

REIMAGINING MIGRATION RESPONSES

SUMMARY
REPORT

in Somaliland and Puntland

Learning from migrant children
and young people's experiences



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This report has been peer reviewed both externally and within UNICEF.

This report was researched and written by Olivia Bueno, Mark Gill, Lucy Hovil, Iolanda Genovese, Lawrence Oduma and Kamal Nidam Adan.

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Cover image is from the video available at www.unicef-irc.org/child-migration-hoa

Editorial production: Céline Little and Sarah Marchant, UNICEF Innocenti

Design and layout: The Visual Agency (www.thevisualagency.com)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper presents the main findings from a research study with migrant children and young people who were interviewed while living in Somaliland and Puntland.¹ It is part of a wider regional study that focuses on the Horn of Africa region.²

This study was carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF) in Somaliland and the Ministry of Women, Development and Family Affairs (MOWDAFA) in Puntland.

This report was researched and written by Olivia Bueno, Mark Gill, Lucy Hovil, Iolanda Genovese, Lawrence Oduma and Kamal Nidam Adan, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.

The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution and support of the following individuals and organizations:

National research partner: The research was assisted by two local partners, the University of Hargeisa and the Peace and Development Research Centre. The University of Hargeisa team included Hanan Ahmed Abdi, Najad Mohamed Abdi, Yasmin Mohamed Ahmed, Fihima Ayanele Esse, Mohamed Nour Hassan, Hinda Mohamed Ibrahim, Warsan Mowliid Ibrahim, Samsam Ahmed Jama, Mubarik Yousuf Mohamed and Saeed Mohamed Yusuf; and two supervisors, Mariama A. Sahal and Mustafe Artan Yousuf. Mukhtar Abby, Dean, College of Social Sciences and Humanities played a key role in coordinating the research at the University of Hargeisa. The Peace and Development Research Centre team included Roble Nur Barre, Abdirizak Abdulkadir Ibrahim, Huda Abdirisak Jama, Mohamoud Abdinasir Mohamed, Naima Mohamud Mohamed, Asia Musse Mohamud, Abdirizak Mohamed Musse, Ifraah Hassan Nuur, Hani Abdi Salad and Ikraan Yassin Yusuf; and two supervisors, Muctar Hersi Mohammed and Said Shidad.

UNICEF: Ahmed Osman Adam and Brendan Ross (UNICEF Somalia); Jean Francois Basse, Belete Birara, Ndeye Marie Diop and Priscilla Ofori-Amanfo (UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office); Noela Barasa, Saskia Blume, Kirsten Di Martino and Cornelius Williams (UNICEF NYHQ).

Office of Research – Innocenti: Ramya Subrahmanian, Priscilla Idele, Josiah Kaplan, Angie Lee, Céline Little, Sarah Marchant, Gunilla Olsson, Matilde Rocca, Dale Rutstein and Francesca Viola. Additional thanks to Bina D’Costa, Australian National University, for peer review of the paper.

Editors: Accuracy Matters (www.accuracy matters.co.uk).

Funding for this research was generously provided by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).



1. This research was carried out in both Somaliland, a self-declared independent state which is not recognized by the United Nations, and the Puntland State of Somalia.
 2. Hovil, Lucy, et al. *Reimagining Migration Responses: Learning from children and young people who move in the Horn of Africa*, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2021.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MESAF	Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family
MOWDAFA	Ministry of Women, Development and Family Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

GLOSSARY

Asylum seeker

A person seeking to be admitted into a country as a refugee and awaiting decision on their application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In the case of a negative decision, they must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any alien in an irregular situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds.

Best interests assessment and determination

Describes the formal process with strict procedural safeguards designed to determine the child's best interests for particularly important decisions affecting the child. It should facilitate adequate child participation without discrimination, involve decision-makers with relevant areas of expertise, and balance all relevant factors in order to assess the best option.

Child

A person aged under 18. For the purposes of this research, children aged 10–17.

Forcibly displaced

Refers to refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons.

Horn of Africa

For the purposes of this report, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia (including the self-declared state of Somaliland), South Sudan and Sudan are included within the Horn of Africa. Primary data collection took place in Ethiopia, Somalia including Somaliland and Sudan.

Internally displaced person

A person (or group of people) forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.

Irregular migration

Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration.

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

Any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder.

Mixed migration

Complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants.

