new jobs by 2025.[143]

- Support existing initiatives, for example the Bureau of Education in Jimma Zone, engaged in organizing awareness raising trainings in school settings as a way of keeping school drop-out numbers low and curbing irregular migration.
- As the re-migration of child migrants is affected by the unaddressed vulnerabilities that originally forced them to move, including poverty, one preventive mechanism to address re-migration is dealing with the different factors of migration and unaddressed vulnerabilities such as poverty, accessing education and the underlying factor related to the culture of migration.
- Help create synergy among various stakeholders. This study accents the need for close collaboration between researchers, policymakers and activists to work on child-sensitive and child-responsive migratory responses.

II) Protection

Protection measures at the individual level

- The younger the children are, the less informed (or more misinformed) they are about the protection risks associated with migration. Thus, raising the awareness of younger children about the potential risks, so that they can protect themselves, is essential. If unchallenged, one-sided migration narratives that emphasize success will gain more traction. Leveraging the initiatives of the Education Bureaus to promote awareness of risks associated with international migration would be useful, for example through schools' mini-media and arts club.
- Give psychosocial support to returnee child migrants who faced sexual and other forms of abuse. Psychosocial support to returnee child migrants should follow international standard guidelines: flexible approach; field assessments before designing support programmes; community-based participatory approaches and training in psychosocial skills for staff.

Protection measures at the structural level

- Awareness raising on child protection should target schools, and to increase sustainability, awareness raising activities could be integrated in school curriculums.
- As the existing gap of data on child migrants is affecting their visibility with stakeholders, it is recommended that organizations working with migrants ensure visibility of children on the move and go beyond describing them as baggage of adult migrants. Evidence on the phenomenon of child migration needs to be built.

143. For more on this: Addis Getachew Tadesse. Ethiopia unveils jobs creation plan. Ankara: Anadolou Agency; Oct 2019. Available from: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/ethiopia-unveils-jobs-creation-plan/1631987.

- As a way of addressing the protection risks that child migrants face in relation to smugglers and similar actors, stronger law enforcement and more stringent prosecution and punishment systems need to be put in place. Although the Government of Ethiopia is making significant efforts in the elimination of trafficking, some areas need more attention. For example, there are no standard procedures for front-line responders to proactively identify trafficking victims among vulnerable migrants; protection measures for male victims remain inadequate, and there is funding gap for the implementation of the government's national action plan.[144]
- Support the government in developing a legal regime providing protection to vulnerable migrant children.
- Enhance capacity building of the national and local systems of psychosocial support; Ethiopia is in an early phase of development of formal psychosocial support for children and families, and as such support for institution building, such as hospitals and schools, is needed.
- Support different initiatives aimed at ensuring children's access to health, education and child protection services, regardless of their immigration status.
- Provide capacity building support (training and employment of professional counsellors) to provide mental health services to children and their parents.
- Because the protection risks child migrants face at the hands of immigration authorities and law enforcement agencies at countries of origin, transit and destination countries tend to be severe, there is a need to lobby for a more rigorous normative framework of protection so state and non-state actors comply with existing basic child human rights laws. Prime Minister Abiy's humanitarian initiative – negotiating for the protection and rights of migrants with the political leadership of destination countries – is commendable and could be leveraged in pressing for protection issues related to child migrants.
- Strengthen partnerships for protection and care of children at various phases of mobility, linking responses at areas of origin, transit and destination.

Protection measures at the community level

- Actively engage in establishing community-based protective mechanisms related to sensitization, early warning and monitoring of child protection. Community mechanisms are an essential component of wider child protection systems. Strategically, strengthening community-level mechanisms of child protection can be an important step in developing effective national child protection systems.
- Consider capacity building interventions for CCCs, as promoting community-based protection such as kinship care for children who do not have primary caregiver protects children at potential risk.
- The culture of migration is one of the leading factors for migration of children and therefore leads to their exposure to multifaceted protection risks. Interventions and programmes should put families, family members, and peers at the centre of messaging.

