



Rethinking girls on the move

The intersection of poverty, exploitation and violence experienced by Ethiopian adolescents involved in the Middle East 'maid trade'

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Acknowledgements

Special thanks are owed to Tis Abay's and Hara's girls and boys and women and men for willingly sharing their experiences and ideas in interviews and group discussions.

The authors are also grateful to the Oak Foundation for funding, Katy Webly at Save the Children International for help with research permissions, Prof. Ann Whitehead for thoughtful, detailed comments, Saba Hussain for research support and Kathryn O'Neill and Roo Griffiths for editorial prowess.

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BoLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
BoWCYA	Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FCSD	Forum for Children Sustainable Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HICE	Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDC	Least Developed Country
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation

ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPRIFSC	Organisation for Prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children
PEA	Private Employment Agency
PNSP	Productive Safety Net Programme
SGD	Small Group Discussion
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Glossary

Birr	Ethiopian currency (\$1 is worth approximately 20 birr)
Idir	A traditional community-based self-help insurance association usually used for funeral services
Kebele	The smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia
Khat/chat	A plant chewed for its stimulant properties, used for relaxation and ritual purposes
Teff	An Ethiopian grain that is made into a staple unleavened bread
Woreda	The administrative unit between <i>kebele</i> and zone; also called district
Zone	The administrative unit between <i>woreda</i> and region, usually responsible for coordination of activities of the <i>woreda</i> and the regional executive

Executive summary

Overview

Recent research on child migration has departed from earlier child protection-focused narratives that emphasised trafficking, and has tended to highlight agency and the way children's migration can play a key role in their 'future seeking' (Yaqub, 2009).¹ Indeed, with the critical caveat that children's decision making reflects the often highly constrained environments in which they live, migration is increasingly regarded as a vehicle for improving children's opportunities for schooling and work, enabling them to build more secure futures for themselves and their families. While we acknowledge that physical force is not involved in Ethiopian girls' migration decisions – and that their entry into the 'international maid trade' is aimed at improving their economic situations – our research findings suggest the earlier trafficking narrative may represent the most appropriate lens through which to view girls' choices and experiences.

Family pressure borne of poverty, combined with limited employment opportunities for young people that are reasonably remunerated, leaves an increasing number of girls feeling they have few options other than migration. This is hardly unique on an international level. What separates the experience of most Ethiopian girls from their peers around the world is first their reliance on illegal brokers – who provide at best partial information about the employment girls are entering into – and second the overwhelming exploitation most face on their arrival. The combination means the line that separates Ethiopian girls' migration from trafficking all but fades into invisibility.

This report investigates the relationships between poverty, migration and children's wellbeing in Ethiopia. It is one of three country case studies undertaken as part of a two-year research programme funded by the Oak Foundation to explore the potential for greater linkages between child protection and anti-poverty work in low- and middle-income countries. The research draws on qualitative and participatory methodologies to explore the drivers of migration, to assess the key threats girls face in destination countries and to consider improvements in programming that could afford better protection, reflecting the views of the girls and families involved in the research.

While a number of recent studies have explored the experiences of Ethiopian women who have migrated to the Middle East in order to undertake domestic service, our research is unique in that it is located in rural origin communities, rather than Addis Ababa or destination countries, and focused on adolescent girls and young women. Furthermore, in order to better triangulate drivers and experiences, we include a broader spectrum of respondents than is typical for research of this type – not just migrants and government officials but also parents, siblings and peers.

Ethiopian context

Despite strong economic growth over the past decade, Ethiopia remains one of the world's poorest countries. Still almost entirely reliant on subsistence agriculture, and with one of the world's highest birth rates, its per capita income is about a third of the regional average, and its Human Development Index (HDI) ranking is one of the lowest globally. While the country is making progress in some areas – the poverty rate fell from 39% in 2004 to 30% in 2011, and primary completion rates have climbed from 35% to 58% – most Ethiopians find it difficult to earn a living and remain highly vulnerable, with two-thirds of people living on less than \$2 a day and

¹ Also Boyden (2013); Boyden and Howard (2013); Crivello (2011); Denov and Bryan (2012); Heissler (2013); Huijsmans and Baker (2012); Orgocka (2012); Porter et al. (2011); Whitehead (2013).

nearly half undernourished. Girls are particularly vulnerable; they remain less likely to have access to formal education, are more likely to be married as children (to men who are, on average, five years older) and are growing up in a culture in which gender discrimination permeates social institutions.

Migration – and the remittances it brings – is increasingly vital to Ethiopia’s economy and is significantly related to poverty reduction. However, given the recent explosion of the ‘maid trade’, with up to 1,500 girls and women leaving Ethiopia each day to work as domestics in the Middle East, there is mounting concern about reports of these young women suffering physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Brokers, long responsible for moving the 60–70% of migrants who go illegally, have subverted even legal migration channels, building a veritable industry that feeds off poor women’s dreams of a more secure future and exposing many to horrific abuse worthy of tabloid headlines. Indeed, recognising the endemic nature of the exploitation, in recent months the government of Ethiopia has moved to ban all work-related migration, citing concerns about migrants’ safety. Ironically, this ban comes at the same time that Saudi Arabia, home to millions of migrant workers, including over 1.5 million from Ethiopia alone, has begun to expel (at times violently) those who are there illegally; more than 151,000 Ethiopians, including more than 7,000 children, have already been repatriated.

Study sample and methodology

Our research was conducted in Amhara regional state, one of the country’s largest regions, situated in the north-west. It is overwhelmingly rural, suffers from a high level of food insecurity, has a poorly educated population and has the lowest average age at first marriage. It is also the natal home of hundreds of thousands of girls and young women who have migrated to the Middle East to become domestic workers. Working in two middling-poor locations – Hara, a Muslim village with a well-established culture of migration, and Tis Abay, an Orthodox town that has recently seen migration rapidly increase – we selected a broad range of informants, including returnees, school girls planning to migrate in future, parents, young adults who have chosen to not migrate and local officials.

We employed a multi-layered, participatory and qualitative research approach. Focus group discussions (FGDs), conducted with groups of adolescents and adults, allowed us to explore general community-level definitions of wellbeing, including the ways they are gendered. They also allowed us to investigate broader views about the drivers of migration, the mechanisms on which it is built, returnees’ vulnerabilities and the local impacts of migration. In-depth interviews with former child migrants revealed insights into the abuses many girls face when working out their contracts, as well as the coping mechanisms they use to protect themselves. Interviews with key informants allowed for elaboration about local communities’ attempts to stem the rising tide of migration. A variety of participatory techniques were used (including body mapping, rankings, timelines and community drawings) to stimulate conversation regarding the push and pull factors (vulnerabilities and opportunities) behind girls’ migration and to elicit ideas about what might be done to better protect their wellbeing in the future.

Drivers of migration

Economics

Adolescents in Ethiopia, like their peers around the world, want better lives than those of their parents. They also (fed in part by significant parental pressure) want better lives *for* their parents. Improvements in education and growing exposure to media mean even children who have not yet left their rural villages have glimpsed a world beyond the drudgery of subsistence agriculture – and they want to participate in it. However, the local options for achieving their goals do not appear strong. Earning a livelihood from agriculture is proving increasingly difficult, given land fragmentation, environmental degradation and recent shifts in weather patterns; meanwhile, non-agricultural jobs are few and far between. Civil service jobs such as in teaching or health extension are no longer seen as a path to a better future. Given that civil servants’ salaries are low compared with the amounts that can be earned through migration, families are beginning to question the wisdom of investing time and money in an education that does not appear to offer any future guarantees.

Education

The Ethiopian exam schedule, which leaves rural children – whose schools are poorly resourced compared with those in urban areas – at a significant disadvantage and eliminates the option of future study for all but the brightest and most supported adolescents. This further pushes many young girls into migration. Exams at the end of Grades 8, 10 and 12 are nationally scored, and broadly determine children’s future options. Indeed, even entrance to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges requires children to pass Grade 10 exams. Poverty further limits the options of many children who do pass the exams. Because TVET and preparatory classes (Grades 11 and 12) are available only in larger towns, requiring families to finance independent living for their children, motivated poor students are often pushed out of education and into migration simply because they cannot afford the rent.

Gender

Gendered norms, which shape girls’ interactions through a broad array of social institutions, also drive their migration. Girls are less likely to pass exams because of the heavy demands household chores place on their time, and are less likely to be allowed to continue their education even when they do pass exams. Concern about girls’ safety from sexual predators – and the safety of the family’s reputation – leads many parents to insist they remain at home after the onset of puberty. In Hara, in keeping with tradition, many girls marry at this point. With secondary school ruled out, and ‘girl-appropriate’ local jobs particularly rare, parents often fall back on the reality that daughters are more dependable remitters than sons, and insist they migrate to the Middle East – divorcing first, if they are already married – to ensure remittances accrue to them rather than to their daughters’ marital families.

Migration mechanisms

While laws regarding economic migration in Ethiopia are well intentioned, respondents noted a wide variety of gaps – most related to implementation. For example, the law specifically prohibits the migration of children under the age of 18, but respondents’ experiences suggested it was relatively easy for girls as young as 13 to obtain false identification adding up to 10 years to their age. Furthermore, although the costs of migration are explicitly delineated and quite small, there is an ever-growing number of illegal brokers who charge exorbitant fees to help girls navigate the migration process as quickly as possible, avoiding the lengthy delays involved in legal migration. These brokers work in well-financed rings that run from rural communities, through Addis Ababa and into destination countries; they are not only fuelling migration by highlighting its potential benefits over and above its risks but also subverting the legal migration system designed to protect migrants’ rights by fleecing them for sums of money large enough to lead to distress sale of assets by their families and unhealthy debt ratios. Occasionally colluding with the police and other officials (with some reported to have paid large cash sums to evade prosecution), brokers appear to be above the law, even when they risk their victims’ deaths by arranging for them to cross the sea and desert illegally.

Impacts of migration

Migrants’ travel experiences differ greatly according to whether they travel illegally or legally, as contract workers. The illegal route is highly hazardous, with migrants exposed to potential abuse by brokers *en route* and then by gangs once they reach the Yemeni border. For girls and women, the risks are higher still, given the ever-present danger of sexual violence on the overland journey. By contrast, migrants with a legal two-year contract travel by air and are seldom exposed to problems or abuse *en route*. Although often frightened at being alone in a strange land, and typically passed from broker to broker when they arrive at in country, their exposure to serious risks appears to start only once they reach their employer’s home.

Our findings reveal that, overall, relationships between employers and Ethiopian migrants in the destination countries are largely negative, with only limited exceptions. Many experience excessively long hours, delayed or partial payment and physical and sexual abuse. Moreover, these experiences appear to be neither new nor unique, but rather routine, as echoed in a number of other studies. Employer abuse appears to happen irrespective of the destination country, is perpetuated by women (largely physical abuse) and men (largely sexual abuse) and is meted out to girls and women irrespective of their age and religion (although psychological trauma seems to be more common among Christians, given religious bigotry).

The potent combination of racism, patriarchy and (for Christians) religious bigotry many domestic workers face, which renders many girls physically and psychologically powerless, means sources of assistance should something go wrong are frighteningly limited. The girls and young women in our sample all come from relatively impoverished rural areas, where there is limited social diversity. Not surprisingly, the sociocultural and economic contrasts they encounter when they reach their destination country are overwhelming, all the more so as they usually lack any friends or peers in whom they can confide and who can help them gain familiarity with a new and alien world. Typically, respondents were confined to the home (or homes) of employers; even those who did have time off generally had very restricted mobility opportunities.

In theory, as per Ethiopian national law, brokers should step in when employer–employee conflicts cannot be resolved; without exception among our case studies, brokers in both the Middle East and Ethiopia did not provide any meaningful assistance. Typically, agents told girls who complained about their employment situation to either stay with the family or go home, often with some form of financial penalty or threat.

On return to Ethiopia, our returnees – many of whom had limited if any financial reward to show for their time abroad – highlighted that material and psychosocial support for girls was often very limited or non-existent. For the most part, the returnees were disappointed and sometimes even ashamed by their ‘bad luck’. Often, they were planning to migrate again to pay off their debts and deliver on their promises to their families. Typically, the drivers that propelled them to migrate – primarily poverty and a lack of employment opportunities locally – were still present and had in fact been compounded by the stigma associated with unsuccessful migration. Outside of family and friends, formal support services for returnees were non-existent in both our study sites. Even in Hara, where the government is making increasing efforts to curb trafficking, officials noted that there was still no focus on returnees.

Policy and programme recommendations to reduce child protection violations

While recent research, including the widely cited Population Council report *Girls on the Move*, has tended to highlight the ways in which children’s work, and their migration for work purposes, can be instrumental in helping them build better futures for themselves and their families, it is vital that policymakers recognise both the constraints under which children labour and the reality that there are places in the world in which exploitation and abuse remain endemic. Focusing solely on the positives of girls on the move risks overlooking the threats migration may pose to young girls – particularly when it involves internationally sourced, private domestic work, in a context often laden with intersecting racial, religious and gender discrimination. Based on our research, we recommend policymakers take the following actions in order to better protect the physical and mental health of Ethiopian adolescent girls:

- *Address the drivers of migration* by ensuring young people have reasonably remunerated local employment options; role models to inspire them and their families to invest in their education; and the opportunity to pursue relevant education, including apprenticeships, in their home community. In addition, parents need to be educated about their children’s rights, lest they focus solely on their instrumental value as income generators. Finally, girls need to be protected from the rampant sexual violence that limits their social mobility outside the home, and their opportunities for education and employment.
- *Make legal migration safer and more streamlined* by strengthening the enforcement of existent policy instruments such as Proclamation 632/2009; expediting migration processes in order to reduce the incentives for girls to use the faster, illegal migration channel; investing in better data collection; ensuring migrants and their families understand how the legal migration channel operates; and providing the training girls need to deal with situations ranging from interpersonal conflict to how to use modern appliances. It is vital that awareness-raising activities be targeted not only at communities in which migration is endemic but also at those in which it is only just emerging. This point of origin-based programming should be supplemented with better destination-based safety nets that give migrants a way out of situations in which their human rights are being abused.
- *Eliminate illegal migration and trafficking* by enforcing existing laws (including cracking down on false identification cards) and punishing brokers with imprisonment, rather than fines that are all too easily avoided. Local efforts to prevent girls and their families using illegal migration channels

need to be bolstered with financial and logistical support from higher-level government departments.

- *Invest in rehabilitation services* by enforcing existing laws and expanding the nascent efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Addis Ababa to ensure affordable, quality services are available to meet the medical, psychological and legal needs of returnees abused during their time overseas. It is critical, given the near absence of services available to returnees in rural areas, that the government invests in decentralised support, including building staff capacity.

1 Introduction

Despite its strong economic growth over the past decade (ranging from 7% to 11% per year),² Ethiopia remains one of the world's poorest countries.³ Almost entirely reliant on subsistence agriculture,⁴ and with one of the world's highest birth rates,⁵ it has a per capita income of only \$470, compared with a regional average of \$1,415.⁶ Its Human Development Index (HDI) ranking is 173 (out of 186 countries) (UNDP, 2013). While Ethiopia has made progress in many areas over the past decade – for example reducing poverty from 39% in 2004 to 30% in 2011,⁷ and increasing primary education completion rates from 35% to 58%⁸ – most Ethiopians remain highly vulnerable.⁹ Two-thirds of people live on less than \$2 a day,¹⁰ and nearly half of the population is undernourished (FAO, 2009). Girls are particularly vulnerable: they are less likely to have access to formal education,¹¹ are more likely to be married as children (to men who are, on average, five years older than they are)¹² and are growing up in a culture in which gender discrimination permeates social institutions.¹³

Migration, and the remittances it brings, are increasingly vital to Ethiopia's economy (ADB, 2010; also Fernandez, 2010) and are significantly related to poverty reduction (Beyene, 2011). Indeed, the World Bank (2011) notes that Ethiopia is one of the world's 'top 10 remittance recipients',¹⁴ taking in nearly \$400 million in 2010.¹⁵ This is remarkable, as Beyene (2011) notes, because 'Ethiopia does not have long migration history' (Beyene, 2011: 44). However, while migration has been linked on both a national and a global level to a variety of positive outcomes for children in what Collier (2007) dubs 'the bottom billion', particularly through poverty alleviation,¹⁶ there is another side to the coin. In many contexts, it may aggravate children's vulnerability because they 'are particularly vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse during all stages of migration' (UN, 2013: 18).¹⁷ In Ethiopia, where there has been a recent explosion of international migration to the Middle East – almost exclusively of girls and young women who migrate to engage in domestic work –^{18,19} there are grave concerns that migration is jeopardising the present and future wellbeing of young

2 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>

3 Ethiopia's growth rate has been slowing for several years, owing to the lingering effects of the global economic crisis. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts a 6.5% growth rate in 2012/13 (<http://www.imf.org/external/country/ETH/rr/2013/052313.pdf>).

4 This is particularly problematic given that climate change is expected to make agriculture more difficult at the same time that rapid population expansion is calling for higher yields (Oxfam, 2010).

5 The 2011 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reports a total fertility rate of 4.8 – the lowest yet measured. It also notes that 47% of the Ethiopian population is under the age of 15 (CSA, 2012).

6 'Regional average' reflects developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD/countries/ET-ZF?display=graph>).

7 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC>

8 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.ZS>

9 Secondary enrolment levels remain dismal – the net rate is only 14% (CSA, 2012).

10 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.2DAY>

11 In 2011, only 55% of girls completed primary school, compared with 61% of boys (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.FE.ZS>). Furthermore, the ratio of Ethiopian girls to boys in secondary school was only 87:100 in 2011

(<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ENR.SECO.FM.ZS>)

12 One-quarter of married women in their 20s were married by the age of 15 (CSA, 2012). Rates of child marriage are particularly high in Amhara state. On a national level, the average age at first marriage for women aged 20–49 was 17.1. In Amhara, the average age was 15.1 (ibid.).

13 In 2012, Ethiopia was ranked 64th out of 86 countries on the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) (<http://genderindex.org/country/ethiopia>).

14 Ethiopia is in the top among Sub-Saharan African countries, least developed countries (LDCs) and low-income countries (World Bank, 2011).

15 Geda and Irving (2011) estimate flows could be as large as \$2 billion including remittances sent via informal channels.

16 Adams (2011); Adams and Page (2005); Boyden (2013); Boyden and Howard (2013); Collinson (2009); Crivello (2008); de Brauw and Giles (2008; 2012); Du et al. (2005); Hashim (2006); Hertrich and Lesclingand (2012); Lokshin et al. (2010); Mansuri (2006a; 2006b); Migrating out of Poverty (2013); Pham and Hill (2008); Punch (2007); Siddiqui (2012); Thorsen (2007); van Blerk (2008); Whitehead (2013); Whitehead et al. (2007).

17 See also Bakker et al. (2009); Endeshaw et al. (2006); Erulkar (2006); Girma and Erulkar (2009); Marcus (2013); Siddiqui (2012); Whitehead (2013).

18 Fernandez (2009); Hu (2013); Le et al. (2011); Wujira (2010).

people.²⁰ This is recognised by the Ethiopian government, which recently issued a ban, until a ‘lasting solution is found’, on international work migration (BBC News, 2013).²¹

Box 1: The Palermo Protocol

‘Trafficking in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.’

Source: www.palermoprotocol.com/general/the-palermo-protocol

Recent research on child migration is departing from earlier child protection-focused narratives that emphasised trafficking, and, while acknowledging that young migrants are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, has tended to highlight agency and the way children’s migration can play a key role in their ‘future seeking’ (Yaqub, 2009).²² Indeed, the recent Population Council report, *Girls on the Move: Adolescent Girls & Migration in the Developing World*, which explicitly focuses on internal – not international – migration, contains the following sentence in its opening paragraph: ‘Migration offers adolescent girls the possibility and promise of opportunity’ (Temin et al., 2013: 1). While we acknowledge that children in Ethiopia, like their migratory peers around the world, move primarily for economic reasons and without the threat of force,²³ we highlight the tightly constrained environment in which this agency plays out, and note that the earlier trafficking narrative may, in this case, represent the most pertinent lens.

Family pressure borne of poverty, combined with limited employment opportunities for young people that are reasonably remunerated, leaves an increasing number of girls feeling as if they have few options other than migration. This is hardly unique on an international level. What separates the experience of most Ethiopian girls from their peers around the world is first their reliance on illegal brokers – who provide at best partial information about the employment girls are entering into – and second the overwhelming exploitation most face on their arrival. The combination means the line that separates Ethiopian girls’ migration from trafficking all but fades into invisibility (see Box 1).

This is one of three country case studies undertaken as part of a two-year research programme funded by the Oak Foundation; it explores the potential for greater linkages between child protection and anti-poverty work in low- and middle-income countries. The research is informed by a systematic review of the literature on four key dimensions of child protection – sexual violence and exploitation, physical violence, early marriage and inadequate care – and their linkages to poverty.

In Ethiopia, we are focusing on physical and sexual violence and exploitation of adolescent girls in the context of their migration to the Middle East. In Amhara National Regional State – one of the poorest and most populous in the country – girls and young women are increasingly migrating to Arab countries to find employment as domestic workers. Given non-binding labour contracts, lack of legal protection and pervasive gender, religious and racial discrimination in the destination countries, these girls and young women, particularly the poorest, who have the fewest options, are highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (physical and sexual) in their working environments.

While this phenomenon is increasingly under discussion in Ethiopia, and has recently moved centre stage with the above-mentioned 2013 ban on international migration as well as the large-scale expulsion of illegal

19 Note that this refers to legally undertaken migration only. Boys and men do migrate to the Middle East, but they must do so without a visa, travelling illegally by desert or sea.

20 Endeshaw et al. (2006); Fernandez (2010); Fransen and Kuschminder (2009); ILO (2011); Minaye (2012); Reda (2012); Woldemichael (2013); Wujira (2010).

21 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24663049>

22 Also Boyden (2013); Boyden and Howard (2013); Crivello (2011); Denov and Bryan (2012); Heissler (2013); Huijsmans and Baker (2012); Orgocka (2012); Porter et al. (2011) Whitehead (2013).

23 Endeshaw et al. (2006); ILO (2011); Toyota et al. (2007); Whitehead and Hashim (2005).

workers from Saudi Arabia,²⁴ there has thus far been limited research directed at girls', rather than women's, migration. Attempts to disaggregate experiences by age, religion, economic status and location of origin have been fewer still. Triangulating the community-level stories through a broader spectrum of interviewees than is common, our report seeks to contribute to emerging national dialogues about girls' exploitation in the context of migration, framing it not in terms of economic migration – which risks undermining the seriousness of the problem – but as a violation of children's rights to protection.

The report begins by laying out the conceptual framework linking poverty, migration and trafficking, briefly reviewing the literature on child migration and introducing the broader Ethiopian context. We then outline the study sites, sample, methodology and research tools. Our primary findings are presented in Sections 5 to 8. The report concludes with a discussion of possible policy implications, informed by respondents' ideas about what could be done to improve the care and protection afforded to children at risk of trafficking, both within Ethiopia and in destination countries. Because of the report's concern with poverty as a possible driver of trafficking, it pays particular attention to linkages to poverty reduction strategies and policies.

24 The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2014) reports that, as of 10 January 2014, the number of Ethiopian returnees from Saudi Arabia had topped 151,000. IRIN (2013) reports that over 7,000 of those returnees are children.