Refugee

A person who "owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country"³

3. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951.

Separated children

Children separated from both parents or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members.

Smuggling

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.⁴ Smuggling, contrary to trafficking, does not require an element of exploitation, coercion or violation of human rights.

Trafficking of persons

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 or payments of benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Unaccompanied children

Persons under the age of majority who are not accompanied by a parent, guardian or other adult who by law or custom is responsible for them. Unaccompanied children present special challenges for border control officials, because detention and other practices used with undocumented adult aliens may not be appropriate for children.

Young person

For the purposes of this research, a person aged 18–24.

4. UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, Art. 3(a).





A 17-year-old on the beach in Puntland, who used a smuggling route and ended up in Libya. Fearing for his life he fled to Sudan, where he was arrested and returned.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration is a regular feature of life in the Horn of Africa. It encompasses multiple forms, takes place by various means and is driven by numerous factors, both positive and negative. These include personal aspiration, curiosity, problems accessing a livelihood in the context of poverty and economic exclusion, and forced displacement on account of political persecution, armed conflict or natural disasters. Of the nearly 3 million migrants in the country,⁵ some are internally displaced and are moving with their families; some are asylum seekers or refugees; some are travelling alone in search of a 'better life' (sometimes with the assistance of smugglers); and some are victims of trafficking. Reflecting these realities, **this research uses the term 'migrant' to encompass all these different forms of movement.**⁶

Children and young people make up a significant proportion of this movement.⁷ Yet there is limited understanding of the ways in which children and young people view migration, or of the opportunities and risks that it poses for them.⁸

This dearth of information also presents a challenge to providing protection to these children and young people.⁹

While there has been a steady growth in child migration research over the past two decades, the literature continues to be dominated by studies that focus disproportionately on those who attempt to migrate to Europe or North America, even though far greater numbers of those who move remain in the Horn of Africa.¹⁰ Some research has been done in the region, but has mainly focused on adults and on specific subcategories of migrants, such as refugees and internally displaced persons. Most of the literature that focuses on children has been qualitative in nature,¹¹ making it difficult to assess how common the various challenges are, and which groups are likely to be most affected. As a result, there is limited information on the extent to which migrant children and young people who move within the region encounter threats or are exposed to vulnerabilities (if at all), as well as little understanding of the coping mechanisms that they deploy to help protect themselves, and the barriers that inhibit their access to services.¹²

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5. See Figure 1 for data sources. The research took place prior to the Tigray crisis, which started in November 2020, and thus does not reflect current displacement figures.
 6. This approach reflects the diversity of children on the move in the definition agreed upon by the inter-agency Global Migration Group: "Children who are migrating within their own country or across borders; children migrating on their own or with their caretakers; children forcibly displaced within their own country and across borders; and children moving in a documented or undocumented manner, including those whose movement involves smuggling or trafficking networks." Cited in United Nations Children's Fund, *Global Programme Framework on Children on the Move*, UNICEF, New York, 2017, <www.unicef.org/media/62986/file>, accessed 10 August 2020. It also resonates with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) definition of migrants as "An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons". International Organization for Migration, 'Who is a Migrant?', IOM, Geneva, undated, <www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>, accessed 10 August 2020.
 7. For the purposes of this study, children and young people are defined as people under the age of 25. In referring to the survey data, this paper regards children as those aged 14–17 years, and young people as those aged 18–24 years.
 8. Although there is no universally acknowledged definition of risk, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction defines risk as "the potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society or community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity". In this context, we are looking at the possible loss of life, injury or damage to assets that could result from a negative migration experience. United Nations Children's Fund, *Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming*, UNICEF, New York, April 2018, <www.unicef.org/media/57621/file>, accessed 10 August 2020.
 9. Child Protection as understood by UNICEF refers to the prevention and response to violence, exploitation and abuse of children in all contexts. United Nations Children's Fund. 'Child Protection Overview', UNICEF, New York, 2015, <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/overview/>>, accessed 17 June 2021.
 10. See, for example, United Nations Children's Fund and International Organization for Migration *Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea*, UNICEF and IOM, 2017, <<https://data.unicef.org/resources/harrowing-journeys/>>, accessed 10 August 2020; United Nations Development Programme, *Scaling Fences: Voices of Irregular African Migrants to Europe*, UNDP, New York, 2019 <<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/scaling-fences-voices-irregular-african-migrants-europe>>, accessed 10 August 2020.
 11. One exception is the UNICEF analysis of the Gallup World Poll: Burrone, Sara, Bina D'Costa and Goran Holmqvist, 'Children and Migration Decisions: Evidence from the Gallup World Poll', 16 November 2017, <<https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/children-and-migration-decisions-evidence-from-the-gallup-world-poll/>>, accessed 20 August 2020.
 12. The lack of empirical data on migrant children has been recognized in the literature. See, for instance, Bhabha, Jacqueline, *Child Migration and Human Rights in a Global Age*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2014.