144. See: 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report – Ethiopia. Washington, DC: United States Department of State; 28 June 2018. Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b454.html [accessed 2020 Feb 2] and Adam F and Meron Zeleke. No place for me here; the challenges of male returnee migrants. Copenhagen: Danish Red Cross and DIIS; 2020.

Protection measures at the household level

- As a way of protecting children, programmes should target place of origin in preventing and reducing domestic and physical violence at home and within the community.
- Educating and building capacity of caregivers, family members to play a role in the protection of migrant children.
- As substance abuse is described to be a push factor for some children, household members need to be supportive of children exposed to substance abuse and different forms of addiction.

III) Reintegration Assistance

Economic reintegration

Economic reintegration measures at the individual level

- The age constraint makes it difficult to devise economic reintegration for migrant children at the individual level. Economic reintegration programmes at an individual level should address the basic push factor, that is, the lack of sufficient income at the household level. For child migrants older than 16 years, a customized training on business management skills could equip them with technical knowledge as they transition to youth.
- Extend the income generating schemes to include child migrants' families with the view of building the capability of child migrant returnees as they transition to youth. IOM's income-generating activities for minors is channelled through their family. For those younger than 14 years, the child is assisted with school material to go back to school and income-generating activities are set up for the family to improve the household's income. IOM's initiative in Sigmo district is a case in point of reintegration support to returnees, based on their individual needs and interests. In Sigmo, reintegration assistance has so far supported the establishment of vending kiosks, retail shops and cattle fattening businesses.
- Link support initiatives with the government's job creation agenda. In addition to income-generating trainings, returnees, potential migrants and their families could benefit from the jobs provided by the industrial parks. There are major industrial parks near the study sites such as Jimma; Kombolcha, Dire Dawa and Hawassa. However, Ethiopia still lacks a minimum wage and the current average salary of the parks (approximately 30–50 United States dollars) is insufficient to meet basic living costs. Advocating for a minimum wage and decent salary is needed. In so doing IOM could partner with other organizations such as the International Labour Organization and the Ethiopian Labour Union.

Economic reintegration measures at the community level

- As one of the key push factors identified relates to severe poverty and debt bondages, thinking of community-based projects that support local economic development is necessary. A local economic development approach would support the livelihoods of local communities and that of returning migrants, and would have a more sustained effect that goes beyond economic reintegration and provides sustainable economic and livelihood opportunities for the community, while also addressing an important "push" factor for migration. An example of local economic development intervention would be small-scale community-based irrigation schemes that could enable impoverished communities to meet food security needs. A third of Ethiopia's gross domestic product

is generated through agriculture. In Ethiopia, more than 12 million households rely on small-scale farming. The country has seen one of the fastest growing irrigation schemes in Africa, and the current administration is focusing on irrigation as a job creation strategy for rural youth. In districts such as Shashogo, floods, previously a liability, could be exploited through irrigation or the introduction of new agricultural practices such as rice production in swampy areas.

Social reintegration

Social reintegration measures at the individual level

- Social reintegration assistance for individual child migrant returnees in the country of origin should facilitate access and provide referrals for services, especially access to education. As most child migrants are school dropouts, who might return to their respective home villages in the middle of the academic year, a system needs to be in place to make sure that returnee migrant children are re-admitted in schools, with basic educational support focusing on those child migrants whose families could not afford the cost of education. Although there are some instances of child migrants from well-to-do families, most come from poor families. Social reintegration assistance would help address the major challenges mentioned by returnee child migrants in relation to payment of school fees and books and uniforms.

Psychosocial reintegration

Psychosocial measures at the individual level

- The existing psychosocial counselling offered to returnee child migrants is carried out for short periods of time. Investing in more time with child migrants is needed, as unlike adults, they lack the necessary skills of self-expression to share the traumatic experiences of the migration process.