2 Conceptual framework and literature review

The conceptual framework for the broader research programme recognises that the drivers of violations of children's rights are multi-layered, complex and interconnected (see Figure 1). That said, it emphasises the key and often underestimated role of poverty in mediating children's wellbeing outcomes, noting that, 'while economic deprivation is never the only factor underlying child protection violations, it is often an important factor exacerbating the risk' (Marcus and Page, 2013: 104) because households not only 'respond in ways which do not safeguard and may directly conflict with children's rights to protection' (Marcus, 2013: 68) but also lack information about alternatives and access to ameliorating social services. As a result, even accounting for the considerable variation in norms regarding acceptable child care practices between and within cultures, children from low-income families are disproportionately more likely to experience abuse and receive inadequate care (Marcus, 2013; Whitehead and Hashim, 2005). It is critical to note here that our conceptual framework takes, as its starting point, the premise that inadequate care is linked to broader structural problems, including poverty and inequality, rather than assuming care deficits are a matter of parental wilful neglect.²⁵

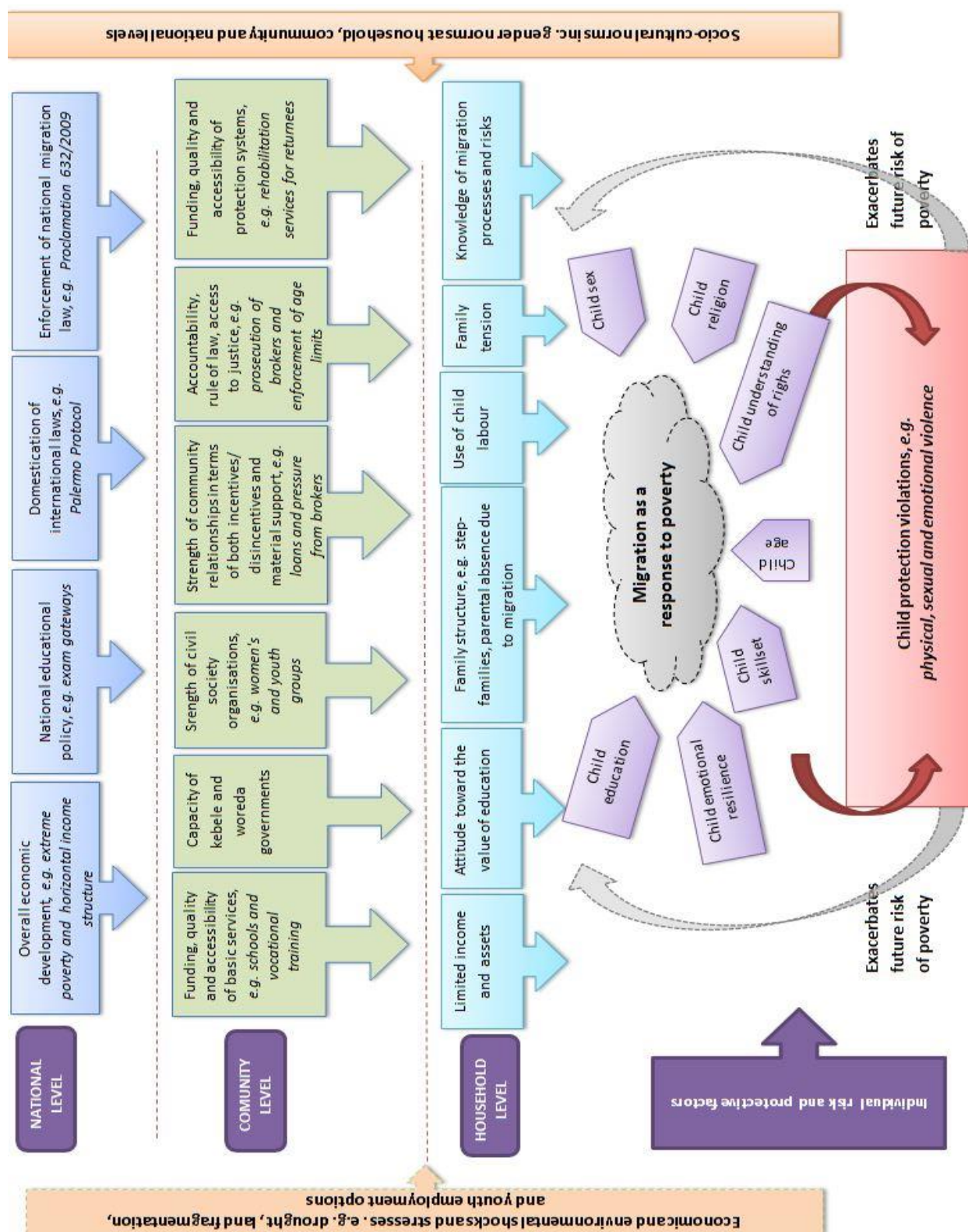
In the case of child migration, which we identify here as a potential response to poverty – we hypothesise that child outcomes could be either positive or negative depending on the configuration of protective and risk factors at play at the national, community, household and individual levels. For some children and adolescents, migration may represent an opportunity to escape rural drudgery, further their education, develop productive skills and assert their emerging maturity by helping their households escape chronic poverty. On the other hand, for those who are tightly constrained by the limited skills and education that all too often accompany the deepest poverty, migration may place children in environments in which their physical safety, health, educational and emotional needs receive inadequate attention – limiting not only their options for today but also those for tomorrow.

It should be noted that, while migration is typically 'a family-based strategy for poverty alleviation' (Migrating out of Poverty, 2013; see also Stark and Bloom, 1985), often taking whole families to urban areas in search of non-agricultural employment, this is not the case in the Ethiopian context, where adolescent migration to the Middle East is solely an independent venture. This is due to the *kafala*, or sponsorship system, which dictates the terms of migrants' employment while in the host country.²⁶ While young migrants' remittances are often critical to the wellbeing of their families back home, there is very little scope for whole family migration, as most girls are working as live-in domestics and receive visas expressly for that purpose.

25 Marcus (2013) notes that '[i]n OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries inadequate care is usually framed as "neglect"' and is variously seen as a result of either wilful inattention or ignorance (p.57; see also Dyson, 2008; McSherry, 2007). On the other hand, in developing countries, reflecting an awareness of the restricted options parents many face, the word 'neglect' is rarely used (ibid.; see also Coope and Theobald, 2006).

26 Unskilled labourers are required to have an in-country sponsor, most often their employer, who is responsible for their visa. This leaves employees dependent on the goodwill of their sponsors and makes it nearly impossible for them to extricate themselves from exploitation as they become illegal when they leave their employer. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011) notes, '[t]hey will face criminal penalties if they try to leave a job without their employer's permission. They may be arrested by government authorities if they are reported as "absconding" and deported, even if they have been abused and are seeking redress' (p.14). As boys are not hired to work as domestics, this effectively leaves them ineligible for legal migration.

Figure 1: Pathways linking Ethiopian national, community and household factors to migration-related child protection violations



Source: Adapted from Marcus (2013).

As Whitehead and Hashim (2005) note, early policy attention to child migrants revolved around particular subsets of children, such as those who had been trafficked or were running away from abusive home situations. While this was crucial in terms of ‘visibilising the harmful situations of many child migrants’, it also served to ‘invisibilise’ the larger group of child migrants who do not fit into that rubric (p.24).²⁷

Box 2: Child labour in Ethiopia

Unsurprisingly, given Ethiopia’s poverty rates and its agricultural base, child labour remains very common. According to the 2011 DHS, ‘17 percent of children aged 5-11 and 55 percent of children age 12-14’ were engaged in work activities (CSA, 2012: 32). Nearly one-fifth of younger children and two-fifths of older children did more than 28 hours a week of household chores (ibid.). Boys were significantly more likely than girls to be working (31.1% versus 23.5%) and rural children were more than twice as likely as their urban peers to be child labourers (29.7% versus 13.3%) (ibid.).

The ILO (2008) notes that, while the vast majority of working children are working to raise the family income, culture is also a key driver in that ‘Ethiopian culture encourages children to work to develop skills’.

Girls, however, are particularly likely to be confined to the informal sector, where it is unlikely they will develop the skills that will help them exit poverty. Broussard and Tekleselassie (2012), for example, report that 41% of urban young women are employed in the informal labour market, compared with less than 30% of young men. Indeed, Erulkar and Mekbib (2007) found in their sample of slum-dwelling girls in Addis Ababa that over three-quarters were working as domestics, reflecting the very limited employment options open to poor, uneducated girls (see also Broussard and Tekleselassie, 2012).

In sharp contrast, recent, more academic, research on child migration, while acknowledging young migrants are both highly constrained and more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, has tended to highlight agency and the way children’s migration can play a key role in their ‘future seeking’ (Yaqub, 2009).²⁸ It emphasises that childhood is socially constructed and notes that, in resource-poor environments, where children are less likely to be seen as economic dependents, children’s work – and their migration for work – is more likely to be framed positively than negatively, in part because of the ways in which it strengthens family ties and in part because of simple economic realities.²⁹

In Lao PDR, for example, Huijsmans (2011) observes that ‘[b]y becoming involved in migrant work [...] girls position themselves more firmly as youth and step out of the moral framework of childhood’ (cited in Huijsmans and Baker, 2012: 935). Similarly, in Latin America, Punch (2007) concludes that migration ‘offers young people a source of identity as well as enhancing their social and economic autonomy’ (Punch, 2004: 179). In Ghana, Hashim (2006) found children were generally positive about their migration experiences, as they ‘afforded them the opportunity to develop important relationships or skills, and/or to earn an income that allowed them to buy the things necessary for their progression into adulthood or to pay for education’ (p.4).

Box 3: What’s in a name? Migration versus trafficking

Where people migrate and lead a life free from exploitation and duress once they reach their destination, they are called ‘migrants’ and not ‘trafficked’. However, where they are coerced, forced or exploited during migration and/or at their arrival to their destination, they become trafficking victims (ILO, 2011).

In simple terms, child trafficking involves the recruitment, transport, harbouring or receipt of children or adolescents (under 18) into a situation involving severe exploitation (Dottridge and Jordan, 2012).

27 Also Boyden and Howard (2013); Davidson and Farrow (2007); Hashim (2006); Heissler (2013); Huijsmans and Baker (2012); Whitehead (2013); Whitehead et al. (2007).

28 Also Boyden (2013); Boyden and Howard (2013); Crivello (2011); Denov and Bryan (2012); Heissler (2013); Huijsmans and Baker (2012); Orgocka (2012); Porter et al. (2011); Whitehead (2013).

29 Bourdillon et al. (2011); Boyden (2013); Boyden and Howard (2013); Hashim and Thorsen (2011); Heissler and Porter (2010); Whitehead (2013).

However, while we acknowledge it is important to recognise both children's agency and the advantages of migration, and agree with Temin et al.'s (2013) report, *Girls on the Move* – which states migration *can* offer adolescent girls 'the possibility and promise of opportunity' (p.1) – we also believe, like Cacioppo (2006), that, 'when away from families and other social safety nets, children face greater risks of exploitation and human rights violations' (p.30). This is particularly likely to be true in the case of international migration, where access to protective social networks is nearly non-existent – and in the case of domestic labour, which 'often is among the worst forms of child labour due to the health risks for children' (Thorsen, 2012: 3) and 'remains virtually invisible and undervalued as a type of employment' (ILO, 2011: 13).

Furthermore, despite evidence that most child migrants – on a global level – lead lives that are far removed from the 'horror stories prevalent within the trafficking narrative' (Boyden and Howard, 2013: 355), evidence suggests the typical experience of Ethiopian domestic workers in the Middle East is best understood through that lens.³⁰ While trafficking is often understood to involve force, coercion or exploitation *during* migration, which is rarely the case in Ethiopia as most girls go quite willingly – albeit in the context of highly constrained options and significant family pressure – the ILO (2011) notes the appropriateness of the trafficking label if force, coercion or exploitation is used *after arrival*. Particularly given that Ethiopian migrants' decisions are made on the basis of inaccurate information about work conditions, because of both immigration officials' whitewashing of reality and brokers' naked deception, it is not the exception for Ethiopian girls to be trafficked. It is the norm.

Box 4: Population growth, land shortages and unemployment are drivers of migration for Ethiopia's young

With a population now over 90 million, approximately twice what it was only 20 years ago, Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Sub-Saharan Africa.³¹ As might be expected, coupling the finite nature of geography with these explosive birth rates, land shortages are increasingly acute. As Rahmato (2013) notes, 'family holdings are not just small but getting smaller' and are 'increasingly fragmented' (p.126). Indeed, many families are now subsisting on 'micro-plots' that, even under ideal agricultural conditions, produce only enough to feed a small family for part of the year. This is driving many farmers to 'abandon sound land management practices', such as crop rotation and land fallowing, therefore increasing the risk of soil erosion and depletion – causing yet more land shortage (ibid.). Landlessness, as high as 25% in some communities – is an increasing result, as is migration (ibid.).

Youth unemployment, driven by these land shortages, is also feeding migration. Broussard and Tekleselassie (2012) note that 'growing youth landlessness in rural areas and insignificant rural job creation' means that '(y)outh employment presents a particular challenge to Ethiopia' (p.2). Young women are disproportionately disadvantaged, as they are more likely to be both unemployed and under-employed. Broussard and Tekleselassie (2012) report that while '(w)omen make up approximately 52 percent of the youth labour force [...] 67 percent of all unemployed youth were women' (p.25). Uneducated young women are the least likely to be employed (ibid.).

As the Ethiopian government does not collect data on international migration, beyond counting those who seek employment through private employment agencies (discussed in greater detail below), no one knows how many migrants end up in the Middle East. Minaye (2012) notes that numbers are both difficult to find and wildly contradictory – largely, as de Regt (2007) observes, because many 'migrate via illegal channels and are not registered' (p.6). Indeed, officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) estimate that up to 70% of all migrants leave the country illegally (cited in US Department of State, 2013; see also Fernandez, 2010) – a figure that is likely to rise further if the ban on legal contract labour persists. Although Ethiopian migration to the Middle East began, primarily to Lebanon, as early as the 1980s (Beydoun, 2006), in recent years Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have been absorbing the vast majority of legal migrants, as their demand for domestic labour has exploded (Fernandez, 2010; ILO, 2011; Minaye, 2012). The ILO (2011) reports that, in 2009, there were nearly 700,000 Ethiopians working in Kuwait and

30 Beydoun (2006); de Regt (2007); Endeshaw et al. (2006); Fernandez (2010); ILO (2011); Minaye (2012); Reda (2012); Woldemichael (2013).

31 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>

approximately 1.5 million working in Saudi Arabia. Woldemichael (2013), citing data from MoLSA, observes that, as the Ethiopian economy slows,³² the number of migrants continues to increase, with over 100,000 legally departing in the eight months between July 2012 and March 2013. Wujira (2010), also citing MoLSA, adds that ‘100 percent of these women migrated for the purpose of serving as domestic servants in private households’ (p.2).

Almost all legal migrants to the Middle East are women or girls. Indeed, Fernandez (2009) reports that, between 2004 and 2006, 99% of legal migrants were female (cited in Dessiye, 2011: 5). Since, according to Proclamation 632/2009 (see Box 7), international migration is legally proscribed for girls under the age of 18, it is not possible to ascertain how many migrants are girls as opposed to women, as even those following legal channels are necessarily using deliberately falsified documents to show they are adults. However, it is believed that adolescent girls represent a significant chunk of migrants to the Middle East. A study by Agrinet and the IOM (2004, cited in ILO, 2011) found that 7.5% of Ethiopian migrants to the Middle East had left home between the ages of 13 and 17. The ILO (2011), which found 11% of migrants in its own study had migrated before the age of 18,³³ notes that girls often choose to migrate after failing an exam cycle in Grade 8, 10 or 12. Furthermore, Woldemichael (2013) reports that falsified ages are quite common (see also Endeshaw et al., 2006) with girls in her sample saying *kebele* officials helped them falsify their documents so they could migrate.

Box 5: Education in Ethiopia

After decades of intermittent war and famine, when education was not prioritised, the adult literacy rate in Ethiopia is only 39%.³⁴ Youth literacy, at 55% in 2007, shows substantial improvement, although girls continue to lag significantly behind boys (47% versus 63%) (ibid.). Furthermore, while ‘Ethiopia's primary school enrolment rate has tripled in recent years, from 25 percent in 1996/97 to 88 percent in 2009/10’ (AllAfrica, 2013), secondary enrolment remains dismal, with ‘only 14 percent of young people of secondary school age [...] attending school’ (CSA, 2012: 29).

There are stark differences in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas and by wealth quintile, with poor, rural girls the least likely to ever attend school (CSA, 2012). Indeed, only 5.9% of rural girls were attending secondary school in 2011 (ibid.). Erulkar (2013) reports that, of all out-of-school girls, nearly one-third cited early marriage as the reason for leaving school.

Not surprisingly, given the influx of new students, education quality is a significant issue; tests show over half of Ethiopian Grade 12 students are ‘lacking basic competence in science, mathematics and English’ (AllAfrica, 2013). Girls are again particularly disadvantaged, given heavy domestic responsibilities that leave them little time for homework. Studies by the Girl Hub have found that, even when girls are enrolling in school, they are not learning as much as boys (cited in Tefera et al., 2013: 17).

Ethiopian migrants to the Middle East are driven to migrate primarily for economic reasons – to alleviate poverty and build ‘a better life not just for themselves but also for their families’ (Manalo, 2007: 184; see also Woldemichael, 2013). However, as Beydoun (2006) notes, ‘[i]ntersecting with poverty are the prevailing patriarchal systems that subordinate women,^[35] and thus squarely compound their indigence and circumscribe employment options’ (p.1014), leaving them, according to Wujira (2010) ‘mostly unemployed’ and with ‘limited participation in the formal economy’ (p.3).³⁶ The end result is that Ethiopian girls and women are less educated than boys and men,³⁷ enjoy fewer land rights (CSA, 2012), earn two-thirds less (Zoellick, 2012) and are increasingly looking towards other countries not only in ‘search of better job

32 After several years of double-digit growth, the Ethiopian economy has slowed since the onset of the global financial crisis. The IMF predicts growth of 6.5% in 2012/13 (<http://www.imf.org/external/country/ETH/r/2013/052313.pdf>).

33 Half went through legal channels with falsified documents and half migrated through illegal channels.

34 Data from 2007 (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS?page=1>)

35 In 2012, Ethiopia was ranked 64th out of 86 countries on the SIGI (<http://genderindex.org/country/ethiopia>).

36 Also Dessiye (2011); Endeshaw et al. (2006); Fransen and Kuschminder (2009); Gebre (2012); ILO (2011); Reda (2012).

37 The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) reports a youth literacy rate of 63% for boys and 47% for girls (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ethiopia_statistics.html).

opportunities' (Wujira, 2010: 1) but also to make their own decisions, assert their independence and exercise their agency (de Regt, 2010; 2012; Dessiye, 2011; Gebre, 2012).

Ethiopian girls and women also use migration as a tool to escape marriage. For example, in her work with internal migrants, Erulkar (2006) found one-quarter of adolescent girl migrants to Addis Ababa had migrated to escape child marriage, which is the norm in Ethiopia (see Box 6).³⁸ Similarly, Gebre (2012) found migrants were often married girls between the ages of 16 and 20 who 'were escaping the oppression of the marital home' (p.262). Girls' international migration has been linked to both forms of escape. As Tefera et al. (2013) note, 'international migration seems to be an increasingly common way for girls to leave an "oppressive" domestic context, either in their paternal or their husband's home, to seek a new destiny in which they think they will be able to become economically self-sufficient and thus more independent upon their return' (p.41).

Box 6: Child marriage in Ethiopia

Child marriage remains very common in Ethiopia, despite being illegal. While the 2011 DHS reports that the median age of first marriage for women aged 20–24 is 18.9 years – a laudatory improvement over the 16.6 seen for all women between the ages of 20 and 49 – one in four Ethiopian girls still marry before the age of 15 (based on women aged 20–29) (CSA, 2012).

There are significant regional differences, with women aged 25–49 from Amhara region married at a median age of 14.7, compared with 21.4 in Addis Ababa (CSA, 2012). There are also religious differences. Erulkar (2013) found Muslim girls were significantly more likely to be married between the ages of 15 and 17 than non-Muslim girls. Nationwide, men marry on average nearly seven years later (CSA, 2012). Erulkar (2013) found the youngest girls were the least likely to have wanted to get married, regardless of whether their marriages were arranged by their families (which is customary) or were the result of abduction.

Child marriage leaves girls vulnerable on a variety of fronts. Not only does it preclude further education, but also it leaves them with little access to household decision making, including regarding contraception, and significantly increases the chances they will experience domestic violence (Erulkar, 2013).

As mentioned above, two migration channels run between Ethiopia and the Middle East: legal and illegal. Both sometimes build on internal migration, with migrants first stopping off in transit locations such as Addis Ababa and then passing through to the Middle East; in other cases they involve direct passage out of Ethiopia (ILO, 2011). Fernandez (2010) notes that there are two ways to undertake legal migration. The first is for migrants to 'secure work contracts abroad through their personal contacts' (p.252) and then register their migration with MoLSA. This path, while faster and officially legal, often relies on migrants' personal contacts with illegal brokers. The second is for migrants to go through private employment agencies (PEAs), which 'unofficially charge women between 2,000 and 8,000 Ethiopian Birr (US\$200-800) for their services, even though the cost of a return ticket, visa and insurance are supposed to be borne by the employer, and women are only supposed to pay for their passports and medical examination' (ibid.).

Box 7: Proclamations 632/2009 and 104/1998

'A proclamation to provide for employment exchange services' is the 2009 instrument that revises the earlier set of rules governing private employment agencies and international work migration. In addition to establishing a minimum age of 18, it also sets rules regarding who pays for what, establishes the obligations of contracting parties and delineates penalties for non-compliance.

Long protected, by the 1998 law, from 'fraudulent recruitment or excessive debt situations' (US State Department, 2010: 146), the 2009 amendment calls for a wide range of safety measures such as the registration of all migrants with the local embassy, the provision of emergency shelters in destination countries and the delivery of emergency medical services for abused and injured returnees.

38 As noted previously, the median age at first marriage is 16.5 (CSA, 2012).

For complete text of both proclamations see:

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_country=ETH&p_classification=08&p_origin=SUBJECT

Furthermore, although PEAs are charged with ‘protecting the rights, safety and dignity of citizens recruited and sent abroad’, they often end up unable – or unwilling – to do so. Woldemichael (2013) notes that simple arithmetic is behind a large part of the gap, as ‘each PEA would be responsible to protect [...] at least 875 domestic workers for every two years period’ (p.50) – a figure so large as to beggar even good intentions. This is further complicated by the agencies’ profit motives. The ILO (2011) observes there is little transparency regarding the size of agency commissions from employers, and MoLSA officials acknowledge that even legal employment agencies often end up depending on illegal brokers to obtain the new migrants they need to keep caseloads high.³⁹ According to the ILO (2011), this results in many migrants being ‘lured into the process by a false promise of an opportunity, deceived by misinformation or lies, or pushed by need or desperation’ (p.10). Finally, there is concern that the well-intentioned Proclamation 632/2009, meant to improve the safety of migrants, may have inadvertently muddied the waters further still. Many PEAs were unable to meet the conditions stipulated by the new law, and effectively became illegal agencies overnight, making it nearly impossible for potential migrants to ascertain whether they were interfacing with legitimate PEAs or not.

Box 8: Remittances in Ethiopia

The World Bank (2011) notes that Ethiopia is one of the world’s ‘top 10 remittance recipients’ and estimates annual remittances at nearly \$400 million – highly significant given that, as noted earlier, Ethiopia does not have a long history of migration (Beyene, 2011).

Furthermore, ‘the actual volume of remittances in Ethiopia, including flows through formal and informal channels, could be in the range of \$1 billion to \$2 billion annually’ (Geda and Irving, 2011: 113). Evidence suggests these remittances provide a significant source of income for many households, particularly the poor, and are vital to daily spending (i-Map, 2013), risk reduction and insurance against shocks (Fransen and Kuschminder, 2009).

While both legal migration channels often build on services provided by illegal brokers, increasing girls’ vulnerability exponentially, the illegal channel is riskier still, as it is run entirely by brokers, who – according to the US State Department (2012) – control 60-70% of the migration between Ethiopia and the Middle East. Illegal brokers, according to Endeshaw et al. (2006), ‘include individuals with relatives in the country of destination; owners of travel agencies and owners of import/export businesses’ (p.6), as well as long-distance bus drivers. Many employ local facilitators to recruit victims, who are often known or even related to them (ibid.), or loiter at bus stations waiting for new arrivals en route to Addis Ababa (van Blerk, 2008). De Regt (2010) notes that migrants sometimes prefer illegal migration ‘because the fees they have to pay are less high or because it can be arranged faster’ (p.255). For under-aged girls it offers obvious advantages, in that fewer questions are asked. However, as Wujira (2010) observes, it can result in debt bondage if migrants or their families must take out loans to pay those fees – and it offers none of the protections PEAs provide (see also de Regt, 2010; Woldemichael, 2013).