This research responds to that gap. It concentrates on the positive and negative experiences of children and young people on their migration journeys, and focuses specifically on two core objectives:

- first, to build a better understanding of children and young people’s perceptions and feelings of safety, their well-being and their protective environments; and
- second, to capture a snapshot of their access to services and resources, and their trust in authorities and other service providers.

By combining qualitative and quantitative research perspectives, the research explores a number of factors that may play a part in creating for children and young people either a more supportive environment or greater vulnerability as they move. These factors include: their age and gender; the factors driving their migration; the level and range of support they have access to (families, friends, peer networks); their access to legal documentation and communication resources; their access to services; and their trust in the authorities.

Understanding the perspectives of children and young people is a crucial step on the road to having their opinions and ideas about migration influence policy and programmatic investments; to improving these investments; and to addressing the violence, abuse and exploitation that some of these children and young people face. In doing so, the research forms part of a wider programme on Children on the Move,¹³ designed to strengthen multi-sectoral and inclusive child protection services on the main migration routes through the region.

This programme is, in turn, embedded in the UNICEF six-point Agenda for Action for uprooted children, which calls for efforts to:

- address the root causes of movement;
- keep families together and give children access to legal status;
- end detention of children;
- combat discrimination against uprooted children;
- protect children from violence and exploitation while moving; and
- help children access school and health care throughout their movement.¹⁴

The research has generated three key findings:

First, mobility is a core coping strategy for many children and young people living in the region. Yet the policy approaches of states and migration governance mechanisms, despite their diversity, often seek to restrict or prevent the movement of people, rather than support it. This has made migration journeys more dangerous for everyone, especially those who are compelled to seek unsafe and irregular routes.¹⁵

- In the specific context of Somaliland and Puntland, programmes are being carried out to reduce pressure to migrate. This research shows how complex the drivers of migration can be, and these complexities may need to be taken into account when targeting such programmes.

13. The programme ‘Ending Violence, Abuse and Exploitation of Children: Strengthening multi-sectoral prevention and response to violence, abuse and exploitation of children on the move (2017–2020)’ is funded by the Department for International Development/UKAID.

The research also builds on an earlier report: United Nations Children’s Fund, “No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate”: Vulnerability of children on the move in the Horn of Africa, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2019, <<https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Child-Migration-Horn-of-Africa-part-1.pdf>>, accessed 8 March 2021.

14. See United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Uprooted Children: Agenda for Action’, UNICEF, New York, undated, <www.unicef.org/children-uprooted/agenda-for-action>, accessed 10 August 2020.

15. See UNICEF and IOM, *Harrowing Journeys*; Ayalew Mengiste, Tekalign, Fekadu Adugna and Priya Deshingkar, ‘Social Embeddedness of Human Smuggling in East Africa: Brokering Ethiopian Migration to Sudan’, *African Human Mobility Review*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2018, pp.1333–1358.

Second, many migrant children and young people are unable to access protection or basic services – either because of poor availability generally, or because of specific barriers facing migrant children and young people. Although

a number of programmes have been mobilized to address these gaps, they are often driven by donor priorities aimed at reducing migration from the continent, thereby neglecting those who remain within their country or region of origin. Yet, in reality, the highest levels of movement comprise rural to urban migration and internal displacement within countries; a smaller (but still significant) number of people cross borders to neighbouring countries (and back again); a yet smaller number travel between regions within the continent; and only a few seek to move outside the continent.¹⁶

While cross-border migration often attracts much-needed attention, this should not come at the expense of understanding and addressing these other forms of migration.