Psychosocial measures at the structural level

- Ensure that all returnee child migrants who have in one way or the other been vulnerable, experienced situations of violence, torture or other traumas benefit from psychosocial intervention that are age appropriate. It is strongly recommended that measures aim at the social inclusion of child migrants and be maintained for the period necessary for a full recovery, to avoid the potential risk of re-victimization.
- Improve the existing referral mechanisms among institutions that provide support to returnee children (including for health care, and legal and psychosocial support).
- Ensure effective coordination at the national and local levels between various institutions and existing support mechanisms allowing harmonious planning and proper implementation of legislation and standards.
- Establish an effective psychosocial support system and a referral mechanism providing safe, confidential and non-discriminatory services. An integrated referral system should exist to support child returnee migrants who need medical, psychosocial and legal support.
- The psychosocial support aimed at children should be sustainable and holistic, ranging from early recovery upon return to their re-integration to society. The psychosocial reintegration of child returnee migrants should be understood as a process, as some children might not need support right upon returning, but at a later stage. Therefore, vulnerability assessments to monitor mental health should be carried out six months into return. This monitoring can be achieved through engaging and actively collaborating

with the families of the returnee migrants. The experience of Jima University's initiative of offering free consultation support could be scaled up.

- The scarcity of qualified specialized and qualified (MHPSS) service providers in both public and private sector should be addressed.
- A link should be established between formal MHPSS facilities and community /religious leaders. In Ethiopia, culturally, religious institutions play a pivotal role in different domains of life including in healing, settling disputes etc.[145] Because of social prejudice, mental illnesses are often attributed to an evil spirit, and hence often Ethiopians opt for prayers rather than seeking professional psychosocial support. Community/religious leaders are encouraged to refer cases to medical facilities for further services.

Psychosocial measures at the community level

- Societal prejudice and stigma towards returnee child migrants in general and those who return with a mental health condition in particular, were found in almost all study sites. Adopting community mobilization strategies as a way of counteracting the potential stigma is needed. Community sensitization activities targeting community members need to be planned with the active participation of the local community. One way of developing these activities could be through peer support mechanisms and platforms. By using local returnee migrants who have gone through the same experience, using available resources and capacities within the local community is possible.
- Community awareness raising activities should mainly target sensitizing community members that child returnee migrants who are affected by sexual and gender-based violence should be treated as survivors, not "criminals".
- Because there is lack of clarity in the community about the current support system for reintegrating returnee child migrants, conducting a community consultation and orientation on the implementation of reintegration programmes as a way of creating better understanding is needed. Programmes should be evidence based.
- There is a lack of humanitarian organizations working with child migrants in some of the study sites such as Hadiya, Bedeno and Sigmo; therefore, organizations need to be encouraged to work on the protection of child migrants and provision of assistance services for children. Each region would develop a comprehensive plan, and then different donors/actors could join the plan to deal with a particular aspect, and on the long term.

145. Religious healing is culturally embedded, as shown by prior research by author on Islamic Sufi shrine. See Meron Zeleke. Faith at the crossroads. Wiesebaden: Otto Harrassowitz, Auflage ed.; May 2015. Available from: https://www.amazon.ca/Faith-Crossroads-Religious-Syncretism-Settlement/dp/3447103531

Suggestions raised during FGDs held with community members and with key informant interviews include:

At the individual level

- Encouraging young children to concentrate on their studies.[146]
- Offering individual mentorship to children with poor academic performance.[147]
- Supporting children with an addiction and history of substance abuse.[148]

At the household level

- Supporting children from poor households to attend schools.[149]

At the structural level

- Facilitating legal labour migration.[150]
- Ensuring easy accessibility to water, both for domestic as well as agricultural use.[151]
- Promoting psychosocial reintegration support to child returnees in migration-prone parts of the country.
- Working to ensure the success of youth job creations schemes. [152]
- Taking legal measures against the smugglers.