Whichever channel they take to get to the Middle East, there is overwhelming evidence that Ethiopian women and girls are often working and living in very dangerous situations,⁴⁰ as domestic work is ‘not regulated and inspected’ and affords little protection to workers, particularly live-in workers (ILO, 2011: 13). Endeshaw et al. (2006) report that they ‘face labour exploitation, physical and emotional abuse, as well as sexual abuse and exploitation. The most recurrent forms of abuse are overwork, confinement, denial of wages, emotional abuse, beatings, sexual harassment and rape’ (p.6). Fernandez (2010) notes that many migrants have their passports taken away on arrival and are expected to work very long hours, often with little food. Similarly, Wujira (2010) observes that, ‘in Saudi Arabia the contracts signed by workers in the

39 Ethiopian Employment Exchange Services Proclamation Number 632/2009, as cited in Woldemichael (2013: 8).

40 Beydoun (2006); de Regt (2007); Endeshaw et al. (2006); Fernandez (2010); ILO (2011); Minaye (2012); Reda (2012); Woldemichael, (2013).

sending country are often confiscated when workers arrive and are replaced by Arabic language contracts with different terms' (p.5), leaving migrants with little recourse if the terms of their contracts are violated.

While Dottridge and Jordan (2012) note that '[n]ot all exploitation experienced by children constitutes child trafficking' and 'calling all child domestic workers "trafficked" (or "domestic slaves") is inappropriate' (pp7-8), the line that separates migration from trafficking in the case of Ethiopians working in the Middle East is thin indeed – particularly in the case of children. Endeshaw et al. (2006) conclude that 'trafficking, unlike regular migration, involves deception about the ultimate outcome of the migration process and exploitation of the victim' (p.38). With that definition in mind, their 2004 study, undertaken with Agrinet, found that a large proportion of Ethiopian migrants to the Middle East were victims of trafficking.⁴¹ The youngest are particularly vulnerable; nearly 90% of children in their sample had been trafficked (Agrinet and IOM, 2004, cited in Endeshaw et al., 2006: 39).

Box 9: Ethiopian governance structure

Ethiopia has nine regional states plus two autonomous cities that operate at the regional level.

The states are split into 68 zones, which are then split into approximately 550 *woredas* (districts). The number of *woredas* increases with the population, as each is meant to represent 100,000–120,000 people.

Finally, each *woreda* is split into *kebeles*, which are 'neighbourhoods' of approximately 500 families. (See Assefa and Gebre-Egziabher (2007) for a more detailed explanation.)

Using a trafficking narrative, rather than focusing on economic migration, meets several goals. First, it serves as a focal point for the development of national political will, policy and programming. This is not inconsequential in Ethiopia, given the restrictive social roles open to adolescent girls. As the ILO (2011) notes, '[d]eep-rooted practices of gender discrimination that characterize Ethiopian communities have created a climate where migration of women is encouraged and the practice of trafficking in women is perceived as morally acceptable' (p.22). Indeed, the US State Department (2013) notes that officials from MoLSA, which is in charge of managing international labour migration, are not even 'trained to combat trafficking because it is considered outside their mandate'.

Second, use of the trafficking narrative may prove useful in terms of both mobilising international attention and focusing funding streams. The invisibilisation of children within international migration debates means their vulnerability to abuse is often overlooked and the urgently needed opportunities to promote safer migration for young people are being missed. The word 'trafficking' may serve to revisibilise this issue – forcing, for example, Saudi Arabia to emphasise rights protection over economic protectionism.

Key, however, is that the debate not turn into one of semantics. Regardless of whether adolescent domestics in the Middle East are conceptualised as victims of child trafficking or as economic migrants building their own futures, there is evidence that an increasing number of girls and young women are driven by poverty and a dearth of other viable alternatives to endanger their own psycho-emotional and physical wellbeing by working very long hours for employers who frequently do not recognise their human rights, in countries that do not recognise their legal rights. It is to this evidence that we wish to direct attention.

⁴¹ Agrinet and IOM (2004) estimate that 81% of Ethiopian workers in Lebanon are trafficked, versus 69% in Yemen, 50% in Egypt and 34% in Saudi Arabia (cited in Endeshaw et al., 2006).

3 Locating the study

3.1 Amhara National Regional State

Located in the north-west corner of Ethiopia, bordering Sudan, Amhara is one of the country's nine regional states (see Box 9) and is the homeland of the Amhara people. Its population, approximately 20 million,⁴² is almost entirely rural⁴³ and is largely Ethiopian Orthodox Christian, though about one-fifth of its inhabitants are Muslim (CSA, 2012).

Figure 2: Amhara



Amhara is one of Ethiopia's most disadvantaged regions. For example, more than 60% of women over the age of 15 have never been to school – the second highest rate in the country (for men the analogous rate is 45%) (CSA, 2012). Furthermore, as was noted previously, it has the lowest average age at first marriage (14.7 years for women aged 25–49) as well as the lowest median age at first birth (18.7 for women aged 20–49) (ibid.). Despite the fact that 85% of Amharans are engaged in agriculture, they are also particularly likely to suffer from food shortages; according to the 2011 Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure (HICE) Survey, 42.5% of the population are unable to meet their food requirements (MoFED, 2012). It should also be noted that, while Ethiopia as a whole has an exceptionally horizontal income distribution, with a Gini coefficient of only 0.23, Amhara's wealth patterns are even flatter; its Gini score is 0.20 (CSA, 2012).

Migration in Amhara is widespread, and has been so for years. As Table 1 shows, in the eight months between July 2012 and February 2013, nearly 34,000 women used legal migration channels to find domestic employment in other countries – the second highest number in the country.

Table 1: Number of migrant domestic workers from five regions of Ethiopia

Region	2008 September-2009 August	2009 September-2010 August	2010 September-2011 August	2011 September-2012 June	2012 July-2013 February
Tigray	949	573	1,582	8,592	4,966
Amhara	3,551	1,952	10,769	62,836	33,831
Oromia	3,600	2,757	10,430	64,431	39,185
Southern Nations,	1,981	1,300	4,547	23,392	13,813

⁴² The 2007 Census reported a population of 17 million. However, this number is widely believed to be an undercount. (see ESAT News, 2013).

⁴³ According to the 2007 Census, less than 13% of the region's citizens lived in urban areas (CSA, 2007).

Nationalities and Peoples					
Addis Ababa	7,251	6,860	11,813	26,774	11,472
Total	17,332	13,442	39,141	186,025	103,267

Source: Woldemichael (2013).

Within Amhara, we chose two towns in which to conduct our research: Hara and Tis Abay. Given that previous research on Ethiopian migration has been largely confined to urban areas, we asked the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA) to help us locate middling-poor, rural communities that were primarily Muslim (Hara) and Christian (Tis Abay), and in which migration was long established (Hara) and rapidly increasing (Tis Abay).

3.2 Hara

Located in North Wollo zone, the town of Hara, in the lowlands near Amhara's border with the arid Afar region (long used as a gateway to Djibouti and the Middle East), has seen rapid recent growth. Its 8,000 residents now enjoy many new cement-block homes, largely financed through remittances from the community's youth, and a paved main road, which links them both with their region's capital, Bahir Dar, nearly 400 km to the west, and with Afar. A planned railroad line is expected not only to further improve transportation options but also to bring new jobs.

Figure 3: Hara's new road



Nearly 90% of Hara's residents are engaged in agriculture, which, given the paucity of nearby surface water, is a risky proposition. Droughts are common and can be severe, as was evidenced by the massive famines the community experienced in the 1970s and 1980s. Given continuing food shortages, Hara is a site of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) – the country's flagship rural public works programme. Most beneficiaries are paid 10 birr a day for work on public works projects; orphaned children, elderly people and pregnant and lactating women are given direct relief. *Kebele* administrators report that, while Hara has both a market and a mill, there is little petty trade.

Hara's primary schools, built decades ago, were joined by a secondary school (Grades 9 and 10) in 2009. Enrolment in the former is high, with more than 1,400 children currently attending Grades 1-8. Secondary enrolment rates, on the other hand, are quite low. The high school has 208 students – a number of whom are adults playing 'catch-up' with their education; one Grade 10 student, for example, was a man of 48. Girls are less likely than boys to attend, even at primary school; while the gender ratio (girls:boys) for Grades 1-4 is 46:54, for Grades 5-8 it is 40:60. Fewer than one in five high school students are female. Students who have the interest and economic wherewithal to continue their education beyond Grade 10, in either 'preparatory school' (Grades 11 and 12) or technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must do so in the nearby town of Woldiya, 25 km away.

Hara also has a health centre, which provides vaccinations, reproductive health care, HIV care and malaria prophylaxis, and several mosques, which cater to its almost entirely Muslim population. Furthermore, the town's telecommunications centre enables some of those who do not have their own mobile phones to stay in touch with migrant relatives.

3.3 Tis Abay

Tis Abay, which has a population of nearly 25,000, is located near the Blue Nile Falls, and Lake Tana, Ethiopia's largest freshwater lake (and visible in Figure 2). It is in West Gojjam zone and is almost entirely Christian.

Figure 4: 'Downtown' Tis Abay



Like Hara, Tis Abay has seen a variety of recent infrastructure improvements. For example, the elementary school, which has nearly 3,000 students, was complemented in 2007 by a high school, which now enrolls nearly 700 children, over one-third of whom are female. Furthermore, its health centre has recently been upgraded, and a variety of new private pharmacies and health clinics have opened over the past few years.

Unlike Hara, however, Tis Abay remains very rural, despite its larger size. Its roads are unpaved, cars are a comparative rarity and its homes are almost exclusively made of mud, rather than cement. While the town has a tourism office and a large power station – both courtesy of its location near the falls – *kebele* administrators report that neither contributes significantly to the local economy. Indeed, they note that, not only does Tis Abay lack overnight tourist lodging, but also sanitation standards are so low that tourists often get ill if they try to eat in the market, which can be seen in the background of Figure 4 above.

The majority of Tis Abay's residents are either agriculturists or small traders. Gojjam, unlike North Wollo, has highly fertile soil and ample moisture. It used to be the bread basket of Ethiopia. Today however, owing to rapid population growth, the average plot size in Tis Abay is so small that, even with proactive management, it is difficult for families to produce more than they require for subsistence. Fertiliser, required in order to partially offset shrinking plots, is very expensive, and, unlike their peers in Hara, farmers in Tis Abay do not have the PSNP to fall back on as a safety net.

4 Methodological approach

4.1 Methods

We used a variety of qualitative and participatory research instruments (see Figure 5 for an example, ‘community mapping’) to explore child and adolescent migration, drawing on a purposively selected sample. Table 2 presents a summary of the interview respondents; and the research instruments used, are provided in Appendix 1.

Table 2: Research methods – instrument type, purpose and sample

Instrument	Purpose	Who
Community mapping	To explore general community-level definitions, views and experiences of children affected by migration to identify areas of consensus and debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group of community elders, religious leaders, adults and youth from Hara • Group of community elders, religious leaders, adults and youth from Tis Abay <p>Total: 2</p>
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	To explore adults’ perceptions of young migrants’ experiences and what could be done from a policy and programming experience to minimise risks and facilitate safer migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better-off women in Tis Abay • Worse-off women in Tis Abay • Better-off men in Tis Abay • Worse-off men in Tis Abay • Women (better- and worse-off) in Hara • Better-off men in Hara • Worse-off men in Hara <p>Total: 7</p>
Small group discussions (SGDs)	To explore adolescent and young people’s perceptions of young migrants’ experiences and what could be done from a policy and programming experience to minimise risks and facilitate safer migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better-off girls in Tis Abay • Worse-off girls in Tis Abay • Better-off boys in Tis Abay • Worse-off boys in Tis Abay • Better-off girls in Hara • Worse-off girls in Hara • Better-off boys in Hara • Worse-off boys in Hara <p>Total: 8</p>
Case studies	To understand individual girls’ experiences of migration and the ways in which these experiences shaped broader wellbeing	<p>Tis Abay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 6 dropout (returnee) • Grade 9 dropout (returnee) • Grade 10 dropout • Grade 10 dropout • Grade 10 dropout (returnee) • Grade 12 graduate (returnee) • Grade 12 graduate (returnee) <p>Hara</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 8 dropout (returnee) • Grade 7 dropout (returnee) • Grade 6 dropout (returnee)

Instrument	Purpose	Who
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 8 dropout (returnee) Grade 5 dropout (returnee) Grade 5 dropout (returnee) <p>Total: 13</p>
Key informant interviews (KIIs) – <i>kebele</i> , zonal and regional	To find out about relevant policies and programmes shaping migration in general, children affected by migration specifically, and the types of services and responses available, and how well these are being implemented	<p><i>Kebele</i> level</p> <p>Health extension worker (Hara, Tis Abay)</p> <p>School principal (Hara)</p> <p>School teacher and head of anti-trafficking club (Hara)</p> <p><i>Kebele</i> administrator (Hara, Tis Abay)</p> <p>Women's association head (Hara, Tis Abay)</p> <p>Youth association head (Hara)</p> <p>Male migrant returnees (Hara, Tis Abay)</p> <p><i>Woreda/zonal</i> level</p> <p>North Wollo BoLSA officer</p> <p>Guba Lafto <i>woreda</i> deputy head of women, children, youth affairs and gender expert</p> <p>Regional level</p> <p>Amhara Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (BoWCYA)</p> <p>Amhara BoLSA</p> <p>Amhara Women's Association</p> <p>Organisation for Prevention, Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children (OPRIFSC)</p> <p>Forum for Children Sustainable Development (FCSD)</p> <p>Total: 18</p>

Figure 5: Community mapping exercise in Tis Abay



4.2 Caveats

The vast majority of previous research exploring Ethiopian domestic workers in the Middle East has relied on interviews conducted either with current migrants in destination countries or with returnees in urban areas, primarily Addis Ababa. Our research is unique in that it is located in rural origin communities and includes a broader spectrum of respondents, not just migrants and government officials but also parents, siblings and peers. That said, it is worth noting – given the differences we found between our two research sites – that sample sizes, including our own, are universally small and cannot be considered inclusive.

Our destination-sourced interview pool does not include data from the most and least successful migrants, which may affect our findings. Many of the former are still in the Middle East and the latter, we are told, are too ashamed, impoverished or psychologically traumatised to return home.

Furthermore, given the limited number of local adolescents who have both migrated and returned, in an attempt to increase diversity our sample includes both current adolescents and young adults reflecting back on their earlier experiences. In addition, while we attempted to meet with authorities at the immigration office in Bahir Dar and had planned to hold informal interviews with some of the hundreds of girls and women queued outside the building, we were prohibited from doing so, despite having permission from the Amhara authorities to undertake field research. This necessarily reduced the breadth of stories we heard – and again, may have shaped our results.

Finally, we acknowledge, owing to issues with data quality, some sources are cited more extensively than others. Some respondents, the leader of Hara’s anti-trafficking club for example, have access to specialised information that illuminates the situation in ways most girls cannot. Similarly, some of the researchers whom we cite, Woldemichael (2013) for instance, secured access to some national sources and key informants we were unable to.

Figure 6: Participatory exercise in Hara



5 Migration in Hara and Tis Abay: where, when, who and why?

While the history and drivers of migration in Hara and Tis Abay have their own particularities, primarily growing out of religious differences, the stories that emerged from our respondents unsurprisingly converged primarily around economic themes. Migration in Hara is longstanding, in part because of its drought-prone, ‘gateway’ location, but primarily because of its Islamic heritage, which not only offers young women a concrete migratory path, undertaking the Hajj or Umrah,⁴⁴ but also eases their transition into work in Arab countries. In Tis Abay, on the other hand, migration is a comparatively new phenomenon, since, while Christians have long been allowed to migrate to smaller Middle Eastern countries such as Kuwait and Bahrain, they have been allowed to migrate to Saudi Arabia for only about three years. In addition, better irrigation possibilities have historically reduced the need for distress migration. In Hara, early marriage and migration are inexorably bound up for many girls; in Tis Abay, educational failure is a key driver of migration. In both communities, however, lack of decently paid, local employment is the key reason most adolescents leave home. Driven by a strong desire to alleviate parental poverty – as well as a need to position themselves in a more secure future – adolescent migration, particularly of girls, is increasingly seen as the only sure way to contribute to the household economy.

5.1 Where do they go?

Our respondents indicated that most migrants from Tis Abay and Hara followed national patterns and ‘go to Arab countries’ such as Saudi Arabia, Dubai and Kuwait. A handful go to Oman and Lebanon. Those who migrate illegally often stop off in Djibouti or Yemen *en route*.

5.2 How many?

There has been, according to a *kebele* administrator in Hara, little attempt to count migrants. He said, ‘no one recognises the importance of recording when the migrants go out of the country and when they return back’. That said, rough estimates of magnitude can be made based on participation in local programming. For example, a teacher in Hara noted that, of the 230 students who had enrolled in high school at the beginning of the school year, 46 had already dropped out by the time of our interviews in April 2013. He added that, while student:teacher ratios ought to be 50:1, many classes have only 14 students – primarily because of migration. Similarly, of the 1,015 people counted in a survey on natural resource management, nearly 10% had migrated only two months later. ‘The other 100 had gone to other places’, said the Hara *kebele* administrator. Indeed, in Hara migration is now so common that ‘the old are afraid that there will not be young people to bury them when they die’.

While migrants remain uncouned in Tis Abay also, evidence suggests numbers, while growing, remain significantly lower than those in Hara, primarily because Saudi Arabia began accepting Christian migrants only recently.

⁴⁴ The Hajj, one of the five pillars of Islam, refers to Muslims’ religious duty to make a pilgrimage to Mecca during the 12th month of the year at some point in their lives. The Umrah refers to pilgrimages undertaken to Mecca at other times of the year.

5.3 Who migrates?

5.3.1 Age

Because few of our adult respondents had a strong sense of chronology, and because birth registration remains both new and limited mainly to institutional births, ascertaining the age of migrants in Hara and Tis Abay was also a challenge. It was further complicated by the fact that children under the age of 18 are not legally allowed to migrate for work purposes. However, it is clear that many adolescents, some of them quite young, do migrate to the Middle East. In Hara, participants in FGDs and SGDs reported that ‘many students from Grades 8 and 9 went abroad. You wouldn’t find a single student who has no passport. They all have passports.’ Indeed, 1 of our 13 case study participants first migrated at the age of 13 and several went at age 14. Another adolescent migrant reported that, of her ‘pre-departure training class’ of nearly 300, approximately half were girls under the age of 15. Girls in Hara were more likely than their peers in Tis Abay to migrate as early adolescents; while the latter most often went after sitting Grade 10 exams, in Hara, since ‘the older girls have already left’, younger ‘girls between 13 and 15 are going’ now, according to one man.

‘I was 14 years old when I went to Saudi Arabia. I got my identity card with the falsified age of 26 years old. There was no problem to get an identity card.’
(Hara returnee)

Adults and adolescents alike indicated it was easy for girls to obtain ‘fake’ identification by simply lying to *kebele* authorities. As one key informant from the Women’s Association said, ‘Everybody does it. You swear to God. They believe you and you can have it.’ The young woman who first migrated at 13, while claiming to be 23, said, ‘There is no problem with false age. They fill your age as you wish.’ Another, who migrated at 14, added, ‘As I was physically big, they believed me when I told them I am 18.’

Kebele administrators acknowledge that many under-aged girls are receiving identity cards that overstate their age. One said young girls were commonly ‘exaggerating their age as 26 or 27 years’. However, administrators reported that their hands were often tied. First, because identity cards are a right and ‘birth registration started lately’, *kebele* authorities have to accept parents’ statements about their children’s age. One woman in an FGD explained age was typically determined by having three witnesses swear before *kebele* staff. She said, ‘A father comes with the child and claims it is he who knows the age of his child and demands the ID be prepared at the inflated age he tells. So families play a major role in this problem.’ Administrators’ positions are further complicated by the need to balance their own interests (best served by not alienating elders who are falsifying their children’s ages), *kebele* interests (best served by reducing local youth unemployment) and girls’ best interests (best served by helping them migrate legally, rather than using the far more dangerous illegal route).

While immigration officials, who are responsible for issuing passports based on girls’ fake identification cards, have more latitude to question girls’ ages, our respondents still indicated little difficulty. One girl who had migrated from Tis Abay at 18 with an identity card stating she was 24 reported that, while immigration authorities questioned her age and said she could not possibly be 24, ‘I acted confident and so had no problem in convincing them to give me the passport.’ Another girl from Tis Abay, who migrated at 16 while claiming to be 21, was flagged in the immigration office to meet with an ‘age evaluator’, who thought she looked young to be 21. However, after her brother explained to the evaluator that she was from a rural area, she was passed through without ‘a bribe, just talking’. As noted earlier, while we attempted to meet with these immigration officials, to talk with them about the problem of under-age migration, they not only refused to participate in the research themselves but also prohibited us from speaking to any of the girls who were queuing for passports outside their office, citing ‘security concerns’.

5.3.2 Gender

Respondents in both Hara and Tis Abay reported that, ‘It is girls who migrate the most’ because the contract visa system exists almost solely for domestic workers. This legal reality, as noted by local leaders, conveniently dovetails with local customs, which see girls as more trustworthy, but also leaves them fewer local options. The Hara school director, for example, explained, ‘In the majority of cases parents prefer to send their daughters to Arab countries than their sons. Parents do not trust their sons. They fear that they may not send them money once they reach their destination. Their daughters, on the other hand, are reliable.’

Figure 7: Girls' work in Tis Abay



A community leader commented that girls' education was often seen as 'irrelevant for herself as well as her family', noting that, for many, 'The options are either getting married and migrate together or getting divorced and migrate alone.'

Girls noted that, even when boys do migrate, their motivations tend to be very different from those of girls. One girl in an SGD commented, 'If a boy migrates, he does so for himself. He wouldn't do a thing for his family. But a girl is responsible for the household. A boy might go because his friends did or because going abroad is considered as a big deal in the community. It is not to help out his family.'

Indeed, several adolescent boys noted that girls' obligations do not end after migration, and that, if their brothers have to migrate, then it is seen as 'all their fault'. One boy in an SGD explained, 'If you have a sister living in an Arab country, and if you ask her to send you some money to establish a business here, she won't be willing. On the other hand, if you are arrested by bandits while you are going to a foreign country, she would be willing to give whatever money they require for your release. If she had given you the money before to do a business, this all wouldn't have happened.' A mother in an FGD confirmed a recent case in which a boy migrant had been beaten to death because his sister did not send money to his kidnappers fast enough; 'His parents blamed her for his death'.

'For females it is easy, as they can work as a maid servant. For males to migrate, they should have some skills. Our cousin got a driving licence. Then he paid 80,000 birr to get his work permit in Saudi.' (Participant, women's FGD, Tis Abay)

5.3.3 Poverty status

Given, as mentioned above, that the economic distribution of rural Amhara is extremely horizontal – with 'rich' families having an ox or cow to go with their three goats, for example – our respondents indicated that, 'Both the rich and the poor are equally interested to migrate' because 'The rich migrate to have more while the poor migrate with the hope that he gets money to change himself and help his parents.' While most agreed that the very poorest 'do not easily find cash' to finance international migration, given that 'the money they need for this purpose is much', many believe girls from poorer families are more likely to migrate than those from comparatively better-off families. For example, one girl in an SGD said, 'People

from poor families migrate the most, because poverty tormented them.’ Another girl added, ‘It is privation that leads you to migrate and leave your country.’ Other girls, however, had other opinions. ‘Earlier, it was the poor who migrated. Now people are going without any economic problems,’ said one. ‘Rich people are avaricious. They want to add up to what they already have,’ contributed another.

Figure 8: Foosball in Tis Abay



Both space and time are critical to local understandings of who is rich and who is poor. Feelings of deprivation in Hara, for example, are accentuated by growth in the nearby town of Woldiya, which boasts new multi-storey buildings. They also continue to be shaped by the droughts of the 1980s – as asset accumulation is still the surest form of protection against the dangers of aridity. In Tis Abay, on the other hand, while families do not suffer Hara’s ‘hungry season’ and can only just imagine multi-storey buildings, today’s smaller plot sizes mean they are working harder to stay afloat than they were a generation ago. They are not poorer, *per se*, but their efforts are less fruitful.

While opinions differed as to whether the poor or the ‘rich’ were the most likely to migrate, our respondents were unified in their belief that the poor were particularly vulnerable throughout the migration process. They noted two key threats. First, because international migration costs between 7,000 and 30,000 birr (\$370–1,575), and poor families do not have access to such sums, when they migrate they often go deeply into debt. Several respondents noted, for example, that the poor must ‘borrow money with an exorbitant interest rate, usually 100%’. Others noted that they ‘use land as collateral’. Both of these strategies mean that, if migration is not successful, poor families have often jeopardised what little financial stability they had.