- The research offers important insights into unmet demand for services, in particular legal assistance, social workers and education. It also highlights the specific risks faced by certain groups of migrant children and young people, which may be useful in targeting programming (e.g., gender differences, lower access to education among Ethiopians and need for specific outreach).
- A strong child protection system should be promoted through a robust legal and policy system, effective governance structures, a continuum of services (from prevention to response), minimum standards and oversight mechanisms, human and financial resources (including capacity building) and social participation.¹⁷

Third, many migrant children and young people and their families move for many and varied reasons, and their lived experiences shared in this research rarely fit neatly into the formal legal and policy categories that authorities rely on to sort and confer or deny status, legitimacy and assistance to those engaged in migration.¹⁸

In this research, respondents were selected because they were engaged in some form of migratory movement and not because of their current legal status.¹⁹ Although migrants have some agency to negotiate the status sought and obtained, the fact that the vast majority cited multiple reasons for their movement (including both security and economic considerations) challenges the use of a clear dividing line between refugee and non-refugee migrants.

- In Somaliland and Puntland, UNICEF should advocate for the expansion of legal options for immigration or legalization of status, with a view to expanding the options for durable solutions.

Through these findings, the research builds a framework that can inform efforts to enhance the safety and protection of migrant children and young people.

16. Chutel, Lynsey, 'At Least 80% of African Migrants Never Leave the Continent, but the Focus is on Europe', *Quartz Africa*, 15 February 2019.

17. United Nations Children's Fund, Evaluation Office, *Strengthening Child Protection Systems: Evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance*, UNICEF, New York, December 2018.

18. Hovil, Lucy, and Melissa Phillips, 'Migrants and Refugees: What's in a name?', *Clingendael Spectator*, 4, vol. 72, 2018.

19. Indeed, in order to avoid relying on reductionist categories in capturing migrants' subjective experiences, this study did not *a priori* classify respondents in terms of official migration categories – for example, as a refugee, asylum seeker, internally displaced person, 'irregular' migrant, etc.

CHAPTER 1

6

SOMALILAND AND PUNTLAND: THE MIGRATION CONTEXT

According to OCHA and UNHCR statistics, Somalia is simultaneously a source, transit and destination for migration. Protracted conflict, violence, natural disasters and economic pressures have led to significant numbers of Somalis moving within and out of the country; other migrants pass through Somaliland and Puntland en route to the Middle East or Europe; while yet others are fleeing to Somaliland and Puntland from conflicts in Yemen, Ethiopia and further afield.

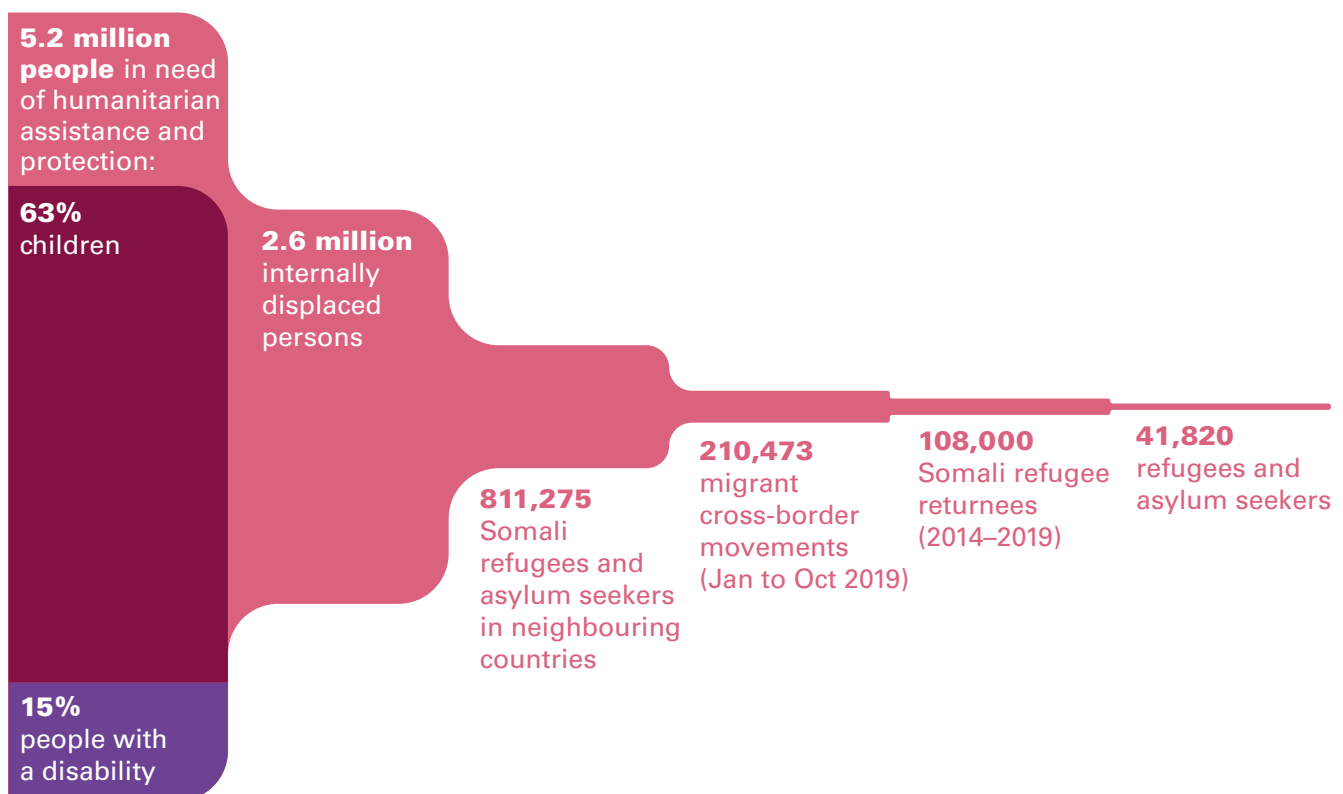
The largest group of migrants in Somalia consists of those who are displaced internally, estimated at