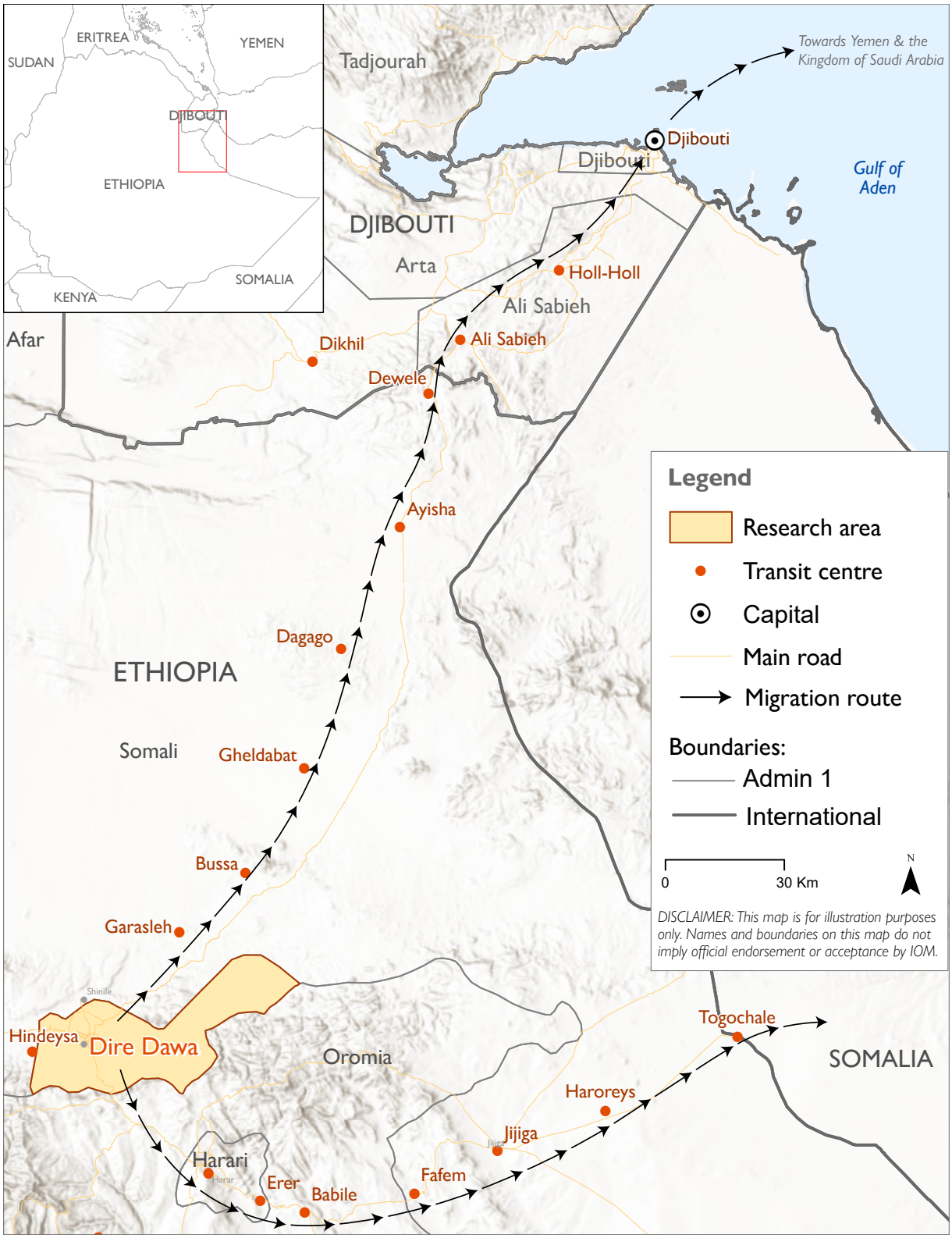
At the community level

- Promoting intensive irrigation.
- Promoting less land-intensive modes of income generating agricultural activities (such as apiary, poultry).
- Providing physical and psychological care to returnees. [153]