Second, our respondents indicated that money buys safety. The wealthiest families are able to purchase ‘the *imam* [green card]’.⁴⁵ This not only ‘allows them to work legally’ but also means migrants have the flexibility to leave poorly paid, dangerous jobs and take other positions of their choosing. ‘The rich have the right to change employer or get a better job,’ explained one man in an FGD. ‘She could get one day off in a week or in month,’ added another. The less well-off, on the other hand, are ‘sold for two years on a contract basis. For two years, the person is not allowed to visit relatives or friends. There is no day off, and they cannot make phone call without the permission of the owner.’ The very poorest ‘send their daughters by sea, through the illegal route’. This not only leaves them vulnerable to violence and exploitation *en route*, but also means they have no safety net on arrival. As one man in an FGD explained, ‘If those who use the legal

45 Responses varied regarding the cost of a green card, from 80,000 birr (\$4,200) to well over 100,000 birr (\$5,300).

route face problems at the destination country, the Ethiopian Embassy could give them some protection – stand for them. However, the Embassy will not be responsible for those who migrated illegally.’

5.3.4 Family structure

Our respondents indicated that family structure is often key to understanding which girls are the most likely to migrate. While ‘orphans don’t migrate because [...] they don’t have the money to go because [...] nobody gives a loan to an orphan’, girls

‘The majority of the households in Tis Abay are female-headed households.’

(Participant, FGD with men)

whose mothers are divorced appear to be particularly vulnerable. Key informants noted that divorce rates in Hara and Tis Abay were high, leaving many women and their children in poor, single-parent households with very limited long-term economic prospects. ‘Women are already married and are living in poverty because their husbands’ income is meagre, they get fed up and abandon their marriage,’ said Hara’s school director. A mother from Tis Abay concurred: ‘It is not more than 20% of the married women who lived with their husband until death.’ This not only leads adolescent girls to migrate, to help their mothers, but also pushes mothers into leaving their children behind and migrating themselves. A teacher from Hara explained, ‘Children grow with their grandmothers. They do not know their real fathers and mothers. Their parents live in Arab countries.’ The school director added, ‘Those whose mothers live abroad are high in number.’ Many ‘receive remittance and live on their own,’ he said. This, he noted, was beginning to encourage intergenerational migration, as left-behind adolescents, ‘also want to go’ and are particularly ‘vulnerable to trafficking’.

The difficulties of blended families also play a key role in migration decisions. For example, one girl in Tis Abay reported that her father left when she was just a baby. Her mother soon went back to her first husband, who was the father of the five older siblings. The girl reported that, while ‘all my elders attended school’, her mother ‘told me that I should help her out’ and would not let her go to school. After many years of being passed between older sisters, she ran away to ‘Addis Ababa alone and [...] stayed there for eight years [...] without the knowledge of my parents [...] because it was not comfortable to live with them.’ A 12-year-old boy, also a runaway, said that his stepfather refused to let him go to school and ‘hit me always’. Relationships with stepmothers were also seen as problematic. A girl at Tis Abay forcefully remarked, ‘There is no person that lives peacefully with his/her stepmother.’ She explained that after remarriage fathers were useless to their children: ‘A father thinks of himself rather than his child. He would say that the child will raise by himself’.

5.4 Why do they migrate?

As mentioned earlier, some drivers of migration are present in both Hara and Tis Abay; others are particularly common in one or the other of the two study sites. In Hara, for example, a culture of migration and the tradition of child marriage are closely related to girls’ migration. In Tis Abay, on the other hand, options (or the lack thereof) for higher education feature prominently in girls’ stories. In both sites, brokers are increasingly feeding on adolescents’ need for independence, their tendency to bow to peer pressure and their sense of ‘luck’. Most importantly, however, respondents at both sites, similar to participants in prior research, focused on the lack of local jobs, particularly those that pay well enough to justify the time and effort families have invested in their children’s education. Unemployment rates are high, agriculture is an increasingly risky proposition and government employment is no longer seen as the sinecure it once was. Driven by a desire to further their and their parents’ lives, many adolescents – particularly girls – feel they simply have no option other than migration.

My five-year-old son told me he wishes to go to an Arab country and send money for me. This is because our children listen when we talk about our problem.’

(Participant, FGD with men, Hara)

5.4.1 Cultural practice

Given Hara’s long migration history and its status as a ‘hub’ through which migrants from other regions must pass in order to ‘finally depart’ through Afar and into Djibouti, ‘Migration has become a culture,’ according to our respondents. ‘Everybody is ready to go. It is like a competition,’ said the leader of the local Women’s Association. She added, “I am as fit as the other to migrate. I am not lesser than the other.” This is

‘We parents do not consider the problems our daughters suffer; we focus only on the money they send us. We regret it only when they come back to her country after sustaining a serious bodily damage.’
(Participant, FGD with women, Hara)

what they say.’ Indeed, one girl in an SGD noted that adolescents did not even regard leaving home to work in an Arab country as migration. ‘Migration is when a person leaves for a place which he/she doesn’t fancy,’ she explained; ‘If it is going to be prolific, then it is not labelled as migration’.

Our respondents in Hara noted that, ‘In the early times, those who have oxen to plough and some armaments were highly respected.’ Now, however, ‘A parent that sends a lot of children to the Middle East is accorded the privilege of being wealthy.’ ‘Everybody wants to send his daughter and depend on remittances for his life,’ explained the *kebele* administrator – even if they have to force them to migrate – because, according to the health extension worker, ‘People’s mentality is geared towards money.’ The teacher in charge of the anti-trafficking club confirmed, ‘Parents nag their children day and night to drop out and go to an Arab country.’

Girls report that these attitudes are quite common. One girl in an SGD said, ‘Your parents will nag you by saying, “Your friend is generating a lot of money by going overseas. Why don’t you go too? What use is there if you waste your time here by doing nothing? Or else you didn’t marry. A girl’s education! Where are you going to reach after learning?”’ She continued, ‘When they say such things, we are dismayed. We think, if my parents hate me this much, then what is the point of staying here? And we go abroad.’ Another girl added that, when a girl says she does not want to migrate, ‘her family will lay blame on her. They would accuse her by saying, “You wanted to stay because you wanted to sleep around.”’ A 17-year-old girl, who first migrated to Saudi Arabia at age 14, was pressured in this way. She reported that, when she told her older brother she wanted to continue her education, not migrate, ‘he insisted and said, “You want to be here as you want to prostitute, not to continue your education.”’

‘We started to think about migration as we saw houses constructed in our area [...] Let alone constructing a house, there is no one who can buy clothes while working here. If a person has no child in an Arab country, he/she wears dirty clothes and his/her body is dirty. But if a person has a child in an Arab country, he/she is the one who is hygienic.

A person with migrant family can buy a soap to wash his clothes and body. He/she has a house with more space. No one can live a better life without sending the children to go abroad. It is common and a good habit that people are migrating by giving their kids to their husbands/wives. That is how people live here; otherwise it is impossible to live here.’ (Father of a daughter who migrated at 17, Hara)

Hara’s ‘culture of migration’ is built on economic success. As noted earlier (and discussed in more detail below), Hara is a town transformed by remittances. One man in an FGD said, ‘Look at Hara, it looks like a town. This is because of the money young people bring from Saudi Arabia. This didn’t come from the selling of *teff* [a local grain] and sorghum.’ Girls are not blind to this reality. While many girls are unable to migrate successfully, and some return home with debilitating physical and mental health problems, the overall attitude of adolescents in our SGDs was that, ‘Our dreams will come true’ through migration. Indeed, of the six girls who had already migrated and returned, five were planning their second migration – eyes wide open and focused on earnings. One young woman, who first migrated to Kuwait as an adolescent despite her parents’ objections, is planning on leaving her infant with her husband and going back as soon as possible. She said, ‘Both my parents did not allow me to migrate. They said, “You are too young.” But I ignored their advice.’ Now, she continued, ‘I am thinking about fortunate migrants,’ who live a comfortable life.

Religion is also a key to Hara’s ‘culture of migration’. Not only does a common Islamic heritage smooth migrants’ transitions into Arabic homes, but also the Hajj and Umrah have given generations of girls and young women an entry point into Saudi Arabia. A teacher noted, ‘Going to Saudi Arabia is considered as going to a sacred place. This is like the Christians going to Jerusalem.’ Indeed, several respondents noted that suffering encountered *en route* to Saudi Arabia, up to and including death, was often considered a ‘holy sacrifice’.

5.4.2 Early marriage

The relationship between marriage and migration in Hara is complicated, with some respondents believing the tradition of child marriage, which is guided by Islamic law, actually fuels girls' migration and others believing the relationship is more *pro forma* than casual.

'Most parents want to celebrate their daughter's marriage even if she is under age. Then they force her to go Saudi Arabia to work and send money for them.'
(Participant, FGD with men, Hara)

Proponents of the former view argue girls leave school as early as Grade 5 in order to marry, and are then made to migrate as they have 'nothing else to do'. For example, one of our case study respondents reported, 'When I was in Grade 7, they forced me to drop out from school and marry. Then after that I migrated to Arab country via an agency as contract domestic worker. My life has become so miserable.' A boy in an SGD explained that a 'large part of the community [...] has a poor understanding of the benefit of education. So they are not willing to teach their daughters to the end.' A girl added, 'Even if a girl desires to learn, her parents do not understand the need for education. All they want is to marry her off,' usually 'for a short period of time before they send them out'.

Other respondents, however, believe adolescent migration has largely replaced child marriage in terms of girls' life-course options. They reported that, while child marriage remains common, it is more of a 'bridge to migration' than an event in and of itself. One man, for example, said, 'Not many people marry off their daughter for marriage sake, but to show they have performed their traditional duty.' Another added, 'They marry to live up to the norm. For the boy, "He lowers his hair." For the girl, "She unties her belt."' Indeed, some girls reported that early marriage was important to their identities; several said it was 'sinful' to remain unmarried after menstruation.

While divorce has always been common in Hara, with girls welcome in their parents' homes, migration has changed not only the nature of child marriage but also the nature of divorce – which now often immediately follows nuptial celebrations so remittances can be sent to natal, rather than marital, families. One man in an SGD discussion said parents 'do not even want their daughters to stay in marriage. In Hara, marriage lasts two months.' A teacher further explained parents 'make sure she has taken contraceptives before her marriage so she does not get pregnant from her husband. They get her divorced and off she goes.' A boy added, 'They do this so that she would support them by sending remittance'.

Our respondents noted that what is key to many parents is not the sacrament of marriage, in which they engage 'just to have the feeling that their daughter is married', but the ritual loss of virginity. Knowing, from community anecdotes, that their daughters are likely to be at risk of sexual violence if they migrate – either *en route* if they go illegally or by their employers – many parents prefer their daughters to marry first. As one teacher noted, parents 'believe it is better to be deflowered before she leaves because if she is raped it won't be as painful as if she was a virgin'. Several parents also noted it was more dignified for girls to lose their virginity in marriage.

'If they fail in their matriculation exam, they get upset by it and go.' (Participant, SGD with boys, Hara)

5.4.3 Schooling and exams

Our respondents noted that 'being not successful in one's education is the other reason for migration'. They specifically reported that the Ethiopian exam schedule pushes many adolescents into migration, particularly in Tis Abay, where overall educational attainment is higher. While schooling in Ethiopia is free and compulsory up until Grade 8, at that point children must take a nationally assessed exam that determines whether they are allowed to progress to secondary school. If they fail the exam, they are allowed one

'My daughter was a good student. She passed her high school leaving certificate examination but I could not send her to Bahir Dar for her pre-university education because I cannot afford to pay her expenses. She is now carrying stones for road construction for 20 birr per day (\$1.40). She comes home with her hands and shoulder full of bruises.' (Father, participant in FGD with worse-off men, Tis Abay)

opportunity to repeat Grade 8 and then take the test again. A second failure, which is common among rural children who have a fraction of the educational opportunities presented to urban children, precludes further education. At the end of Grade 10, children are tested again; the few who pass are allowed

to continue on to either TVET or preparatory school (Grades 11 and 12). Only students who pass Grade 12 exams are allowed to attend university. Several Grade 10 adolescents shared one girl's view: 'If I don't get a passing mark to the preparatory school, then I will go to a foreign country.' Another girl, fearing her Grade 12 exam results, migrated immediately after taking the test.

Respondents (particularly but not exclusively in Tis Abay) also reported that, because attending preparatory school necessitates an expensive move to Bahir Dar (or Woldiya for students from Hara) – 30 km away over an untarmaced road – few have the opportunity to continue their studies even if they do pass exams. One community leader commented, 'If you want to learn beyond Grade 10, you need to go to Bahir Dar and this needs money for renting a room, for food and for other expenses.' This leaves poorer girls unable to pursue higher education – and more likely to choose migration. Another noted, 'If she is from the rich family, she goes to Bahir Dar to join the preparatory school or a TVET school by renting a living house. But if she is from a poor family, she will go to an Arab country in order to support her family.'

'A girl is usually overburdened with work so she lags behind the boy in her education. When a boy comes home from school he eats his lunch and either he studies or plays. In this town, we do not allow a girl to move around because we fear she will encounter bad people or go to places unsafe for her. (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)

Grade 12 exams, said that, even for those who are able to continue their education, lack of parental supervision and support can be challenging when coupled with Ethiopia's exam schedule. She explained, 'When I was with my parents, my father used to follow up on my performance in school and

support me at home with my homework. In Bahir Dar I missed my father's support. There was no one following up on my performance. I think that was the reason I failed my exam. Had I been with my parents I would have performed better.'

Adolescents, parents and community leaders all agreed girls were far more burdened than boys by both the exam schedule and the lack of local higher education. One girl from Tis Abay, who began working in Grade 6 as a daily labourer, full-time over school holidays and part-time on school days – in part to make money to pay her own school fees – explained, 'In a way I expected I would fail because of the time pressures.' Another added, 'When I come back from school with my brother, he is free to go out and play. On the other hand, I have the responsibility to work at the house.' Parents are also worried about girls' safety and reputation. One father noted that, 'Staying away from parents in rented houses in Bahir Dar has its own dangers even when a family tries to cover their costs. When girls go there they become outside parental control and supervision. Girls could be violated or lured into unwanted and dangerous practices.' One girl concurred, explaining parents did not want their daughter to go on to preparatory school or TVET because, 'They are afraid that she will become promiscuous.'

5.4.4 Tis Abay: stigmatised sexuality

In Tis Abay, the stigma surrounding girls' sexuality was also implicated in their migration. For some, the 'dishonour' of rape, which respondents said is quite common, pushed girls out of the community. For example, one father in an FGD reported that, when his sister was raped, and one of the perpetrators escaped, 'She wanted to go away.' He added, 'I paid her costs and sent her to an Arab country.' Another said, 'When a girl is raped she is shamed. She is unable to face the community.' This has an impact not only on the rape victim but also on her family, who may respond by pushing harder yet towards migration. Another girl explained, 'If I am wronged [raped] it is not only me but also my family that is going to be demoralised.'

For other girls, familial and community expectations about their sexuality may drive their migration. As already noted, parents are worried girls will become promiscuous when they are on their own in Bahir Dar. 'The backbiting and gossiping become unbearable. They decide to migrate,' explained the father of one girl.

Despite the concerns of their parents, adolescent girls in Tis Abay reported only fear of their sexual capacities. One, for example, said, 'Let me give you my example. When I was a kid, I used to get out. But, after I became 13, since I could get raped and be pregnant, I take precautions when I go out.' Another added, 'I will try to stay virtuous until the age of 18. But, if I say no to a guy who asks me to be his girlfriend, he

will rape me.’ She concluded that, if that happened, migration would be her only option: ‘I don’t think that I can stay here while people make a joke out of me. I will run away.’

5.4.5 Pressure from brokers

While brokers are discussed in greater detail below, our respondents were clear they have had become endemic, and dangerous. One man explained, ‘The illegal brokers advertise the good things children can get by migrating.’ The Hara *kebele* administrator continued, ‘The brokers search for the young and persuade them to go abroad.’ Girls said brokers actively disseminated false information. One, for example, who migrated at 16 and was sent home after only five months, said her broker told her, ‘If you work hard and work as you should, then they will treat you as their own child. Not that they will abuse you.’

5.4.6 Trying for luck

Adolescents in both sites expressed a strong belief in ‘fate’ or ‘luck’, which they thought would either keep them safe during migration or not. One mother explained, ‘The lucky one is already declared to be happy by God. The poor is condemned to be so from the beginning.’ A young man added, ‘They believe that they would not die unless they are destined to die.’ This fatalism appears to be more cultural than religious, with Christian girls in Tis Abay just as likely to mention luck as Muslim girls in Hara. Key for understanding its impact on migration is that adolescents who expressed a strong belief in fate appeared comparatively more ‘deaf’ to risk. While most of our respondents indicated they preferred to see the positive rather than the negative outcomes of migration, the adolescents who focused on luck seemed to discount personal risk entirely – as it was perceived as being beyond their control.

‘As life gets tough, a mother starts to continuously blame her daughter for not going to an Arab country, saying that, “If it is not for your laziness, you could have gone to an Arab country and help us improve our life as does the daughter of our neighbour.”’
(Adult, Tis Abay)

5.4.7 Familial tension

Adolescents and parents also report that parent–child tensions can push adolescents into migration, particularly when children are out of school, unemployed and not contributing to the family economy. One father noted, ‘When adolescents are not able to pursue their educational aspirations or fail to get jobs, they sit idle with their parents. There is no peace in the household.’ Another added, ‘There is no place in the household when an adolescent girl comes home to stay with parents without a job – disappointment of the parents boils to the point where she is told to leave.’ Much of this family tension appears to be the result of recent social change, particularly in Tis Abay. Not only is this the first generation pursuing school for more than basic literacy, but, as mentioned earlier, farmers in Gojjam are increasingly ‘pinched’ owing to falling plot sizes. The confluence of economic stress and adolescent education is accentuating discord in many households.

Some young people are fed up with everything in their locality. They want to go away.’
(Participant, FGD with men, Tis Abay)

5.4.8 Peer pressure

While pressure from parents, particularly in Hara, is a key driver of adolescent migration, there is also ‘a lot of peer pressure’, driven in part by the fact that, ‘Youth are more informed about the current affairs of the country.’ One girl from Tis Abay who migrated to Saudi Arabia said, ‘Most youths are migrating. So I decided to go with my friends.’ She continued, ‘I see the families of these migrants [...] with a Blackberry and touch-screen mobiles and stylish clothes. I feel inferiority. I wanted to migrate to change myself like them.’ Indeed, one savvy schoolgirl from Hara, who herself planned to migrate in the near future, understood the positives adolescents heard from their peers often outweighed the negatives. She said, ‘When you hear bad things, your interest in going decreases. But again, when you hear the good things, such as somebody bought a car after going there or somebody built a house after going there, you forget all the sufferings and accidents that can happen.’ A father from Hara noted that, once children have made up their minds to go, it is often impossible to talk them out of it: ‘We cannot tie them down like animals.’

5.4.9 5.4.9 Economics

Regardless of whether respondents were discussing Hara's culture of migration, the make-or-break nature of Ethiopian exams or the power of peer pressure, economics sit at the heart of most girls' decision to migrate. Girls reported that their primary aim was to help their parents. One, who migrated illegally to Oman from Tis Abay, said, 'My interest was to improve the life of my parents, to make them very rich.' Another, who migrated from Hara to Saudi Arabia at the age of 14, added, 'Being the elder child for my mother, I decided to migrate. I don't want my mother to be depressed as I like her so much.'

As already noted, daughters, rather than sons, feel particularly obligated to help their parents. One girl, who migrated from Tis Abay to Dubai at the age of 16, explained that, despite her brother being an employed university graduate, 'He didn't care for the parents – I felt I had to support my family.' Girls also reported great sensitivity to the reality that migration not only contributes to the household economy but also precludes further drain. Several noted that, when they were living at home and still attending school, their daily costs added to their parents' burden. One Tis Abay returnee from Saudi Arabia said, 'It made me aspire to migrate to the Middle East because I could send money to them, rather than taking from them. You don't care for your education – seeing your parents suffering like that.'

Figure 9: 'Downtown' Hara



In the past, agriculture was the main route through which adolescents were able to contribute to the family economy. However, as already mentioned, farming is now a less viable option, for many reasons. One boy in Tis Abay noted, 'The land is highly degraded and the forest is destroyed.' Another, in Hara, said, 'Agriculture is not as productive as it used to be. The land has been in use for a very long time. It is over-cultivated. So it has lost its productivity. Besides, there is a lack of water for irrigation. So people are forced to flee the area to get a better life.' Hara *kebele* administrator expressed considerable concern about climate change and changing rainfall patterns, which make harvests increasingly uncertain – particularly dangerous given that farmers go into debt 'to purchase fertiliser'. The cost of inputs also worries farmers in Tis Abay, because, although their harvests are more certain, they are also shrinking alongside farm plots. Given Ethiopia's high inflation rates – 22.8% in 2012⁴⁶ – farming feels increasingly unsustainable to many families, particularly in Tis Abay, where plenty is the historical norm, given soil fertility and weather patterns.

'Her dream might be building a house or making her family's life better. All this might become a reality because she went there.'
(Participant, SGD with girls, Hara)

46 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG>

The impact of population growth on agriculture is well understood by our respondents, who have been left with ‘micro-farms’ after several generations of dividing inherited property.⁴⁷ One older man, who migrated to Saudi Arabia in the 1970s during a major Amhara drought, said the community ‘is simply building houses everywhere; no one is considering the agriculture’. Another man, lamenting the fact that Ethiopia used to have a higher standard of living than Saudi Arabia, explained, ‘As the population began growing fast, food production did not match it. The consumer population is increasing but the number of farmers producing food is smaller than it used to be.’ Even adolescents understand the relationship between population growth and poverty. One boy noted that, in Hara, migration is often a result of ‘family size exceeding the level of income’.

Given Ethiopia’s high unemployment rate, particularly for youth, adolescents have few other local employment options. One young man in Tis Abay, for example, commented that, ‘Especially in this town, there are no jobs. Most mothers raise their children by collecting fire wood.’ A mother added that local businesses were rare, as ‘residents of the town don’t reinvest the money they get here. As they accumulate some money by doing business here they take their investments to Bahir Dar.’ This was certainly clear to the research team, who observed that, despite increasing migration from Tis Abay, it remains primarily a rural collection of mud structures. Complaints about job options were similar in Hara. For example, one teacher complained that, ‘There is nothing in Hara except *chat*.’⁴⁸ And, as one male participant in an FGD in Hara said, ‘There are many rich people in our country but they do not want to create jobs and employ young people. Instead, they want to “buy people” and exploit them with little money.’ One girl from Tis Abay, who had no interest in migration despite failing her Grade 10 exams, pointed out that finding employment was particularly difficult for girls, as the ‘work available is considered male work’.

‘Here, the alternatives are prostitution, preparing local drinks and work as maid servants. However, these all are not life changing. As a result, girls decide to migrate.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)

However, both adults and adolescents seemed aware of the fact that economic opportunities are often made, not found. This was particularly of concern in Hara, where respondents highlighted the laziness of young people and a recent rise in the use of *chat*. For example, several adults mentioned that, while Hara is a point of origin for international migration, it is also a *destination* for internal migration, with Ethiopians from other *woredas* recognising that the town’s remittance-driven local economy is ideal for small trading activities. As one mother said, ‘People of other places come here and change their life by selling water, tea and so on. We, the low landers, are lazy.’ A teacher added, ‘The shopkeepers and people engaged in catering services have come from other *woredas* and regions.’ The problem, explained one father, is that ‘in our culture it is not customary for the son or daughter to work for money for someone in the neighbourhood. That would be a “bone breaker”. Therefore, young people would prefer to go away to work for others.’ And as one other man commented, while ‘rich people need labourers here in this area [...] youths feel discomfort to work for someone with pay.’

Respondents were also agreed that, regardless of custom – and even in Tis Abay, where young people are more likely to be working – the main issue is that local work is mostly poorly remunerated, seasonal manual labour that does not interest today’s adolescents, who, with their typically higher levels of education, aspire to more. The leader of the Youth Association in Tis Abay explained, ‘They are selective about the type of work they will do and not serious about making it work, not sufficiently committed. For example, quarrying sand from the riverbank is laborious, especially for the girls; they don’t want to continue with that work, they are fed up.’ He continued, ‘What the youth want is for the government or others to open factories [...] the work is dull but better paid.’