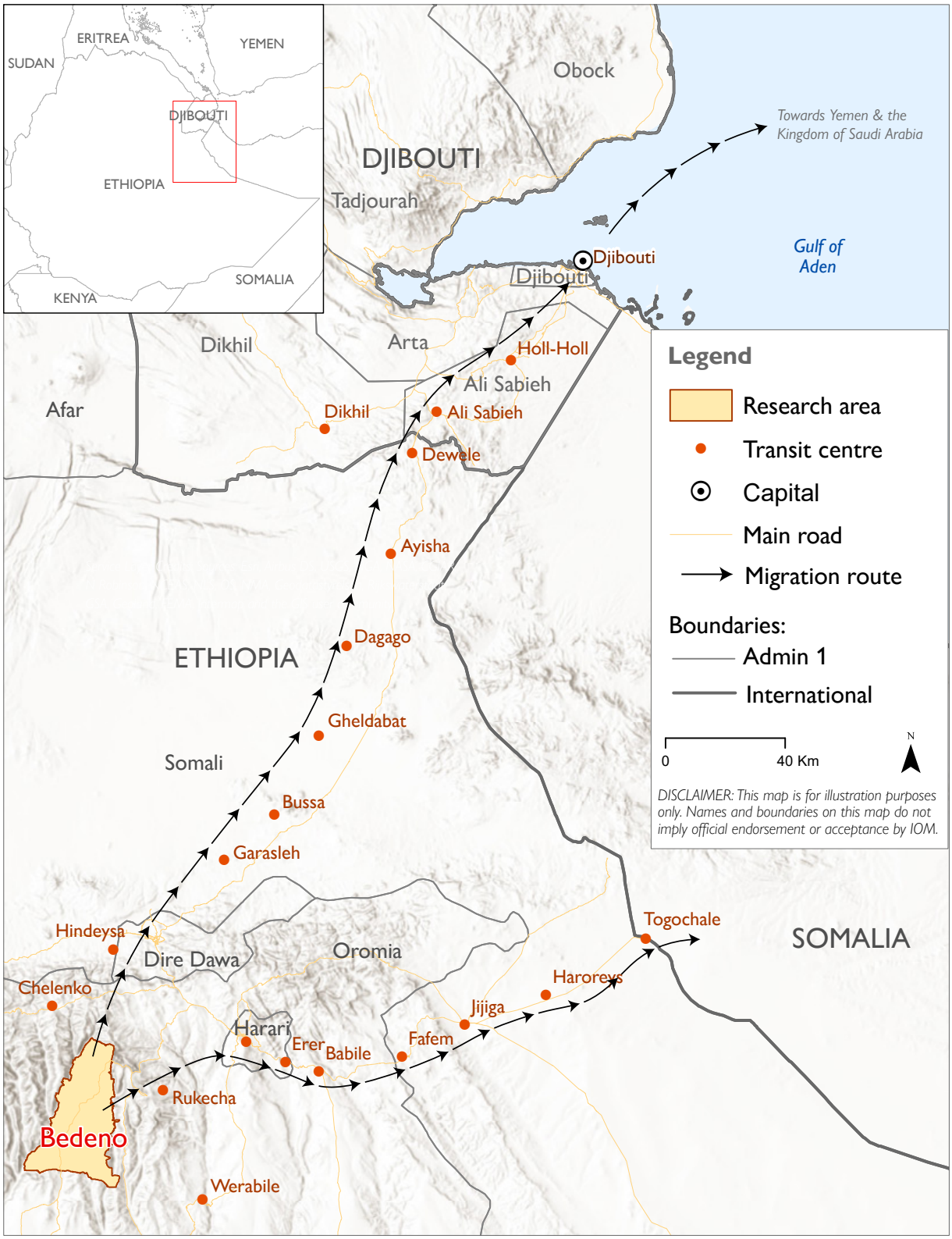
146. In-depth interview with community member, Tigray
147. Community FGD, Habru.
148. FGD with community members, Dire Dawa.
149. Community FGD, Dire Dawa; Interview with a parent of three migrant children, Shashogo; FGD with children, Jimma.
150. Interview with Head, WCY Affairs Office, East Hararghe Zone.
151. Community FGD, Bedeno.
152. FGD with potential migrant children, Sigmo.
153. FGD with children, Beramora Kebele, Shashogo District; Head BoE; Community FGD, Beramora Kebele, Shashogo District.