One girl in Tis Abay, who has not migrated despite the fact that her ‘parents tried to force me to go last summer in 2012’, concurred. She said that, since she had left school, she had had only a string of short-term

47 ‘Land and land tenure is a hot policy issue in Ethiopia’, notes Future Agricultures (nd). Fragmentation, exacerbated by the reality that land cannot be reallocated by lower-level governments, owing to its federal ownership, has resulted in average farm sizes that ‘can generate only about 50% of the minimum income required for the average farm household to lead a life out of poverty’ (ibid.). Recent leases on millions of acres, issued to foreign governments, particularly China and Saudi Arabia, are poised to increase strain (Bartlett, 2011).

48 Chat or khat is a plant native to the Horn of Africa that has amphetamine-like properties when chewed.

jobs, ‘not enough for saving [...] just for covering expenses’. For example, her agricultural work pays only 40 birr (\$2.10) a day. A returnee from Hara explained that, despite the risks, wages in the Middle East were sufficiently high to pull her back, despite the abuse she suffered there. ‘When I thought about Ethiopia, I have never seen any hope. You can gain nothing by working here. You can’t change your lifestyle; you are always the same while being here. In Ethiopia, it may take more than three years to get the money that one got by working one year in Arab country.’ Another girl, planning on migrating soon, agreed” ‘What you earn there for a year is more than what you get in two years here. So, in order to earn a better income, you migrate.’

‘There is a story about a female student and her teacher. The teacher has been advising his students not to leave school and migrate. He also talked to her parents and told them not to allow her to leave school. Nevertheless she went and came home after four years. She built a beautiful house in front of her teacher’s rented house. On the other hand, the teacher was not able to change his shoes. When he saw what his student had achieved, he resigned from his teaching post and migrated to an Arab country.’ (Teacher leading the anti-trafficking club, Hara)

Families are increasingly scathing about local jobs such as teaching or working at the health centre, because even these jobs pay low wages compared with what one could earn through migration. One young

man from Tis Abay said, ‘When vacant positions are announced in the town administration with a monthly salary of 400 or 500 birr, no one applies. They expect a salary of 1,000 or 1,200 at once.’ A girl in Hara pointed out that her teacher earned only 700 birr a month and was ‘unable to do anything to support his parents’. Given that this salary, \$444 a year,⁴⁹ is less than the rate of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (\$454 in 2012)⁵⁰, it is easy to understand why the civil service is no longer an attractive job option for young people.

Adolescents and their parents are concerned about the impact this quest for higher wages is having on educational aspirations. As already noted, Ethiopia has made huge strides in increasing school enrolment in recent decades, which means today’s young people typically have much higher levels of educational attainment than their parents and therefore expect a better standard of living. Yet respondents in Hara in particular observed that today’s adolescents, seeing their economic goals frustrated, were less likely than their slightly older peers to value schooling. One participant in an SGD with boys noted, ‘Those who have an interest in continuing their education don’t even be 10%.’ ‘Why bother?’ asked another from Tis Abay, who added, ‘Some of my friends who passed Grade 12 and joined universities are now here without a job after graduation.’ A girl from Hara summarised the situation quite succinctly: ‘In this community, going abroad is like having a master’s degree.’ As we discuss further in the concluding section, managing education – and educational aspirations – will require, at least in the short run, a degree of fine-tuning that is not yet apparent. Given that education has powerful knock-on impacts that accrue over generations, it is an undeniable good. However, care also needs to be taken to manage students’ expectations and ensure tighter alignment with local job options.

49 Assuming payment over 12 months—which is likely a significant over-estimate.

50 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

6 Migration in Hara and Tis Abay: how?

6.1 Brokers: key to the migration process

Our respondents' comments and observations confirmed what the literature suggests, which is that there are two migration channels: legally, with a visa issued for a specific work contract, or illegally, via the desert or sea. They also confirmed that girls and women were most likely to go legally; men and occasionally older boys migrate illegally – at least until they are rich enough to purchase a green card. Girls who choose the illegal route – like one of our Tis Abay case study respondents, who worked hard to convince her reluctant parents to take on the debt to send her to Oman – typically choose that route because 'it was delayed to go legally'. A visa is not issued until a girl has been offered a particular contract – a process that can 'take more than a year' for girls waiting 'to be sent by the government'.

With just one exception – an adult man from Hara who highlighted using official migration channels, paying 'only 800 birr to get the visa at the Embassy for my sister and finish all other processes myself' – all of our respondents mentioned brokers were involved in mediating the migration process. They explained that, because brokers are able to expedite the visa process, largely by walking girls through it step by step, even girls who go on contract usually rely on their services. The head of the Hara Women's Association said, 'They spend a lot of money just because they do not know the different offices they need to go to to process their travel. They have to pay the broker to take them through the process.' Given that most adults understand that brokers and the fees they charge are prohibited by law, it is not clear why families choose to spend thousands of birr – sometimes more than 10,000 – to obtain what ought to cost a mere fraction of that.⁵¹ In Tis Abay, where migration is a more recent phenomenon and collective community experience is commensurately more limited, an argument can be made for families feeling overwhelmed by the legal processes involved in obtaining a visa. In Hara, however, that argument is less applicable. Whatever the reasons, the pervasive reliance on brokers suggests Proclamation 632/2009, despite its careful wording, is not working as intended. Whether this is because brokers can expedite a process that is widely seen as too slow, or owes to some other cause, is unclear from our research, but is a matter desperately in need of further investigation.

'Even now, if you go through the legal agents you wouldn't suffer a problem. But there are others who claim to be agents but are not known by the government. It is these whom you get everywhere. They send people and expose them to various risks.'
(Women's FGD, Tis Abay)

As mentioned above, brokers play an increasing role in encouraging as well as facilitating migration. The leader of the Hara Women's Association said, 'Every afternoon, young people chew *chat* in groups. They sit on the veranda. The discussion is about migration – who went, who came back, who sent money, how much etc.' The teacher in charge of the anti-trafficking club explained that local brokers 'work in the community under the cover of this *chat* chewing ceremony,' convincing adolescents to try their luck at migration. When they are successful, 'the broker in Hara [...] sends them to the next location'. A mother in Hara explained, 'There is a chain of brokers. The major one is in Addis Ababa. Then there is a coordinator in Bahir Dar. At the local level there is someone else who does the mobilisation.' An official at the Amhara Women's Association continued, 'There are lower-level brokers within the community who are paid a small amount of

⁵¹ The ILO (2011) reports that many, perhaps even most, employment agencies are unlicensed and that migrants are unable to tell the difference between legal PEAs and illegal PEA lookalikes.

money – 200 birr per person. These brokers are farmers. These local brokers go house-to-house spreading information about the good things households could get if they send their daughters and sons to Arab countries.’

While the largest sums of money are typically required only after a contract has been procured, migrants report that they need money even to initiate the migration process. In addition to paying for their passports and their medical exams – both stipulated by law – they must also fund overnight travel that can stretch into weeks if their paperwork is delayed. As the parents of one girl, who migrated at the age of 17, reported, ‘We

‘Households are selling their resources – they sell their oxen, use their house as collateral to borrow money, borrow money at exorbitant rates – often these are unpaid debts. Many young girls and men return empty-handed and their parents run into serious debt. They remain so for a long time to go [...] maybe 10 years.’ (Participant, FGD with men, Hara)

paid 2,000 for one office and 2,000 for the other office. They gave us paper and nothing other than that. 2,000 birr was enough for that paper.’ They added that costs for food and lodging during the process were even higher than agency fees, even though their daughter lived on bread and tea. They concluded, ‘If one wants to eat better food, 20,000 birr may not be enough.’

As mentioned previously, our respondents noted that few families could finance migration on their own. Some ‘parents are forced to sell his [sic] ox or cow’; others mortgage their land. Most take out loans at 100% interest – sometimes from the very brokers who are encouraging migration – with the goal of paying the loans back out of the first few months of their wages. The money poured into migration, according to a mother in Hara, ‘is for the broker living in Addis to get the address of the agency and create a relationship’. It is not, she noted, to pay the private employment agency for its services, as the agency ‘gets its fees from the Arab employer’.⁵² Brokers earn ‘so well’ procuring migrants, and guiding them through the process, that one ‘recently managed to buy a 300,000 birr minibus from his profits’, reported the Hara *kebele* administrator.

Although illegal broking is endemic – with chains running from small villages through the national capital and into the Middle East – *kebele* and *woreda* authorities report their hands are tied when it comes to enforcing the law. First, it is almost impossible to catch brokers ‘red-handed’, as required by law for prosecution. A key informant, whom we leave anonymous given the sensitive nature of his comments, reported that last year they were able to identify a broker by name and caught him in ‘a place called Chifra’. However, as ‘there was no evidence, he was not caught in action’; the police had to let him go. Brokers, he said, are very powerful: ‘They have a big network, money is shared across different locations’; this enables them, he explained, to easily pay off officials – and the penalties stipulated by law. Furthermore, when they are ‘warned ahead of time’, they can just ‘move somewhere else’.

‘We were on a field visit once. We encountered a conflict between two people. A man had paid a broker 5,000 birr to help his daughter migrate through Djibouti and by sea. His daughter was raped in transit. What is more, she disappeared. The man asked the broker what happened to his daughter. His daughter came later in bad shape. The man insisted that the broker paid his money back. The police, on the other hand, responded by saying that both had committed a crime and the broker was not obliged to return the money. At this time I intervened. I threatened to report the case if the broker did not return the money. The broker returned the money immediately. The problem will not be broken without breaking the relationship between brokers and the police.’

(Anonymous key informant)

Government employees are also implicated in brokers’ elusiveness. ‘There is a strong relationship between police. The police work in the legal way during the day hours. At night they work with the brokers,’ said another anonymous key informant, relating a story about police protection (see above). Furthermore, even when the police are working to prevent trafficking, our respondents reported that higher-level officials exploited legal loopholes, which means the broker is ultimately released. A father from Hara said, ‘the laws have gaps in themselves’; when ‘the militia arrests the broker, the broker is taken to a higher-level authority.

⁵² Proclamation 632/2009 makes no mention of fees PEAs may bill to migrants – other than the specifics listed earlier, such as the passport, medical exam and criminal clearance. Proclamation 104/1998, on the other hand, specifically defines PEAs as matching migrants to employment ‘without directly or indirectly receiving payments from the worker’.

The brokers negotiate and are set free.’ The militia are reluctant to continue trying in the future as ‘they see no point’. Indeed, a third anonymous key informant reported that recently ‘a government vehicle from North Wollo was caught with illegal passengers while going to [...] the Ethiopia–Djibouti border. The driver was a government employee and the vehicle was assigned to serve higher official in North Wollo. But the driver was released. No one was taken to court.’

‘Our house maid was traveling on a minibus. The minibus was full of girls. They were being trafficked. She recorded their conversations and sent it to a police station near Bahir Dar. The police waited for the minibuses to arrive.

‘Unfortunately, while they managed to stop the minibus in which they were travelling, the other three escaped. The driver was caught red-handed but they called her to be witness on the trial. She refused because she has no legal protection.’ (Key informant, Amhara Women’s Association)

Kebele authorities were not sure how to handle the issue of brokers. The anti-trafficking club leader said, ‘If you expose this person and he is sent to prison [...] then there will be a conflict between families. We do not have protection.’ The Hara *kebele* chair confirmed this reality. Last year, an illegal broker was caught and prosecuted. The broker’s parents first tried to ‘solve the accusation using his financial capability’, and then told the ‘*kebele* security official’ that he would be ‘imprisoned or killed’. Both key informants stressed that, without protection, there was little they could do to stop even the most blatant trafficking. They are too scared of the brokers’ allies.

6.2 How adolescents prepare to migrate

In addition to paying for the services of brokers to assist with passport, visa and labour contract papers, prospective migrants also prepare in a number of other ways, as follows.

6.2.1 Pregnancy prevention

In both Hara and Tis Abay, girls reported that they had taken family planning precautions – typically obtaining the Depo-Provera injection – in advance of migrating, indicating that, even in Tis Abay, where migration is still relatively new, there is keen awareness that young women may be subject to unwanted sexual contact either *en route* or by their employers after they arrive. The health extension worker from Hara noted that, even though many of the girls migrating are under the target age for the standard family planning package, ‘We don’t deny them the service. I’m encouraged that girls are concerned about unwanted pregnancy and take contraceptives before their journey to the Middle

‘Usually such an attack occurs in October. This month is a season that crops grow tall. And a man can hide in the crops and rape a woman passing by him alone. He may threaten her with a blade so that she will not cry [...] in most of the cases parents force him to marry her. However, if she can’t identify him, then they can do nothing.’ (Participant in SGD with worse-off boys, Hara)

East.’ While this could also be seen as part of changing attitudes towards adolescent sexuality, FGDs with adolescent boys and girls alike suggested that being pressured or forced into sexual relations was commonplace for girls in their local communities, and thus availing themselves of contraception before travelling was simply a realistic assessment of the likely risks.

Given these social norms, it is also possible to see why the risk of sexual abuse does not act as a major deterrent to migration ambitions (although this is in no way intended to understate the impact of the traumatic experiences of sexual violence a number of girls and young women recounted as occurring *en route* or at the destination country – see Section 7.2).

6.2.2 Religious conversion

As noted earlier, reflecting the religious roots of historical migration, until the late 2000s migration to Saudi Arabia was a possibility only for Muslim girls. Before the law shifted to accommodate Christian migration, it was common for Christian migrants to adopt Muslim names and don a veil in order to migrate. While this subterfuge is no longer strictly necessary, girls in Tis Abay (which is predominantly Christian) are still aware it can be difficult for them to be Christian in a Muslim household. One said, ‘If employers insist you change your name to become Muslim, then Orthodox friends say they will then get baptised again. But I know there

is no baptism after childhood.’ Another added, ‘We are Christians. Conversion of religion will get you to hell. We won’t miss what God wants us to have for the day.’

6.2.3 Training

Unlike domestic workers from other parts of the developing world, the training provided by Ethiopian government officials to Ethiopian girls and women planning to work in the Middle East is very limited. Our case study respondents reported that they had received extremely brief training, which covered only a narrow range of topics, often in a room with hundreds of other prospective migrants, with no opportunity for questions or discussion. As one Hara returnee from Kuwait noted, ‘They didn’t show us how Arab employers mistreat us and how can we resist /prevent such mistreatment [...] They didn’t train us about salary payment and days off; they didn’t tell us about our rights and duties.’

Figure 10: A girl and her grandmother outside their new home in Hara



Another Tis Abay returnee from Saudi Arabia noted how the training provided an unrealistically rosy picture of migration and the safeguards supposedly in place: ‘Immigration office showed films of girls who migrated to the Middle East – always showed us the good things – they assured us we would be secure because there is the Embassy of Ethiopia there, and going through the contractual agreements, we would be picked up at the airport, could change homes, could return home. Even the work time is limited to eight hours, one day off a week, the conditions of payments are also given to them – so could get it monthly, send to parents. Any training language, housekeeping etc. [...] Other training for three months would be provided after you reach the Middle East.’ As mentioned above, other returnees noted that they were warned about possible abuse by employers, but told that, as long as they behaved properly and didn’t ‘flirt with the employer’s husband’, they would not encounter problems.

However, a small minority noted that they opted to take matters into their own hands and prepared in advance by learning from their peers. As one returnee from Dubai to Hara noted, ‘I had learned a lot about

the language and the working conditions from returnees [...] My employer got surprised and used to appreciate me when she looked at my work. I used to write and study when the returnee told me about something. Therefore, I didn't face any difficulties while the employer told me to do something. I also studied Arabic language before my departure. Moreover, I am strong as I am from a rural area; those are people from urban area that can't tolerate the difficulties.' Another girl noted that she had developed strong housekeeping skills during her six years working as a domestic servant in Addis Ababa and that this had placed her in good stead to cope with the demands of the work expected of her in the Middle East.

6.2.4 Labour contracts

As part of the migration preparation process, all contract workers have to sign a labour contract, but they receive no advice on what their rights are, what they should look out for and what to do in cases of breach of contract. In practice, contracts are not regarded as agreements to protect the rights of employers and employees alike, but rather a document that binds the behaviour of the domestic worker only. As one Tis Abay returnee from Saudi explained, 'After finishing the training, we were made to sign an agreement. Those who have been educated insisted to read the agreement. But officials told them that they have no time and just to sign [...] They said, "If you don't want to sign then go away and throw the paper at us."' Another woman from Tis Abay, who spent nine years in Saudi Arabia, said of her employers, 'They bind you in a contract. They beat you, they starve you and so on [...] They let you work for 24 hours. Until your contract is completed you cannot go out and you are not free.'

7 Destination experiences

7.1 Getting there

The travel experiences of migrants differ greatly according to whether they travel illegally or legally, as contract workers. The illegal route is highly hazardous, with migrants exposed to potential abuse by brokers *en route* and then by gangs once they reach the Yemeni border. As an official from the North Wollo zone BoLSA explained, ‘The harm is from many sources. For those who go illegally by ship, they are beaten while crossing borders. In Yemen, what is happening is that there are gangsters who catch these illegal migrants and beat them seriously. Then they call their families and demand a ransom or otherwise threaten that, “We will kill Mr X or Y” whom they have caught [...] To save the life of his son or daughter, they must send money for the gangsters.’ Male FGD participants in Hara similarly lamented that, ‘Young Ethiopian women and men are being beaten and tortured by their captors. People were asking why the government [Ethiopia] did not go after them. Even we are concerned when our own citizens are tortured and inhumanely treated. Ethiopia is a country of heroes – a country that has not been colonised. Now, they are being trampled. This hurts us a lot. Can’t we live with respect and dignity although poor as we are?’

For girls and women, the risks are higher still owing to the ever-present danger of sexual violence on the overland journey. As the head of the BoWCYA in Guba Lafto *woreda* (in which Hara is located) noted, ‘They tell virgin girls that the computer will show that they are virgins and they will not be allowed to go. The girls believe them and see their virginity as an obstacle. This way they deflower them on the way. After being raped, these girls are then taken to a place in Afar region close to the Djibouti border, where another takes them to the border. Once they cross the border, another broker takes them to the shore where the boats come to take them across the Gulf of Aden.’ Among our case studies, only one girl from Tis Abay had gone illegally, but she said she knew of six others who travelled with her and nothing had been heard of them in eight months, which was causing considerable concern.

As discussed briefly in Section 6.1, efforts to stop minibuses transporting illegal migrants have been largely ineffectual, in part because of weak legal enforcement and collusion with some government officials, but also because of lack of capacity compared with the scale of the activity – with tens of minibuses travelling through Hara and neighbouring *kebeles* nightly. The head of Hara *kebele* illustrated the problem with an example of a young girl from his *kebele* who lost her life when police opened fire on a bus of illegal migrants. ‘This shouldn’t happen in a country where a government exists [...] There are plans for checkpoints every 200 km to stop minibuses at night, but this hasn’t happened yet. The government, especially the Ministry of Civil Service, should fight against this illegal migration. This spoils the image of our country.’

By contrast, migrants with a legal two-year contract travel by air and are seldom exposed to problems or abuse *en route*. Although often frightened because of being alone in a strange land, and typically passed from broker to broker when they arrive at their destination country, their exposure to serious risks appears to start only once they reach their employer’s home.

7.2 Employer abuse and exploitation

Overall, our findings reveal that relationships between employers and Ethiopian migrants are largely negative. While there are some positive experiences, our respondents indicated that these were more the exception than the rule, with most experiencing excessively long hours and delayed or partial payment and many experiencing physical and sexual abuse (see also discussion below). As one participant in an FGD with better-off adolescent boys from Tis Abay noted, ‘Some youths migrate to another place and return home

after having accumulated money. But their number is at most 5% of migrants. Most migrants don't return home, even their address is not known. They lose their human rights and democratic rights. Some die there. Some even suffer at the hands of insurgents while crossing to Arab countries by ship.'

What is disturbing is that the stories of very serious abuse that were recounted to the research teams appear to be neither new nor unique, but rather routine, as echoed in a number of other studies.⁵³ As one Tis Abay returnee from Saudi Arabia noted, 'There is no solution. We can talk about our experiences, but they wouldn't listen. From 100, 15% might have a good income. They just see 15% success stories rather than the failures.' Moreover, girls themselves are not portraying their experiences as exceptional, and, even in the face of adversity, recognise that, relatively speaking, they may be luckier than others. Another returnee noted that the plane she returned on from Saudi Arabia was full of young women who had had bad experiences. None of them had been able to finish their contracts, many were suffering from trauma-induced mental illness and others had suffered from very serious abuse. Only one girl among several hundred reported a positive experience.

It is also key to emphasise that, in our sample and in those of other qualitative researchers, there are clear patterns of employer abuse. It happens irrespective of the destination country, is perpetuated by women (largely physical abuse) and men (largely sexual abuse) and is meted out to girls and women irrespective of their age and religion (although, as we discuss further below, psychological trauma seems to be more common among Christians, given religious bigotry).

7.2.1 'Lord and slave relationship'

In general, key informants and case study respondents alike likened the employer–employee relationship to one of lord and slave, with migrants experiencing a loss of personal autonomy and the contract being essentially valueless. A contract worker's ability to stay in the country is completely dependent on the employer; if they complain or ask to change workplace, then they are typically deported. As one Tis Abay returnee from Dubai noted, 'My employers also threatened me to choose from either staying there or going back to my country. And if I stayed in that country, I can only work in their house. If the people know that you are a runaway, they will play with you. So, it was difficult. They threaten you.'

Besides racial and religious discrimination (discussed below), one of the drivers of this type of attitude relates to the employer's own socioeconomic status. Given that domestic workers are a reflection of a family's social status in the destination countries, those employing Ethiopians are likely to be among the less wealthy. As Fernandez (2010) notes, there is a hierarchy of foreign workers, with Filipinos valued most (because they tend to have strong English skills and be more highly trained); Africans (and perhaps especially Ethiopians, who are associated with extreme poverty) are afforded the least status. 'The Arabs don't even consider you as a human being. They insult us, calling us, "Habesha, donkey". This makes me so sad,' said one returnee from Saudi Arabia in Tis Abay.

Indeed, this seems consistent with the description of the homes in which a number of the young women whose stories from our case studies were employed – that is, rural and sometimes quite remote homes, with large families sharing one or two bedrooms (with siblings not even segregated by sex, which goes against cultural customs), with domestic staff often split across multiple families for the purpose of cost sharing. 'My employer has sisters and brothers. And his mother's house takes an hour from his house. After I have done for him and his brother and sister, he ordered me to go and work for his mother. I became sick. When I asked him to take me to hospital, he refused – just giving me tablets [...] I told them that I have to work only for one of you. Then they send me to the broker. The broker beat me and returned me,' said a returnee from Oman in Tis Abay.

7.2.2 Excessive work hours

Our case study respondents highlighted that they were often expected to work extremely long hours, with sometimes only four hours' sleep per night, no breaks during the day and few if any days off. A number of girls reported being physically exhausted and 'depleted' owing to heavy workloads, and this was echoed by key informants.

53 Beydoun (2006); de Regt (2007); Fernandez (2009; 2010); ILO (2011); Minaye (2012); Reda (2012); Woldemichael (2013).

7.2.3 Incomplete wages and withholding of pay

Average monthly wages are around \$120-180 (between three and five times higher than a young woman could expect to earn at home), although rates can be considerably higher if migrants are skilled and have previous experience, especially in Saudi Arabia. However, while theoretically lucrative, there were repeated accounts of partial or delayed payments or withholding of wages altogether. As one Hara returnee from Saudi Arabia said, ‘Five months passed without granting my salary. Finally I told her that, “I have gone into debt to come here. Moreover, my family is poor and demand my help. Therefore, please give me my salary.” [...] She refused and sent me back to Ethiopia with only two months’ wages.’ In other cases, because of the perception of Ethiopia as a country mired in famine, several employers reportedly felt justified in withholding payment, believing that, in providing food and lodging, they were performing an act of charity.

While part of this labour exploitation is clearly shaped by the absence of any sense of employee rights, it also appears to be partly fuelled by employers’ frustration at the language barriers and low skill levels Ethiopian girls and young women have, particularly with regard to modern homes and appliances. As one Tis Abay returnee observed. ‘They don’t want to retort back and forth. They just want you to see and do it as you are told. You have to be a quick learner. I have seen a lot in Addis so it was easy for me [...] But without knowing how to use or clean a bathroom or arrange shoes in Addis, imagine how difficult it would be to go there. The reason such kinds of violence are visible is because of us, and second, because of them. But, the basic problem lies within us. If you go there and have some information on the country, it would be better. But our people lack that.’ Underscoring the depth of this skill gap, one case study respondent recalled the tragic case of a friend who burned to death because she did not know the smell of gas and unwittingly left the oven on.

7.2.4 Physical abuse

Overt physical violence and torture were also commonly reported among returnees and other interviewees, with women employers being singled out as the main perpetrators. Abuse ranged from severely limiting girls’ food intake to acid and chemical attacks; other incidents included repeated beatings and throwing girls down stairs or off balconies, often causing serious and permanent bodily harm (see Box 10). Such abuse is so widespread that several girls reported that training videos for prospective migrants now include a scene where an employer punishes a maid with boiling water in order to warn them about the challenges they may face. One Tis Abay returnee from Oman noted that the abuse was so persistent and disturbing that she wanted to commit suicide by drinking detergent, and was only deterred from doing so by some empathetic Ethiopians who encouraged her to find a way back home.

Box 10: Routine physical abuse

‘They were the children who used to beat me, but they said, “Sorry, you are poor” after they beat me. They beat me when their mother told them to beat me [...] Their mother said, “My hatred for you has increased over time. I will kill you, slay you”’ (returnee from Saudi Arabia, Hara).

‘Saudi Arabia is a place where you can never grow and the people there are not good. Life there is very sad. There are so many challenges. They are cruel. If you are a coward, they may beat you. But if you are brave enough, they don’t dare beat you’ (returnee from Saudi Arabia, Hara).

‘I was beaten by the daughters in the house and the daughter next door. They would use their hands or whatever object they asked me to fetch – spoons, cans, whatever. The beating was daily – even if one daughter wasn’t beating me, the other was’ (returnee from Saudi Arabia, Tis Abay).

7.2.5 Sexual abuse

Our findings, echoing those of other qualitative research, suggests sexual violence at the hands of male employers and/or their relatives or friends is a relatively common experience for Ethiopian adolescent girls, as the quotes in Box 11 graphically highlight.

Box 11: Routine sexual abuse

‘He repeatedly tried to rape me. When my employer tried to rape me I cried. I wanted to tell his wife, but I didn’t tell her as I worried that the problem will be aggravated’ (returnee from Oman, Tis Abay).

‘The abuse got worse and worse [...] The son wanted to have sex with me [...] he tied my hands behind my back and kicked me in the stomach. But the first time before he tried anything, his father came in. I almost escaped, but then one month after arriving he raped me in the bathroom [...] He opened the shower and forced himself onto me. He was holding something [...] I felt I was suffocating, the odour was so strong – I couldn’t breathe. It was overpowering [...] I was a virgin [...] I thought I could lose my virginity in a virtuous way. All I know is when I woke up, the shower was open, blood was everywhere – the water was washing it away. I couldn’t stand up and support myself. Even in that condition they [employer family members] beat me up. I insisted on not working [...] Everyone came and beat me up – even when I was sleeping [...] Nothing is worse than this – death is preferable’ (returnee from Saudi Arabia, Tis Abay).

Although relatively common, it appears young girls’ experiences of sexual violence are not openly discussed when they return home among their family or friends, because of the stigma as well as the distress it would bring to the family. The second girl in Box 11 explained tearfully that confiding in her family would only bring them pain and frustration, and – if word got out in the community – loss of honour.

Experiences of commercial sexual exploitation were less common, although the North Wollo BoLSA officer had recently had to intervene in a case of an illegal immigrant who was sexually abused for two years by Ethiopians in an Arab country who preyed on the fact that she had no legal documentation, whereas they had secured a green card. ‘I am becoming upset because of working with such issues. The cases with migrants are huge [...] Another case involved one migrant from Kobo town [near Hara] who has been abused sexually by nine males. We requested her to inform to the media her case, but she refused to do so. But it can be a good lesson for others.’

7.2.6 Psychological ill being

What is striking about the accounts in our study, but also those of several others, is the very heavy psychological toll the migration experience takes on girls and young women. According to key informants in Addis Ababa working with returnees after they are sent back following detention and imprisonment in the destination country, the psychological trauma experienced is often severe, and some individuals return with serious mental health issues. It seems likely that this is a result of sudden and dramatic contrasts in their environment (e.g. from having no electricity or running water in rural Ethiopia to having a well-equipped home in urban Saudi Arabia), inadequate training and awareness raising about what to expect and extreme social isolation (many girls report not only language barriers but also very limited social mobility, with several leaving the house only to put out the rubbish or clean the home of their employer’s relative).

In some cases, psychological problems resulted from cultural and religious unfamiliarity rather than abuse, as this girl from Tis Abay who had returned from Dubai explained: ‘The veil they were wearing – the darkness – I found this really stressful [...] It is not the problem with health – it wasn’t related to food. Rather, it was a psychological problem. I can’t live with the Wahabis [Muslim sect known for its strict observance of the Koran] [...] I couldn’t stay with them, all veiled always. And the mother would tell me not to get up until she had burned incense and sprayed holy water around me. I can live with Muslims in this town, live peacefully with them [...] not so covered, don’t have such strict traditions.’ In other instances, however, deliberate abuse had caused significant mental ill-health among young women migrants. One family we interviewed had a 20-year-old daughter who had migrated when she was 17 but returned mentally incapacitated; her family can only speculate what happened to her before she was expelled from the country. Her father noted:

‘After working three months, she asked them for her salary but they refused to give any of her wages. She asked them the reason for withholding her wages. They replied, “We bought and

brought you here, so keep quiet.” When she told them she was there to get money and improve her parents’ living condition, they said, “We will send you to Ethiopia.” Then they called us and said, “We are planning to send her.” We asked them, “Why do you plan to send her?” [...] The employer forced her to have an injection to make her dizzy so she couldn’t ask for her wages [...] Once she returned, she became extremely depressed as she came back without any money. When she arrived here on Thursday, she was mentally unstable. We don’t know what happened to her. As you can see, she can’t talk and became like this. We tried to call her employers but the female employer shut down the phone on us.’

7.3 A lack of escape routes

The potent combination of racism, patriarchy and (for Christians) religious bigotry that many domestic workers face, which renders many girls physically and psychologically powerless, means sources of assistance should something go wrong are frighteningly limited. The girls and young women in our sample all hark from relatively impoverished rural areas, where there is limited social diversity. Not surprisingly, the sociocultural and economic contrasts they encounter when they reach their destination country are overwhelming, all the more so given that they usually lack any friends or peers in whom they can confide and who can help them gain familiarity with this new and alien world. Only two exceptional young women expressed any awareness of being able to turn to the authorities for help and the importance of maintaining confidence, even in the face of threats of violence (see Box 12).

Box 12: Standing up to power

‘She said, “I will beat you” and I replied, “I will beat you too.” She said, “I will throw you from the building” and I replied, “You can’t”. She couldn’t do anything. She would be punished 10,000 riyal if she tried to get me arrested, as she had employed me without a working permit. I might also get hurt if she expelled me as I went there through a visitors’ visa [umra]’ (returnee from Saudi Arabia, Hara, migrated at 14).

‘You can report your case to the Ethiopian Embassy. Fortunately, I had not been in a dangerous situation. I was able to handle any threat by myself [...] But there are others who are victims of beatings. I am disappointed by these people as they should be able to protect themselves. They should respond properly to any physical attack. These people are afraid of being deported. That is why they are submissive. But I would rather be deported than suffer there to death. Nothing will happen if you are deported. You will not be starved at least. But if you keep on living there, you suffer a lot’ (returnee from Saudi Arabia, Tis Abay).

For most other case study respondents, however, the multiple sources of power wielded by employers and brokers felt crushing. They noted that they often faced tight restrictions from employers in calling home, were often without a passport as it was held by either the employer or the broker and usually lacked cash (wages were typically sent to their families by wire transfer). Moreover, except for those who had physically escaped and were fortunate enough to stumble on fellow Ethiopians, most had no contact or opportunity to forge contacts with other migrant girls who might have been able to provide support or at least comfort and a sympathetic ear. Typically, respondents were confined to the home (or homes) of employers; even those who did have time off generally had no opportunities to move around outside the home.

In theory, as per Ethiopian national law, agents from the hiring PEA – or their business associates in the destination country – should step in when employer–employee conflicts cannot be resolved. However, without exception among our case studies, girls in distress were offered no meaningful assistance. Typically, agents told girls who complained about their employment situation either to stay with the family or to go home, often with some form of financial penalty or threat. In some cases, where Ethiopian agents were very unhappy with the girls they had placed, local agents or their brokers were sent to physically abuse young migrants until they agreed to silence and submission. One returnee from Oman explained. ‘I have been beaten consistently by the broker for daring to complain [...] Still my ears are not working well. The broker beat me always until my parents paid the money to the broker in Addis [...] A policeman heard the case and was ready to catch him but my mother begged them not to catch him before I returned home in case he

informed the Arabs to kill me.’ In other cases, agents simply took no action, but deceived families into believing they were following up on their complaints. As the father of the young woman who returned from Saudi Arabia in a mentally unsound state explained, the agent promised to ‘adjust things so she could be employed in another household’ and, when they called him back three days later assured them that she was with a new employer, even though in reality she was already back home. ‘He lied to us.’

The physical isolation of their workplace (especially for girls living in rural areas in destination countries) and the language barriers mean running away proved challenging for those who resorted to this option. Even if they did manage to escape, it presented a host of new vulnerabilities, as one Tis Abay returnee from Saudi Arabia explained: ‘My father talked to the broker but said he couldn’t do anything and my only option was to flee and try to come back. But I couldn’t as it was a very rural area – we had travelled for 10 hours by car from the airport across the desert when I arrived. There were only scattered villages with homes far off that I could see, otherwise it was just camels.’ Girls without legal documentation are even more vulnerable to abuse and employer control, as they lack access to any form of redress.

Even before the recent Saudi crackdown on illegal migrants, undocumented workers were at constant risk of arrest and imprisonment – something that had happened to several of our case study respondents. While obviously very stressful, in general girls did not complain about abusive treatment or lack of food in prison; instead, they noted a sort of relief that their ordeal – at least in the destination country – was nearing an end. One, who migrated from Saudi Arabia from Hara at the age of 14, noted, ‘I was pleased when I was detained as I would be sent to my country.’ This is not to say that they would not try to migrate again – the majority of our case study respondents were considering returning despite their negative experiences. But until they encounter ‘better luck’, detention and expulsion are often the only way out of an unbearable situation. It should be noted, however, that the relief felt by our respondents on detention and expulsion appears to be an unlikely outcome in the current milieu, which Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2013) reports is increasingly violent given the zeal with which undocumented workers are being deported.

7.4 A glimmer of light: positive experiences

Our research sample generally painted a very negative picture of the migration experience, but there were nevertheless a small number of positive stories. Employers were not all or consistently abusive, and within one family there were occasionally sympathetic and supportive family members who sought to minimise the harm practised by more powerful relatives. A Hara returnee from Saudi, for example, noted that her initial experience there was largely positive. She was shown the ropes by the broker’s sister, who was married to an Arab, and then the first employment stint with an 80-year-old widow was positive: she was treated kindly and had a light workload and plenty of opportunities for rest. However, she felt lonely and isolated, and, when she tried to leave, the agent who had placed her in the job demanded that she repay the family for the transport costs they had incurred on her behalf, causing her to run away as she did not have access to that much money. Moreover, in the same compound, another Ethiopian maid was ill-treated and starving as a result of restrictions placed on her food intake by her employers. Another Saudi returnee from Hara was placed with a mixed race (Arab and Ethiopian) couple and was also treated well; she was even given time off to play, as they recognised that at 14 she was still a child. Several returnees also noted that the children in the household were more often more sympathetic to their plight than the parents, including one Hara returnee from Kuwait, who recounted the following incident:

‘She [the employer] brought a knife to threaten me and she tried to pull me and I resisted her. Then her children came [...] I started to cry when I saw them. Her elder child asked what was happening to me. I told them that she was trying to pour boiling water on me. Her elder children shouted at her and said, “It is Haram [forbidden], Mama!” They took me and sat with me. They told everything to their father when he came home. He quarrelled with his wife: “Why did you do such a thing to her? If you don’t want her, you can send her back.”’

At the community level, while generally highly socially isolated, girls on the run who encountered Ethiopians reported that they were supported in their hour of need. As one Tis Abay returnee from Dubai noted, ‘I found Ethiopians while I was running away. There are Ethiopians there who run away and work

there. They live by renting a house for 10. For the time being, the girls loaned me some money for rent. There is a sense of sharing and helping each other there.'

7.5 Returning home: coming to terms with 'bad luck'

As mentioned in our methodology section, our sample of returnees is not representative. On the one hand, we are not capturing the minority who are financially successful, have bought their parents a new house and are now living in urban Ethiopia. On the other, we are not depicting the lives of girls who are too afraid, ashamed, impoverished or psychologically damaged to return to their families – many of whom are now in debt having covered their broker fees but without any financial rewards to show for it. Below, we describe some of the main consequences of girls who have returned home and are coming to terms with 'bad luck' during their migration experience.

7.5.1 Economic failure

For the most part, the returnees we talked to were disappointed and sometimes even ashamed by their 'bad luck', and were frequently planning to migrate again in order to pay off their debts and deliver on their promises to their families. As one Tis Abay returnee from Oman noted, 'I am afraid to be seen out of the home publicly. This is because I failed to repay the loan to my parents. Our entire neighbourhood knows this fact.'

Even those migrants who had managed via their employer to send some of their earnings home and did not return in debt often found that their family had not spent the hard-earned cash wisely. As one girl, who migrated from Hara to Saudi Arabia, noted, 'They didn't save any money for me. They spent all the money for themselves and they only constructed a house.' The school principal in Tis Abay similarly noted that, although migrants may send money home, the house built from these earnings often remains in the parents' name, even when the migrant returns, leaving the young person in despair as to how they are to provide for their future.

While the returnees in our sample were fortunate to have returned alive but often emotionally or even physically scarred, the drivers that propelled them to migrate – primarily poverty and a lack of employment opportunities locally – are still present and have in fact been compounded by the stigma associated with unsuccessful migration. As one Hara returnee from Saudi Arabia noted, 'I don't want to go again but there are no other alternatives. It is better than sitting idle. There is no work to do here. So migration is the available option [...] I may start a small business like opening a cosmetic shop. But there is no demand for such kind of goods as the place is uncivilised. Therefore, any kind of business here is not profitable.'

7.5.2 Truncated education

Returning to school is also challenging, socially and financially, but local officials in Hara are trying to overcome these hurdles. The head of the Guba Lafto *woreda* BoWCYA noted that her office was now aiming to support girls who drop out but return within a very short time with school materials in an effort to overcome their sense of shame. Two girls in our sample also emphasised that, following their migration experience, they now recognised the importance of education and were going to try to persevere. A returnee from Dubai to Tis Abay emphasised that, 'I still regret my education and I will regret it in the future. But I know that I will learn in the future, either through evening classes or long distance education. Even though I might not learn to have the highest grades, I will learn for the sake of knowledge, for my own sake, to make myself happy.' Another determined Hara returnee, back in school despite dropping out to migrate at the age of 13, explained that she went to the school and asked to re-attend and was not put off by initial rebuffs. 'I borrowed 300 birr from my sister who got the money from her husband. Using that birr I bought exercise books and a uniform. I plan to repay her as soon as I have money that the broker put aside for me.'

7.5.3 Emotional scars

Several case study respondents confided that they were not able to secure the emotional support they needed to move on from the traumatic experiences they had endured. One returnee from Saudi Arabia explained that, 'After I came here I have faced difficulties and regretted it since I came back. People started to gossip about me, saying, "She came back as she is in love with a boy." I had a boyfriend here and they said he is the reason for my return.' Another Tis Abay Saudi returnee noted that her parents were dealing with the fallout

of the local rape of her cousin and that, if she were to reveal that she too had been raped, while abroad, their pain would be unbearable.

Outside of family and friends, formal support services for returnees were non-existent in both our study sites. Even in Hara, where the government is making increasing efforts to curb trafficking, officials noted that there was still no focus on returnees. As the health extension worker in Hara explained, ‘There is no coordination on returnee issues. Returnee issues have not surfaced. I will raise this in our Monday meeting.’ While there is acknowledgement that many returnees have suffered psychological trauma, there are still no attempts outside of two small non-governmental organisation (NGO) services in Addis Ababa (one with capacity for 30 girls only) to offer support services. Even the North Wollo zone BoLSA officer admitted that, while BoLSA intervenes with agents if girls or their families raise complaints about treatment, there is no help provided to those who suffer a disability or become mentally ill. This problem was also highlighted by the father of the girl who had returned mentally unsound to Hara discussed earlier, who lamented that, ‘We took her to traditional and religious healers and we spent about 3,000 birr by borrowing. But there is no solution at all; she is the same. Now, it has been said that there is a hospital for mental health; so we are planning to try that [...] The government only wants the revenue/currency from migration and facilitates young people to migrate out. But the government does not provide them protection in the destination country or provide any support to those who return in a bad condition.’

8 Applying the brakes from the bottom up: slowing migration

8.1 Policy and programming

Recognising migration can be a double-edged sword, and as such respondents were suspicious of Proclamation 632/2009. On the one hand, they recognised it had eased migration restrictions, particularly for Christians, and was responsible for the declining cost of migration, which in turn had reduced its riskiness.

We have a lot of resources to use to develop our country, yet our young people are dying in foreign lands trying to get money. We have become like a moth that flies into the fire.'

(Participant, FGD with men, Hara)

On the other hand, they noted a variety of unintended consequences. One official, for example, highlighted that the 'amazing' migration rate would soon begin to have 'political implications', as the 'government is not in control in the short run'. Furthermore, as noted by one participant in an FGD with men in Tis Abay, the 'government is encouraging international migration but

does not do much to protect them from harm in the destination country'. Another man explained, 'It seems that the government is in a weaker position to negotiate *vis-à-vis* destination countries to protect its citizens.' While most respondents felt migration was desirable – equating it, as mentioned earlier, not just with economic success but also with modernisation – they felt strongly the federal government should do more to 'ensure migrants are guaranteed their security and protection'. 'The government', added a man from Hara arguing for better enforcement of the law, 'should be strict to solve the problem. Youths are being sold as it was used to sell slaves in earlier times.'

'If we cannot stop migration it is likely that we are going to lose a generation.'

(Participant, FGD with men, Hara)

Unlike regional officials, who admitted they had limited information about migration realities and still fewer programmatic activities, zonal and *kebele* officials were focused not on making migrants safer in destination countries, which is beyond their purview, but on keeping them safer *en route* – by ensuring where possible that young women used the legal migration channel. Taking full advantage of their decentralised power, they were working hard to ascertain the scope of the migration 'problem' and to find solutions that worked for their communities. For example, key informants in North Wollo, of which Hara is a part, have trained '62,000 leaders who are working at zone, *woreda* and *kebele* administrative offices' over the past year to prevent illegal migration. This training is fostering coordination between stakeholders ranging from teachers to police officers to natural resource conservators, who, as mentioned earlier, have contributed important information that is helping quantify the numbers of adolescent girls who are involved in migration.

The Hara school director reported that there were monthly meetings, resulting in rotating tactics to address the previous month's top concerns. He said, 'We meet on the seventh day of the month and discuss trafficking. We bring our reports about activities we carried out about child trafficking. We then evaluate activities of the past month and plan for the next month.' Awareness-raising activities, such as dramas about the harmful effects of illegal migration and programming designed to be delivered by mosques and churches, have been coupled with clear directives to *kebele* authorities that 'issuing identification card for the under-aged is illegal' and punishable by imprisonment. Enforcement efforts have also been stepped up; officials are stopping suspicious minibuses travelling at night and keeping accurate headcounts of the trafficking victims

pulled from those buses. The *kebele* administrator in Hara reported that these efforts were hardly inconsequential: ‘One night, 18 minibuses with 381 passengers were stopped.’

‘They showed us a film that showed people being thrown in to the water while they go on sea. The film showed all of the sufferings of the children. They told us that we women should discuss the issue in coffee drinking ceremonies, in Idir and in other social gatherings.

‘They told us that the illegal agents are our own children and we should advise them so that they would return from their wrongdoings before they are caught by the police.’
(Participant, FGD with women, Hara)

Respondents in Hara indicated that awareness-raising activities were working to some extent. The new anti-trafficking club has managed to dissuade a handful of children from migrating by providing economic support for the strongest students and bringing in outside speakers, such as religious leaders, the police and government officials, to encourage those planning to migrate to stay home instead. The Hara health worker reported she was working

with local mothers, meeting during weekly coffee ceremonies, to ensure they understood the tremendous risks migration entails. She said, ‘I myself have advised four parents to cancel planned migration of young girls.’ The local ‘development army,’⁵⁴ which meets regularly to discuss political and social issues, has also added migration to its awareness-raising activities. At one meeting, the *kebele* leader quoted the Koran to parents, telling them, ‘It is a sin to rely on usury and use of daughters to alleviate yourselves from hardship.’ Several girls mentioned seeing a film in which an Ethiopian maid was disfigured with boiling water by her Arab employer, who was worried she was catching the eyes of her husband.

Despite these efforts, most respondents indicated that anti-migration efforts were not sufficient to significantly slow the exodus. The anti-trafficking club, for example, is small, and most girls do not appear to know it exists. One girl said, ‘There is no club dealing with such matters. People come now and then to provide us with some information on such topics. But there is no club, running by itself, focusing on these matters.’ Perhaps more worryingly, the teacher in charge of Hara’s anti-trafficking club reported that, for the most part, when shown graphic films detailing migrants’ suffering, adolescents and parents ‘sympathise with the victims they see. But that is not the point. Do they bring any behavioural change? No!’ This is certainly evident from our respondents, most of whom could relate stories about girls being seriously injured – even killed by being thrown off eight-storey buildings – and yet still see migration as the most attractive way to secure a prosperous future. As the Hara school director concluded, ‘People do not want to see the negative side of migration. They are all obsessed with getting rich quickly.’

‘Migration of people can’t be stopped simply by propaganda. There’s a need to study what the problem of each family is and how this problem can be solved. The people and the government officials should work in detail to solve the problem of migration.’ (Participant, FGD with men, Hara)

In Tis Abay, the Youth League is taking small steps towards providing youth employment opportunities that respondents indicated would help lower migration rates. Our key informant reported that the organisation was providing local young people with jobs in sectors ranging from construction to quarrying. He said the league ‘negotiates with private construction owners’ to provide jobs. It also helps them set up ‘micro-enterprises such as tea shops, pool halls, film showings’. Young people, however, said these efforts were too small. For example, a man in Tis Abay said, ‘The money that we can get is just 2,000 birr, which is too small’ for starting a business such as a hotel or a restaurant that caters to tourists. Another, explaining that the government had recently allocated land to unemployed young people so they could support themselves through agriculture, said that, while the initial group comprised ‘more than 25 young persons [...] since they don’t have support to wait for the fruit of their cultivation, their number is decreasing. Now they are about 14.’

⁵⁴ The development army was formed by the government in 2011 as a way of improving Ethiopia’s maternal and child health outcomes. It links rural families, in small clusters, with volunteer ‘model’ families who encourage uptake of primary care. In Amhara, the development army is building off its success with health and is now using women volunteers – and weekly coffee ceremonies – to encourage safe migration.

8.2 Respondents' recommendations

Most of our respondents, though not all, continue to believe migration has the potential to transform lives – if it is made safer. In addition to calling for the federal government to provide better safety nets in destination countries, to ensure migrants' human rights are better protected, our respondents had many ideas about how to strengthen community and household-level protective factors to improve the safety of the young people who choose to seek their fortunes overseas. We have clustered these into four main areas: tackling the drivers of migration, promoting safer migration, eliminating illegal migration and investing in rehabilitation services for returnees.