Maps of migratory routes of children from the study sites

Map 2. Migratory routes from Dire Dawa

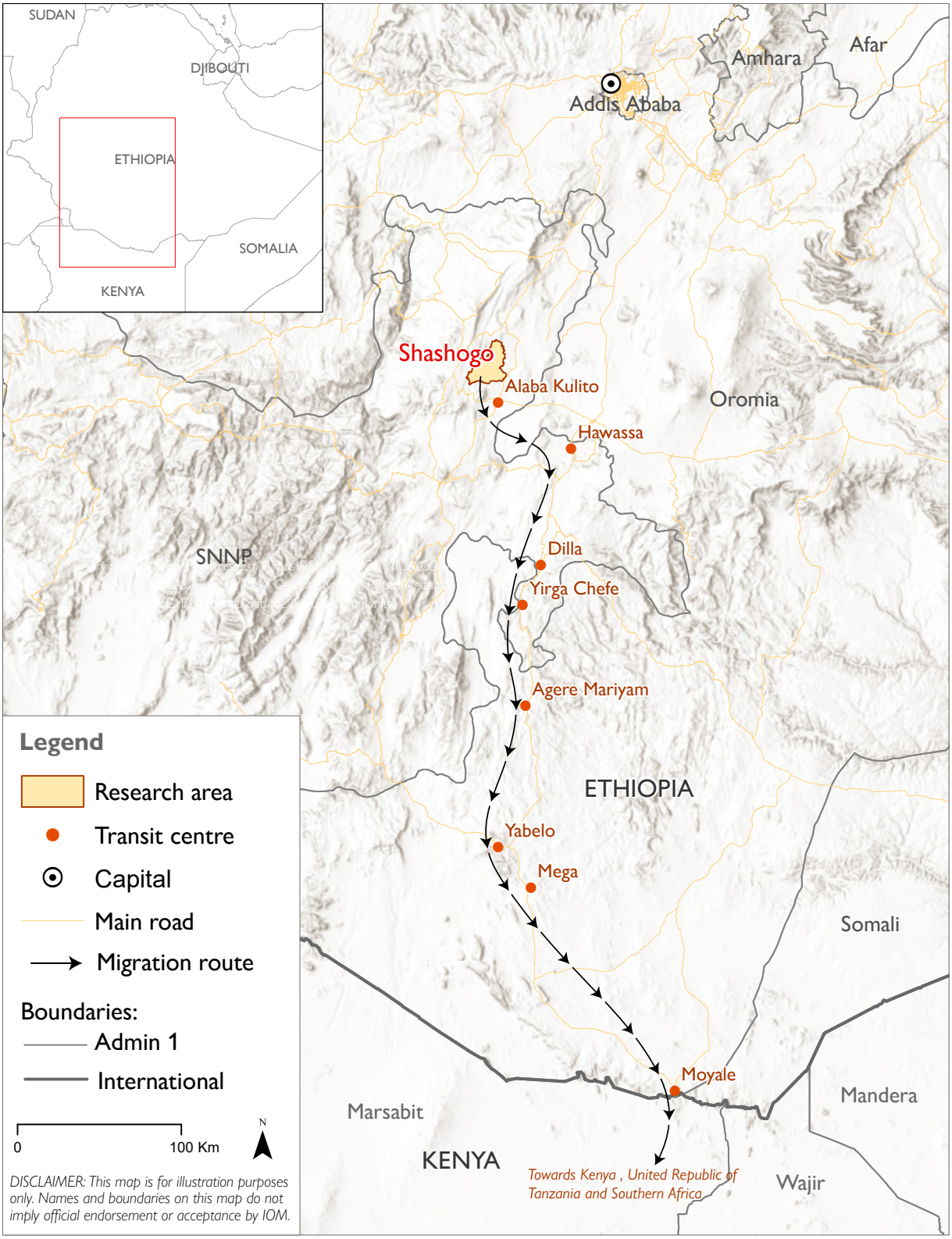


Map 3. Migratory routes from Bedeno

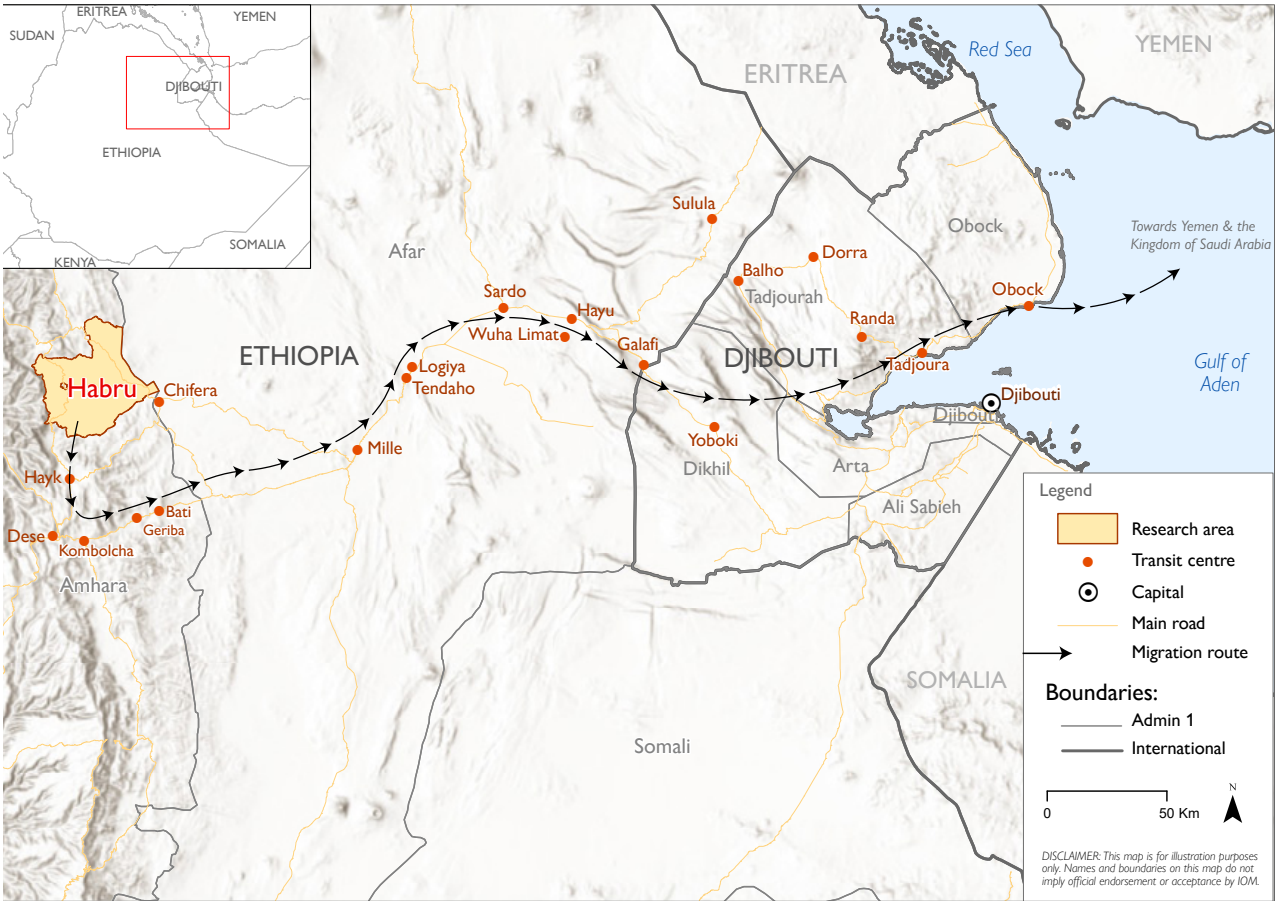