8.2.1 Tackling the drivers of migration

1. Ensure affordable, local education

- 'Even if she wants to learn, she lacks the economic capacity.' (Participant, SGD with girls, Hara)
- 'There is no preparatory school here. Those who succeed in the general leaving examination go to preparatory school at Bahir Dar, and those who fail stay with their parents. When someone asks a girl's parents to marry her, she will marry. If they don't marry, they will migrate.' (Key informant, Tis Abay Women's Association)
- 'If there is anyone who supports us, the ones who support themselves and learn, then I think we might have good grades in our education.' (Participant, SGD with girls, Tis Abay)
- 'In urban areas, if a student is poor in education, there are other options, vocational and technical education. But in rural areas, you don't have such opportunities. So students migrate to other areas, dropping their schooling.' (Participant, SGD with boys, Hara)
- 'Parents will not allow a girl to pursue her tertiary school education in Woldiya town, even if she finishes Grade 10 here in Hara town and wishes to continue.' (Participant, SGD with girls, Hara)
- 'There is one thing I want you to know. Girls who go to Bahir Dar to attend secondary school face a lot of problems in terms of sexual violation. If a higher secondary/preparatory school and TVET are opened here, it will be possible to reduce migration. This is an important solution.' (Returnee, Tis Abay)

2. Better educate children, particularly girls, so they understand their rights and are better able to protect themselves

- 'I would show them men are equal to women. Nobody should hurt women.' (Participant, SGD with girls, Hara)
- 'Establish children's clubs in every school and set up adult education for non-educated people.' (Participant, SGD with girls, Tis Abay)
- 'The community has to be taught about sex, early marriage. The community should learn and try to stop such illegal things.' (Participant, SGD with girls, Tis Abay)
- 'We should teach boys not to bother girls against their will or hassle them when they are sent for something in the dark.' (Participant, FGD with girls, Tis Abay)

3. Provide economic opportunities for young people locally, ensuring girls are included

- 'For us, if the amount of a loan is increased, we can do more things. My son is a farmer. He can do a lot of things if I can borrow more money.' (Participant, FGD with women, Hara)
- 'If they could get fair payment here they would take a job here.' (Health worker, Tis Abay)
- 'The seed money they give them is very small. For example, they organised 15 young people and gave them 60,000 birr, but the money is too small to start any business.' (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)
- 'The government is organising the people for business. Though the money given to the people is very small, the people should work hard to reach a higher level using that small money. Many males are members of such schemes. So it would also be good if the same scheme is arranged for females' (Non-migrant male, Tis Abay)
- 'I think no one wants to leave their parents. Job creation schemes should focus on diversified areas instead of one type of business.' (Non-migrant male, Tis Abay)

- ‘The *kebele* has no right to allocate land. Many young people live in rented houses. With the small incomes they get, they find it hard to pay the rent.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)
- ‘We don’t even have construction of infrastructure and buildings here in the town. If these were done, youth would get jobs in the process.’ (Participant, community mapping, Tis Abay)
- ‘It is better that the government create jobs here that give us opportunities.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Hara)
- ‘I think it will reduce if there are job opportunities based on their level of education.’ (Returnee, Tis Abay)
- ‘If there were a motor pumper and if it could use the river, it would be possible to cultivate the land twice before the rain comes.’ (Non-migrant male, Hara)
- ‘If there were a single factory in the area it would create many jobs for youth.’ (Participant, community mapping, Tis Abay)

8.2.2 Promoting safer migration

1. Teach parents about the risks migration entails
 - ‘The majority of young people who migrate are pushed by their own parents.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)
 - ‘The community should be engaged in this. Schools, churches and mosques should create awareness.’ (Returnee, Tis Abay)
 - ‘The parents are responsible for all the problems.’ (Teacher in charge of anti-trafficking club, Hara)
2. Streamline legal migration processes to obviate the need for brokers
 - ‘When you want to go legally, it takes too much time.’ (Returnee, Tis Abay)
 - ‘The legal system is not expensive but the illegal system is faster than the legal procedure through the immigration process.’ (Official, Amhara Women’s Association)
 - ‘As it is not fast, most migrants want to be sent by brokers.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)
 - ‘It is better that the government handles migration legally without delay.’ (Returnee, Tis Abay)
3. Ensure families understand the illegal nature of fees charged for migration so girls are not trapped in debt bondage and families are not ruined if migration is not successful
 - ‘Make the legal route easier and cheaper.’ (Participant, FGD with men, Hara)
 - ‘It is because the agency’s fee is high that people prefer to go illegally as it is cheaper.’ (Key informant, North Wollo BoLSA)
4. Make sure migrants are better trained so there is less of a gap between employers’ expectations and migrants’ capacities, so as to improve employer–employee relations
 - ‘Agents should give trainings before they send women to Arab countries. Our females may not have the skill to manage a house. They may not even know how to open a fridge.’ (Non-migrant male, Tis Abay)
 - ‘Without knowing how to use or clean a bathroom or arrange shoes in Addis, imagine how difficult it would be to go there. The reason such kinds of violence are visible is because of us, and second because of them. But the basic problem lies within us.’ (Returnee from Saudi Arabia, Tis Abay, aged 22)
 - ‘The problem is that most Ethiopians are from the countryside; they don’t know most of the household equipment. Then it takes time for them to learn. In this case, the Arabs became upset.’ (Returnee from Saudi Arabia, Tis Abay, aged 18)

8.2.3 Eliminating illegal migration

1. Close off illegal channels

- ‘If we could close the illegal route, migration could be useful.’ (Participant, FGD with men, Hara)
 - ‘Close illegal migration altogether and make provisions for legal migrants.’ (Participant, SGD with girls, Hara)
 - ‘It is better to make migration legal and safe.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)
 - ‘The government should work to stop these illegal brokers.’ (Returnee, Tis Abay)
 - ‘The only solution government can provide is closing it up. There is no solution. We can talk about our experiences, but they wouldn’t listen.’ (Returnee 2, Tis Abay)
 - ‘Youth and women’s affairs committees are still active and returnee women are participating, trying to expose brokers. The problem is lack of a place to meet – an office – as the difficulty is not reporting but getting the evidence.’ (Key informant, Guba Lafto *woreda* BoWCYA)
2. Punish illegal brokers by ensuring sanctions are consistently enforced
- ‘Punish these illegal brokers according to the law. The punishment for trafficking is small.’ (Key informant, Amhara Women’s Association)
 - ‘The legal system is not strong enough to handle such issues.’ (*Kebele* chair, Hara)
 - ‘The problem is the brokers work secretly and there is also a gap in the law. The legal procedure is to advise them to stop such illegal action. They are required to deposit 5,000 or 10,000 birr as collateral until the case is solved. Providing this amount of money is very easy for them. They are very rich because of brokerage fee from the migrants.’ (Key informant, North Wollo BoLSA)
3. Ensure underage girls are prevented from migrating
- ‘Officials who sign over the passport should be held responsible. The problem is with the administrators.’ (Participant, SGD with girls, Hara)
 - ‘We are in conflict with many parents who ask us to make the age of daughters above 20 while they are actually 15 or less. It is illegal for us to issue an identification card for the under-aged. But parents do not understand this.’ (*Kebele* chair, Hara)
 - ‘In Hara, we have agreed to stop issuing ID cards without consulting the school.’ (School director, Hara)
 - ‘It is the parents who know the age of their children. The *kebele* officers don’t know the age of each girl.’ (Participant, FGD with women, Tis Abay)

8.2.4 Strengthening rehabilitation services

1. Provide better support services for migrants who return with mental or physical health problems
- ‘There is no service for migrants who have been hurt and come back home. The health centre is not working at full capacity. There is no quality service.’ (Participant, SGD with boys, Tis Abay)
 - ‘There are no services for returnees.’ (Participant, FGD with men, Tis Abay)
 - ‘There is no help for returnees who are disabled or mentally ill.’ (North Wollo zonal officer)
 - ‘There is no service here that rehabilitates returnees.’ (Participant, FGD with men, Hara)
 - ‘There is nothing to even console those who come back damaged. No one does this. Instead, the public judges them as someone “cursed or having bad luck”. There is no respect for a returnee.’ (Key informant, Hara)
2. Provide employment support and educational opportunities for returnees
- ‘The government should provide money to help them be entrepreneurs.’ (Returnee, Tis Abay)
 - ‘I had nothing at hand when I came back. So how can I start a business?’ (Returnee, Hara)
 - ‘I want to re-attend school.’ (Returnee, Hara)

9 Conclusions, policy and programming recommendations

While, as Boyden (2013) notes, ‘(c)hildren’s familial contributions have both instrumental and symbolic value, helping fulfil immediate domestic requirements and also serving collective ambitions for the future’, it is vital to recognise both the constraints under which children labour and the reality that there are places in the world in which trafficking remains endemic (p.595). Focusing on young people’s agency and future-seeking risks overlooking the threats migration may bring – particularly when it involves internationally sourced private domestic work, in a context often laden with intersecting racial, religious and gender discrimination. As Collier (2013) notes in his recent work on global migration, there is little doubt economic migration is helping transform lives. It is, however, vital that focus be redirected to those young girls and women for whom migration entails serious risks to their physical, sexual and psychological health.

The drivers of migration are neither universal nor static. In order to strengthen the factors that serve to protect children – such as education, high parental aspirations or community cohesion – it is vital to understand the unique risks, at the national, community and household levels, pushing children into situations that increase their vulnerability. National-level policy environments need to build on this diversity and encourage bottom-up, community-driven solutions that facilitate prevention, education, rehabilitation and monitoring, and comply with core legislation.

While it is true that, within the context of Ethiopia’s highly horizontal income structure, both the poor and the rich – though not the very poorest – send their daughters to the Middle East to work as domestic servants, it is clear that the price of migration typically increases with the depth of a family’s poverty. Less likely to have accurate information, more likely to either deplete household assets or take on high-interest debt and often forced into the riskiest illegal migration channels, poor migrant girls regularly end up in unsafe situations in which their human rights are violated.

Given that girls have no problem obtaining false identification cards that permit their migration, thousands of Ethiopian girls are risking their physical and mental health in a quest for a better house, soap and a more modern lifestyle. While egregious abuse is typically thought to be rare, the evidence suggests that, for Ethiopian girls engaged in domestic work abroad, it is in fact a common experience. Moreover, evidence suggests that, as brokers manage to subvert even legal migration channels, such abuse is becoming more common within Ethiopia. Working under a well-intentioned but poorly enforced law that encourages international migration, local officials are struggling to keep children safe, while criminals involved in organising illegal migration – even when caught red-handed – can buy their freedom with the futures of their neighbours’ daughters.

We conclude by presenting four broad sets of policy and programming recommendations, clustered around the four themes identified in the previous section: addressing the drivers of migration, promoting safer and streamlined legal migration, eliminating illegal migration and trafficking and investing in rehabilitation services for returnees.

9.1 Addressing the drivers of migration

Adolescents in Ethiopia, like their peers around the world, want better lives than those of their parents. They also want better lives *for* their parents. Given improvements in education and growing media saturation, even children who have not yet left their rural villages have seen glimpses of a world that is not, in the words of

one returnee, ‘nasty’ – and they want to live in it. Their local options for achieving their personal goals do not appear strong. Earning a living through agriculture is increasingly difficult given land fragmentation, environmental degradation and recent shifts in weather patterns; and non-agricultural jobs are few and far between. Civil service jobs such as teaching or health extension service are no longer seen as a path to a better future. Given that civil servant salaries are low, particularly compared with what a person can earn through migration, families are beginning to question the wisdom of investing time and money in an education that does not appear to offer any future guarantees. The Ethiopian exam schedule, which leaves rural children at a significant disadvantage – eliminating the option of future study for all but the brightest and most supported adolescents – further pushes many into migration.

Policy and programme recommendations government and development partners, including NGOs, could consider to address these underlying drivers of migration include the following:

1. Provide local role models and employment options such that migration does not feel like ‘the only option’ for young people:
 - Pay teachers and other civil servants well enough that they can serve as role models to encourage adolescents and their families to invest in education.
 - Ensure programmes that provide training and seed money to local young people also target girls and young women.
 - Continue to invest in the infrastructure responsible for linking rural livelihoods into the broader economy.
 - Work to broaden families’ horizons with regard to employment options, encouraging adolescents and parents to look beyond traditional sectors such as agriculture and civil service.
2. Address the ‘do or die’ nature of school exams
 - Invest in a schooling system similar to that in Germany and Brazil, whereby apprenticeships begin earlier and are valued. The academic route should not be the only path available to youth, particularly given local labour market realities.
 - National-level exams that pit rural students against their urban peers make no allowance for the fact that urban schooling is better quality. While in the long run it is clearly vital that Ethiopia continue investing in quality education (and indeed the government has just secured a \$130 million loan from the World Bank to move towards this goal), short-term actions should also be considered. For example, an affirmative action programme that rewards and motivates able rural students would not only have positive impacts on migration but also support development more generally, ensuring there is not a backlash against education – for boys or girls.

9.2 Making legal migration safer and more streamlined

While laws regarding work migration in Ethiopia are well intentioned, with a variety of safety nets to prevent abuse, our respondents noted a wide variety of gaps, many of them related to implementation. For example, while Proclamation 632/2009 calls for the provision of emergency shelters in destination countries, respondents reported only having known of detention centres, with no easily accessible sources of help. Furthermore, while MoLSA can provide headcounts of legal migrants, local officials – who are trying to count migrants from the bottom up, by ascertaining who has left each village – have been left to their own devices, not just to ascertain the true scope of migration but also to devise programmes to slow illegal migration and trafficking.

Although *kebele* authorities reported a wide variety of awareness-raising activities, and parents and girls were able to recite the stories of abuse they had heard through such activities, evidence suggests migrants and their families remain ignorant of the odds of success – and particularly about what can be done to make girls safer if they do choose to migrate. Based on the stories of our returnees, whatever their experience of migration, more and better knowledge is key to keeping young girls and women safe. For instance, girls need to know their rights as workers, how to get help if they need it and how to use modern appliances safely.

Key policy and programme recommendations that require urgent consideration are as follows:

1. Better data collection, reporting and tracking

- Migrants need to be counted and data need to be disaggregated by age, gender, religion and geographical location at origin and destination. The efforts of schools and other local programmes to keep track of how many adolescents are migrating, where and under what conditions need to be strengthened.
- Data on migration need to be shared with all levels of government and provided in an accessible format so programming can become more evidence-based and outcomes can be effectively monitored and evaluated.
- PEAs need to invest in tracking migrants and following up on cases of abuse, as per their responsibilities under Proclamation 632/2009. The ILO (2011) notes that follow-up is very rare.
- Given the rapid penetration of mobile technology, consideration should be given to developing an online or texting-based reporting service through which migrants and their families can report agencies that have not abided by the law.
- In order to strengthen the evidence base and improve the policy recommendations that grow out of it, international funding agencies would be advised to better fund in-depth qualitative fieldwork. The vast majority of research is based on a small handful of case studies that do not lend themselves easily to generalisation.

2. Strengthen national policy instruments

- There is an urgent need to develop a coherent policy that delineates migration from trafficking, highlights the many points where the two overlap and firmly places prevention under MoLSA's purview.
 - Given the low number of trafficking cases currently being prosecuted, it is clear that the exploitation of under-age migrant girls is not considered trafficking.
- Enforcement of Proclamation 632/2009 needs to be stepped up. Many of its well-intentioned regulations and penalties appear to be poorly financed and implemented. For example:
 - The law calls for all migrants to be registered with the Embassy in their destination country within 15 days of arrival, but funds to enable this appear never to have been allocated.
 - The law calls for the provision of emergency shelters in destination countries, but this is poorly implemented at best. The ILO (2011) reports that shelters exist only in Kuwait and Lebanon.
 - The law calls for PEAs to establish escrow accounts to pay for assistance in the event of broken contracts. The US State Department (2013) indicates that these funds have never been used to return a young migrant worker home.

3. Promote safe, legal migration, in communities in which migration is already the norm as well as those in which it is rapidly expanding

- Ensure all parties – including in-school adolescents, out-of-school young people and parents – know how the legal migration system works, and how inexpensive it can be if used correctly. This must involve teaching people how to differentiate between the legitimate agents of legal PEAs and the illegal brokers that are increasingly used to recruit for them.
- Involve religious leaders as well as women's and youth association leaders in awareness-raising activities on migration.
- Given the pervasive reach of the development army, include awareness-raising activities on safer migration as part of its activities.
- Ensure the information presented to school children is part of the curriculum rather than being provided only where anti-trafficking clubs are active, so all school children are reached.
- Target the exam years (Grades 8, 10 and 12) when adolescents are more likely to be tempted to migrate, so girls have current information about the risks, as well as information on safe migration.

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4. Make sure families know about the risks and realities of migration, and how to maximise their daughters' safety
 - Awareness-raising activities need to be directed at communities where the rate of migration is rapidly increasing, not just at those communities in which migration is already endemic.
 - Girls and their parents need to know the reality of work conditions, including not just stories of horrific abuse (which appear to be widely known) but also the cultural differences, likely work hours etc. Parents could be reached through adult education classes, the development army and religious services, among others.
 - Potential migrants and their families need a training course to help them realistically evaluate the economic risks and benefits by comparing the costs of migration with salaries at destination.
 - Girls need to understand contract terms and their rights as workers in order to know when those rights have been violated.
 5. Make sure girls get access to practical and affordable training
 - Given the expanding ties between Ethiopia and the Middle East, Arabic should be integrated into school curricula, at least through basic literacy.
 - Given that many have only a nodding acquaintance with electricity, girls need extensive training – not a 30-minute video – on housekeeping, child care, elder care etc. At the same time, however, to ensure girls are neither pushed into illegal migration nor further exposed to penury, courses need to be kept relatively short (e.g. one to two weeks) and provided in local areas by the government and supported by NGOs and/or UN agencies such as IOM and the ILO.
 - Girls need support to develop skills in problem solving and dispute resolution, with training that includes role plays on the specific issues they are likely to encounter.
 - Girls need basic financial literacy skills and advice on how to set up their own bank accounts so they can maintain control over their wages.
 6. Promote better safety nets at destination
 - Increase the remit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and staffing resources in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries so they can provide appropriate support services for Ethiopian migrant girls who encounter difficulties. The ministry could consider having a labour attaché to work with PEAs to ensure a stronger focus on girls and women's safety while they work abroad. It could also consider advocating for vital protections to be extended to domestic workers, as per the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention 2011 (No. 189).
 - Ensure all migrants know how to obtain help if they need it. Consider emulating the system adopted by the Philippines government whereby girls can send letters, postcards or texts to a central government office to provide updates on their wellbeing, which would enable the Ethiopian government to respond in a more tailored way.
 - Ensure regular monitoring of migrant girls while they are on assignment. While this could be done via a phone call, rather than an in-person visit, it is critical that monitors speak Amharic.
 - Middle Eastern families working with employment agencies to locate and hire migrant workers need training on basic human rights, as well as clarification about contract terms. This is an area where IOM and other human rights agencies could play an important role, as could local religious institutions.
 - Work towards ensuring migrants in destination countries have the time to develop their own social networks that can provide them with the emotional support they need in order to stay healthy and safe. Allowing girls one day off each week, rather than keeping them isolated for the duration of the contract period, could substantially improve their mental health, as well as give them yet another option to escape the worse abuses.

9.3 Eliminating illegal migration and trafficking

According to our respondents, illegal migration and trafficking are endemic in Ethiopia – and are well hidden in the flow of economic migrants. A lack of birth registration, and parents who are willing to assert that girls are much older than they actually are, leaves *kebele* leaders with few options but to grant identification cards that can add up to 10 years to a girl's real age – something that is often impossible for immigration authorities to verify, even if they wished to. Brokers then exponentially increase the risks girls take, sending some through illegal channels, which leaves them open to physical and sexual violence *en route*, while leaving the majority far enough in debt to reduce their escape options if their employment does not go as planned. Unscrupulous brokers are illegally risking girls' wellbeing for their own profit at every step of the process. While local authorities are taking some action to provide protection for migrant girls, teaching them and their parents about safe migration and stopping busloads full of illegal migrants, the wealth accumulated by brokers operating in well-resourced international rings has rendered them, in most cases, above the law.

In order to curb violations of Ethiopian migrant girls' rights to protection, the following steps should urgently be considered:

1. Eliminate under-age migration

- *Kebele* authorities that issue false identification cards to girls need to be prosecuted, named and shamed so they can stop bowing to community pressure.
- Efforts to systemise birth registration need to be accelerated so a child's age is a matter of public record.
- School records need to play a more prominent role in the current identification system, as they are often the only way to verify a child's age.

2. Eliminate brokering

- Brokers need to be named, shamed, prosecuted and jailed rather than fined.
- PEAs need to be adequately compensated to reduce their incentives to use brokers. The government might consider allowing agencies to charge migrants a reasonable fee to ensure better enforcement of legal intent, in conjunction with greater emphasis on awareness raising regarding the illegal nature of all other fees.
- Legal migration processes need to be streamlined so they are quicker, which would reduce the incentives for girls to use brokers. Girls consistently cited time rather than cost as their reason for choosing the illegal migration route.
- Immigration and training need to be decentralised to a zonal level to ensure rural girls do not become prey to unscrupulous brokers in larger cities.

3. Strengthen local capacity

- *Kebele* and zonal authorities need support to develop, implement and extend safe migration and anti-trafficking programming that is tailored to local needs.
- Local officials need to know that, if they enforce the law, they will be backed by higher-level authorities and receive protection where necessary. The US State Department (2013) reports that the government 'did not report any investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of public officials allegedly complicit in human trafficking offenses' in the previous year.

9.4 Investing in rehabilitation services

Our respondents indicated a complete dearth of support services for returnees, particularly those who have developed physical or mental ill-health during their contract overseas. While dreams of a better, more financially secure future pull adolescent girls to the Middle East, many return home empty-handed, and some – the victims of the worst forms of abuse – have serious medical and psychological needs. Services for these girls and young women should be urgently provided, as, without such help, these individuals are unlikely to lead productive lives, putting further pressure on their families' limited resources.

In order to provide appropriate support to returnees, the following should be considered:

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- PEAs need to provide rehabilitation services for abused migrants in line with the provisions laid down in Proclamation 632/2009; MoLSA and its state-level branches (BoLSA) need to monitor whether they are fulfilling their responsibilities under the Proclamation.
 - The government needs to provide victims of trafficking with immediate access to medical, psychological and legal services to avoid further strain on families' limited resources.
 - Support services need to be adequately funded and staff capacity should be strengthened, especially in the areas of psychosocial ill-being/ mental illness, which requires specialist skills. At present, there are two NGOs working in this area in Addis Ababa, which could provide a useful source of learning. However, their coverage is very limited, so urgent attention is needed to expand reach to other regional states, especially Amhara and Oromia, which are home to the vast majority of migrant girls.
 - Returnees could be directed to available support services via a free telephone hotline, with the number heavily publicised through relevant media.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Research instruments

Case study

The case study involved two key tools undertaken with individual survivors of the child protection violation as well as service providers involved in prevention and rehabilitation service provision.

- Life history methodology (including pits and troughs; integrating narrative practice and rapport building questions drawing on Linda Williams Pathways into and out of Sexual Exploitation) (90 minutes)
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis of prevention and rehabilitation support services provided by case study respondents – using a ranking exercise

Life history tool

Need large sheet of paper; three segments of time line (7-10, 11-14; 15-17 years) in middle of page

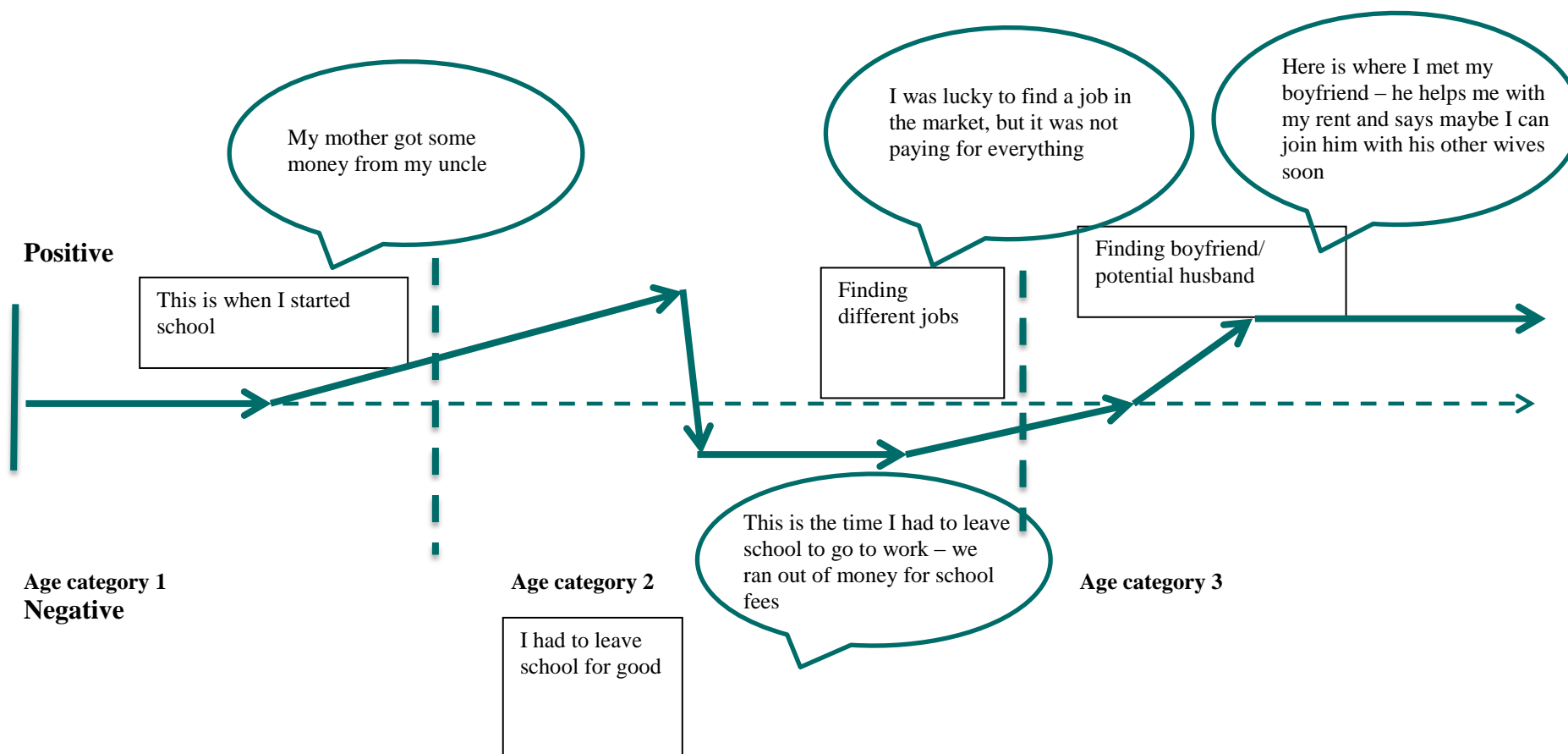
Introduction: ‘We are talking to young people to learn about their experiences in their own words. This is a time when you can talk about your life – the good and bad and what you want for the future. Your life story and your thoughts and suggestions will be confidential but your experiences and ideas will help others learn from you so young people growing up today can have a better life – especially when they face trying circumstances. I have some questions I plan to ask but mostly want to hear your story the way you want to tell it.’