Map 4. Migratory routes from Saesi Tsadamba

Map 5. Migratory route from Shashogo



Map 6. Migratory route from Habru



Map 7. Migratory routes from Sigmo

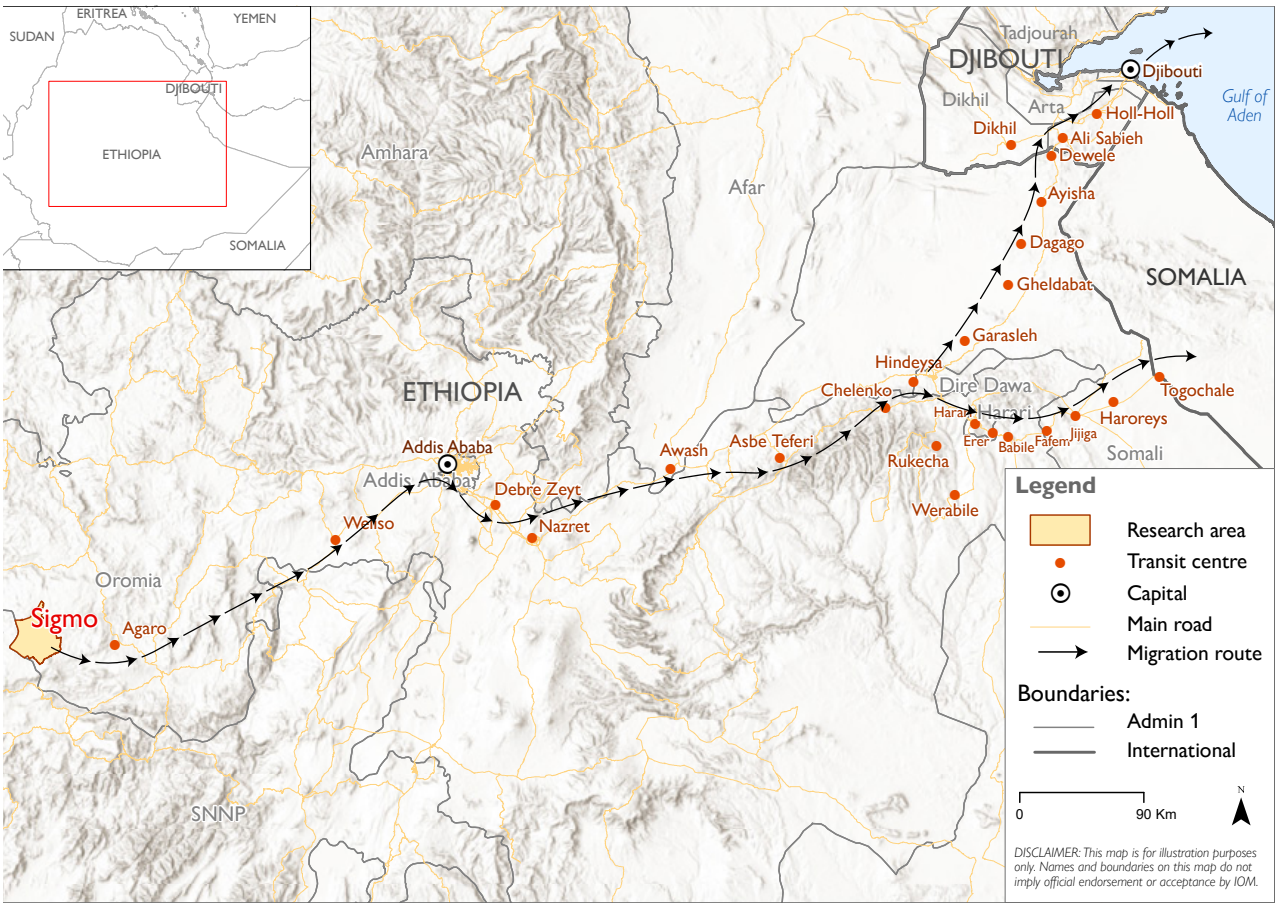


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Photo: Migrants in the desert on their way to Obock, Djibouti © Alexander Bee/IOM

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