Begin with rapport building: ask about a recent good day in their lives; a recent bad day in their lives. Objective is to elicit things of importance in their lives, including sources of support.

Next, ask for key events that have had a positive or negative effect in their life in general, around:

- Family life (e.g. birth of sibling; death of a parent; limited time with parents; intra-household violence)
- School (e.g. success in exams; dropout)
- Household economic wellbeing/livelihoods (e.g. bumper crop; parent lost source of income)
- Friends
- Recreational activities
- Domestic and care work activities
- Personal/physical security and integrity: ‘So, can you tell me about any tough times you might have experienced? For instance, have you ever been in a situation where someone has tried to harm you? What happened? How did you feel? Did you tell anyone?’
- Interactions with services and service providers, e.g. vocational training
- Pre-migration, migration experience, post-migration experience

Draw negative events below line; positive events above. Note that it may not just be events in the sense of one-off happenings but rather longer-term stressors, such as persistent intra-household violence. Add in bubbles to represent sources of support around the key events.



The **objective** is to understand key life events and sources of vulnerability and resilience – depict these using the pits and troughs life history diagrams.

Key to ask where they turned to for support; what coping strategies/sources of resilience they drew on when they faced difficult times; and what the limitations of that support were and why (e.g. didn't feel able to confide in a parent or friend; no social services that they were aware of or felt comfortable accessing).

- Probing approach (drawing on work by Linda Williams (2009) regarding Pathways into and out of Sexual Exploitation): using narrative practice techniques and avoiding questions that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no'. Don't make any assumptions about behavioural motivation or sequencing of events.
 - 'Tell me more'
 - 'What did you do next?'
 - 'What happened next?'
 - 'When you say this, why is it important to you?'
 - 'What do you mean by X?'
 - 'So what was bad about that?'
- For interrupting a story, good to warn respondent upfront:
 - 'I am very interested in your story and don't want to interrupt you a lot but I may need to ask you a few questions as you go along so that I can understand fully'
 - 'May I ask you a question now' – do this early so as to indicate how the interview will involve a back and forth dialogue
- For wrapping up:
 - 'Is there anything else that you think is important for me to know?'
 - 'Is there anything I got wrong – something you want to add or correct?'

SWOT institutional analysis tool

(NB: This would need to be contextualised to be child and context friendly)

Strengths – internal to support service	Weaknesses – internal to the support service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Service availability and accessibility (both prevention and rehabilitation) ➤ Service quality ➤ Integrated approach (economic empowerment, psychosocial support, life skills training, community reintegration support etc.) ➤ Attitudes of service providers ➤ Quality of information systems ➤ Linkages with complementary services (schools, health professionals, justice professionals, youth workers, child- or gender-based violence professionals, psychosocial services) ➤ Follow-up over time ➤ Legal environment – laws that prevent child protection violations ➤ Degree and content of public discussion on child protection violations – is there support or a blame-the-victim approach? ➤ Extent and type of reporting on child protection violations: is reporting of abuse something rare or is it well accepted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited awareness of service availability ➤ Limited service provision ➤ Service quality weaknesses ➤ Limited scope of rehabilitation or prevention services ➤ Attitudes of service providers ➤ Inadequate attention to issues of confidentiality ➤ Limited follow-up ➤ Weak linkages with complementary services ➤ Limited opportunities for feedback on service quality
Opportunities – external to the support service	Threats – external to the support service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opportunities to share experiences with other survivors ➤ Opportunities to communicate risks and mitigation/prevention strategies with broader community ➤ Opportunities to integrate knowledge of services ➤ Information packs for migrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Under-resourcing of services (e.g. limited staff; limited qualifications of staff; limited support – especially in terms of economic empowerment, covers too few people, too small an area, cannot give clients enough support, e.g. transfers are too small or training courses too short etc.) ➤ Services are appropriated by those in power (ethnic,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening linkages and information sharing with other government and NGO service providers ➤ Degree and content of public discussion on child protection violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> religious majorities etc.) ➤ Sensationalist media reporting ➤ Problem of stigma in the community ➤ Extent and type of reporting on child protection violations ➤ Extent to which laws and policies are enforced ➤ Extent to which laws and policies are monitored
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For adolescent returnees who were supported with a rehabilitation service, use the SWOT exercise as follows:

- Use flip chart with different colour post-it notes for strengths (green) and weaknesses (grey), opportunities (yellow), threats (red) to discuss the rehabilitation service they had access to as returnees.
- Start with empty sheet of paper with four squares – S, W, O, T – use the coloured post-it notes to fill up the different quadrants, and to generate a conversation.

For adolescent returnees who were not supported with rehabilitation service do NOT use the SWOT – instead have a discussion:

- For those children who didn't get support from a service, find out if they know about such rehabilitation programmes and if so why they haven't accessed it.
- Then do a ranking exercise about eight possible programme responses – pick top three, least applicable two and why – using a starred rating.

For case study adolescents – expand list and ask them to rank top three in each quadrant and provide a reason for the ranking – likely to respond more to suggestions. Also ask them to reflect on what sort of intervention would have been most helpful – both the sort of service and how and by whom it was delivered.

Policy options for case studies

*Please pick the three things you think would be most useful for improving the situation of children involved in risky migration using three stars for the most important. *** ** **

Identify a maximum of two things that you think would not work using crosses xx or x

1. Better access to vocational training opportunities close to home
2. Legal aid centres for children/adolescents to help deal with cases of abuse or violence (by family members or strangers)
3. Development of drop-in centres for child/adolescent migrants where can get information on entitlements and services as well as meet other child/adolescent migrants
4. Introduction of safe migration programmes in schools
5. Safe migration programmes provided by commune office at village level or in urban centres (e.g. at DOLISA offices)
6. More leisure activities for adolescents/youth
7. Access to educational scholarships to enable poor adolescents to stay in school
8. More radio or TV programmes on risks of migration and how to prevent these, including interviews with children/adolescents who have suffered from bad experiences during migration
9. Education for parents on risks of migration so they can provide better advice to their children and also avoid sending them to risky environments
10. Access to counselling in schools for vulnerable children/adolescents to discuss their programmes
11. Life skills programmes at school, including information about legal rights, and how to access the justice system

Key informant interviews

<p>Viet Nam – distress migration of children (ie under 18 years) – unsupervised by parents</p> <p>(Province, commune)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Warm up question]: Who are the main people migrating from this province? Where are they migrating to? What kinds of jobs are they migrating to undertake? Since how long have people been migrating in significant numbers? What explains this? • [Provincial level:] Which districts have the highest prevalence of distress migration in An Giang? Why?
<p>Household factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which children are most often involved in distress migration and why? (orphans, gender, relative age, victims of domestic violence, children from large families, etc.) • Are children in lower-income households more involved in this practice? Why?/ Why not? (parental level of education, divorced family, going into debt/borrowing money – can the very poorest families afford those costs, encouragement by brokers – is this a common problem? Example of successful migration?) • Does the sex of the household head make a difference? If so, why? (if a female headed hh, is it boys or girls who are more vulnerable?) Is there a problem with families with step-parents? (does it affect boys or girls?) • Do you think the type of livelihood a family has (e.g. subsistence agriculture vs petty trade) affects whether they are more or less vulnerable to distress migration? And what about if both parents are working outside the house (less care and protection/ supervision)? • Do you think economic shocks make people more at risk of distress migration? • How important do you think unemployment and/or under-employment are as a driver of distress migration • Do you think environmental shocks make people more at risk of distress migration? • Overall, to what extent is distress migration related to poverty and non-poverty factors? • Is distress migration more common amongst specific social groups (e.g. some ethnic groups vs others)? Why?
<p>Migration experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of jobs / activities are children getting involved in when they migrate? • What do you know about girls' experiences once they migrate internally? Externally – to other countries? Where do you get your evidence from? Do you think there are evidence gaps? • Role of agents / brokers? Who are they? What do you think of their practices? How do you identify and contact girls and boys? How are they regulated? Is this effective?
<p>Community/ institutional responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role do local community officials and leaders play in responding to distress migration? Do they try to intervene? Raise awareness about risks? Facilitate it given poverty pressures? • What has been the government's response to the problem of distress/ independent child migration? Is poverty considered a driver by the government in terms of MOLISA's policy frameworks? • Which government units are responsible for dealing with these problems? Are there effective coordination mechanisms? (e.g. between child protection, poverty reduction depts., etc.). How could the departments work in a more joined up way? What types of incentives would help? • Has this policy response been effective? What is the balance between preventative efforts and rehabilitation services? In what ways? How could the policy response be improved? What are the challenges are doing this? • Have there been any spill-over effects from poverty reduction interventions on distress migration of children? If so, why do you think this happened? • Are there NGO/community based organisations/ private businesses supporting interventions? Has this response been effective? In what ways? If not, why not? • Is there any coordination across interventions undertaken by different actors? What is the mechanism? How effective is it?

FGDs with adults

The focus group discussion should be facilitated through the **participatory and modified problem tree** tool outlined below.

Tool:

Start the session with a context-appropriate warm up exercise to make participants feel more comfortable. Once people are more relaxed, start the participatory exercise.

- Ask people to define well-being – you said ‘you are well’ – what does that mean for you? What about for a girl? For a boy?

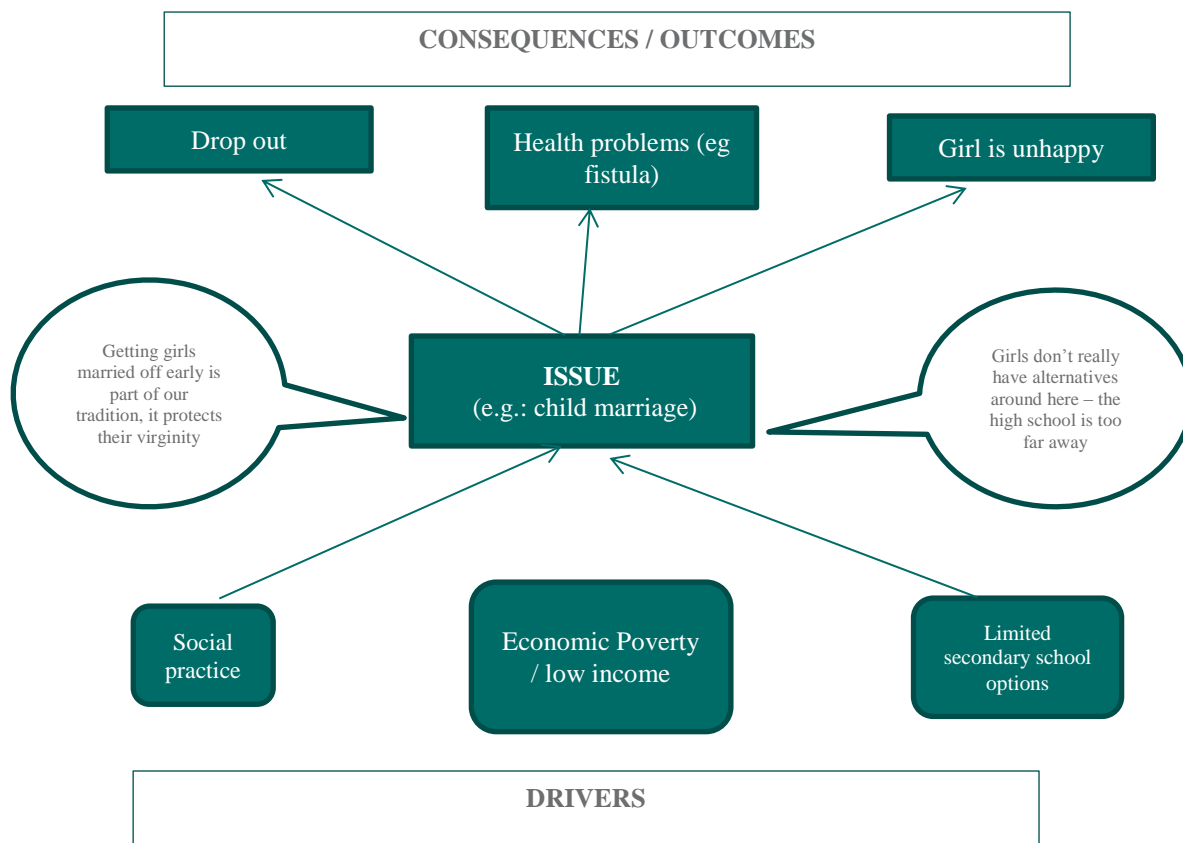
Explain that the purpose of this exercise is to understand what people consider to be the ‘drivers’ (or causes) of an issue that we have identified to take place frequently in the locality (don’t say ‘problem, just issue, to avoid biasing it). You can ask for all to participate, and then explain the instructions as per the below:

Facilitator:

Using flip chart (writing and drawing to account for illiteracy): Write down the child protection issue you are focusing on in simple language and during discussion write down/draw perceptions and drivers:

- Issue statement: “Adolescents are increasingly migrating abroad to the Middle East and finding themselves into vulnerable situations” [short-hand = “distress migration”].
- The **Issue** should be at the centre of the diagram
- **Drivers or causes** to be noted as boxes on the bottom, with the size of boxes depending on perception of magnitude of the driver (i.e., bigger box for more important drivers)
- Most common **opinions** (why is this happening?) as bubbles around issue. Size of bubble for this layer not important.
- **Consequences/outcomes** as ‘branches’ above (bigger boxes [but different colour] for more important drivers, smaller for less important).

The diagram and probing questions below should only be the starting point for the analysis, and to facilitate the discussion to get to issues of ‘why’.



Key questions for further probing:

Drivers

- What do you think of this issue? Does it occur frequently in your community? (Probe: Is it seen as normal? Problematic? Why?)
- From the reasons or drivers provided, which do you think is more important? Why? What is the chain events? What is the relative importance of economic problem?
*(If they do not mention poverty, ask specifically whether they think poverty plays a role...)

Possible solutions

- Are there any interventions/measures in place (laws, government or NGO programmes, community interventions, etc) to prevent this situation from occurring? Or if it occurs, is there any programme or intervention to support the people that might be affected?
- Do you think they are working? Why/why not?
- If there aren't any interventions, why do you think it is?
- Can the community do anything to improve the situation?

Small group discussion with children

For this exercise you will identify 3 (maximum 4) children in the age range 14 to 17.

Important to select both middling poor and extremely poor. One group with dropouts. You will have a total of 5-6 SGD in each site: 2 with girls (from better off / worse off households) / 2 with boys (from better off / worse off households)

[*Need to mark on the transcript which poverty group is the most important].

The SGD involves 3 different exercises to make it more dynamic and engaging for the participants. The total discussion should last no more than 1.5 hours.

Begin with a warm-up exercise asking children how think about wellbeing – ie what they mean when they say ‘thank you I’m well’.

Part 1: Life skills analysis to understand children’s perceptions regarding some common child protection violations in their community (*This should not last more than 20 minutes*)

Part 2: Problem tree analysis with a focus on the research problem in each country, exploring drivers facilitated through ‘problem tree’ technique, whereby we will prompt with questions and draw a tree for causes and consequences (*maximum 45 minutes*)

Part 3: Intervention mapping– open questions to find if children are aware of programmes or interventions to prevent or provide support to those victims of child protection violations in their community and how they think these could be improved (*maximum 25 minutes*)

Part 1: Life skills, perceptions of child protection violations (adapted from UNICEF’s violence study tools)

Each child is given a copy of the form below and a pen/pencil. The facilitator reads out the list to the group and supports any child who has trouble with the written format.

In the column on the right, children should say in a scale of 1 to 5 if they 1 disagree and 5 if they agree. Once the question is asked and ranked, it should be the entry point for discussion as to whether they think those situations occur in practice, and to ask why these occur.

Do you think these situations happen at school :	
1. Students hurting or threatening others	
2. Teachers threatening or hurting students	
3. Students using sexual language with others	
4. Students making sexual advances or abusing other students	
5. Teachers making sexual advances or abusing other students	
Do you think these situations happen at home :	
1. Parents physically punishing children	
2. Parents verbally abusing children	
3. Older siblings beating or verbally abusing younger siblings	
If any of these situations happened to me, I would :	
1. Do nothing	
2. Avoid the situation so it doesn’t happen	
3. Seek help from a friend	
4. Seek help from a teacher	
5. Seek help from a parent	
6. Seek help from another adult	
7. Seek help from a programme / service available in the community	
8. I wouldn’t seek help from anyone	
Do you think the following situations happen in the community:	

Girls or boys being involved in a sexual relationship before they are 18	
Girls becoming pregnant before they are 18	
Girls or boys getting married before they are 18	
Girls or boys being sexually abused by family members or friends	
Girls or boys being sexually abused by strangers	
If any of these things happened to you (against your will), would you:	
Talk to your parents about it	
Talk to someone else (such as a children's club leader) about it	
Talk to authorities about it	
How much do you agree with these statements regarding your mother and father:	
Normally around in the household to take care of me	
One is away working and the other stays at home caring for children	
Both are away and children stay on their own	
Both are away and children stay with friend / neighbour	
Both are away and children go to nursery and school	
I can talk to my mother and my father, they listen to me	
I feel protected and cared for at home	
I feel unsafe / unprotected at home	

Part 2: Problem tree analysis

Draw a picture of a large tree with roots, trunk and branches where leaves can be added...

Taking the 'trunk' of the tree to be the central 'problem' being researched (trafficking, distress migration, cross-generational sex), use the following questions to explore drivers (roots) and consequences (leaves) –[so what happens (good and bad) as a result of distress migration?] in the diagram:

- Can you think of some of the **causes** of the 'problem'? (probe for: poverty, social pressures, common response that is accepted by peers, only livelihood option, etc.). What do you think is the most important cause and why?
- Who are more exposed to it, girls or boys? Why?
- Are some children more exposed than others? Why? (probe: those that live in poor households, disabled, orphaned, girls, etc)
- How do you feel about this situation happening in your community?
- What are some of the **consequences** of the 'problem' on children/adolescents experiencing it? On the community? (probe: education, health, happiness, family life)
- Similarities and differences between internal and external migration? Which is more risky and why?

Part 3: Programmes / interventions – with a focus on preventative measures...

- Do you receive information about how to prevent these types of things from happening to you or your friends/peers from parents, schools, children's clubs, other programmes in the community?
- Are you aware of any programmes in the community that try to prevent these situations from occurring (including information by radio, communication campaigns, support given to children or their households, etc)
- Are you aware of any programmes in place in the community that provide support more generally for children / young people in the community? If so, what does the programme do? Do you think it works? How would you improve it?
- Do you know anyone participating in this programme? Have they benefitted? How?
- Are you aware of any laws in your country that will protect you from harm or violence – e.g. going to school, to the field? If you were harmed, what action if any would you take? If you were the local leader or district official, what programme would you put in place to improve the situation of children in your community? Why?

End by asking children to rank the interventions most likely be effective. As the above discussion is ongoing put up possible interventions on a flipchart and then ask them to rank the top 5 most effective, and the 2 least effective.

As a backup plan, we will have a list of options that they could rank if they don't have many suggestions.

Community mapping and timeline

Objectives:

- Obtain perspectives from community members on community dynamics, experiences of poverty in the community, gender and adolescence dynamics,
- Obtain understanding of timeline for key events in the community and recent changes that have shaped coping mechanisms and future opportunities for young people
- Use as entry into the community and for exit and providing feedback to the community
- **Kebele leader will be able to provide list of names of who is better off and then poor based on participation in the safety net which will be key for sampling purposes for the FGD and the SGD

Approach	Visual tool	Purpose	When	With whom	Running the meeting, Write-up /analysis
Small group discussion Part 1	Social and vulnerability mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community map resources (infrastructure –schools, clinics, churches, mosques, roads, depots, etc. - , livelihood resources, etc.)¹ and where people live Community map where different categories of hh live in general (with regard to resources and proximity to services), how long been in the area... Ask group what are the key vulnerabilities (economic, social, physical, environmental) in this area (how vulnerable are people & to what?) Focus in on social capital and social networks – who gets included? Who excluded? If in trouble what to people do/where do they go; has this changed over time, improved/got worse, why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall sense of poverty and vulnerability in the community Identifying key vulnerabilities in the area 	Entry into community / after initial discussions with KIIs, field coordinator/set up by field coordinator prior to arrival of team	Key people in the community, elders, could be men/women, if many people split into male/female, older/younger groups, [<i>having a representative from the younger generation is key</i>], around 5-6 people. [2 groups]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 facilitators – one leading, one taking notes Taking notes of: discussion on key change, interesting verbatim quotes, non-verbal communication, etc Present time-line as annex to report 2 facilitators – one leading, one taking notes Taking notes of: discussion on vulnerabilities, interesting verbatim quotes, non-verbal communication, etc
Small group discussion Part 2	Coping strategies and resilience by age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask how coping mechanisms differ between adolescents/young people, adults and older people Ask them to categorise different types of informal sp – savings groups, borrowing, labour sharing, relying on friends, neighbours, relatives; communal soup kitchens, informal insurance groups, youth association <p>[15-17 yrs are now seen as children based on constitution and UNCRC... 18-29 yrs at Kebele level], women’s association [15-49 yrs]etc.</p> <p><i>Probe specifically regarding support mechanisms for younger people.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask them to weight relative importance of these mechanisms and then vis-à-vis formal govt/ ngo programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying how community leaders identify /define poverty and vulnerability Obtaining listing for sampling purposes 			

Small group discussion Part 3	Historical time-line / trend line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start from 1991 – beginning of EPRDF... • Ask about key events in their community (services – [e.g. secondary school, vocational training], out-migration, NGO /donor programmes, social protection, drought, floods, etc.) • The effects of these events (get at issues of disruption, information provision, mobile phones, radio/TV programmes – shifts in attitudes). • Key changes in the way adolescents and young people behave, opportunities and challenges they face - gender differences within these changes • Finally, ask about shifts in internal and external migration... and underlying reasons 	Change in community over time and effect on community dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History / dynamics of the community • Change over time in terms of infrastructure, access to services, vulnerabilities, cohesion • Particular focus on adolescents, and gender differences 			
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Some **websites**

http://www.oneworldtrust.org/apro/search/found_tools/?selection=36

<http://www.fao.org/Participation/tools/PRA.html>

<http://www.cprc.abrc.co.uk/toolbox/Participatory.php>



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ISSN: 2052-7209

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