2.6 million.²¹ An estimated 1.7 million of these are at sites assessed by Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM).²² In Somaliland and Puntland, these people have most commonly been displaced by drought. A smaller number have been displaced by violence – either conflict with al-Shabaab or a territorial dispute between Somaliland and Puntland.

There are also an estimated 41,820 refugees and asylum seekers in Somalia,²³ with 31,464 of them in Somaliland and Puntland. The majority of these (21,295) are Ethiopians,²⁴ who have been fleeing ethnic violence or political persecution for over a

Figure 1: Key figures about migration in Somalia*

Source: OCHA and UNHCR statistics.²⁰



*The research took place in 2019, prior to the Tigray crisis starting in November 2020, thus does not reflect current displacement figures.

20. Data from: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan 2020*, OCHA, Geneva, January 2020, <<https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-response-plan-2020>>, accessed 20 August 2020; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Somalia Situation, Population of Concern to UNHCR as of 30 September 2019', UNHCR, Geneva, 2019, <<https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-situation-population-concern-unhcr-30-september-2019>>, accessed 20 August 2020; International Organization for Migration, Displacement Tracking Matrix, 'Somalia — Border Point Flow Monitoring, January–October 2019', IOM, Geneva, 2019, <<https://dtm.iom.int/somalia?page=1>>, accessed 20 August 2020.
21. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan 2020*.
22. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'CCCM Somalia Overview', UNHCR, Geneva, undated, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/cccm_somalia>, accessed 20 March 2019.
23. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan 2020*.
24. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'CCCM Somalia Overview', UNHCR, Geneva, undated, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/cccm_somalia>, accessed 20 March 2019.

decade.²⁵ There are smaller numbers of Yemenis fleeing a civil war that began in 2015. Yemenis are granted *prima facie* refugee status and do not need to go through individual status determination.

There are also a substantial number of undocumented migrants in the region, predominantly from Ethiopia; these people come to Somalia and the self-declared state of Somaliland in search of work. Their numbers in Somaliland are difficult to assess, and estimates range from 20,000 to 90,000.²⁶

According to the IOM, Somalia is also a transit country: an estimated 210,473 border crossings were monitored in the first 10 months of 2019,²⁷ most involving Ethiopians and Somalis. Much of this transit is short term or seasonal; but some people are crossing borders on a more permanent basis, due to conflict or to seek other opportunities. At an estimate, 17 per cent of border crossings fell into this category in February 2020.²⁸ Others involve people, usually young people, seeking to move to Europe or the Gulf States for work – a pattern of migration referred to as *tahriib*.²⁹ This movement builds on long histories of migration embedded within Somali culture and its pastoralist tradition.³⁰

8

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25. Lidley, Anna, 'Seeking Refuge in an Unrecognized State: Oromos in Somaliland', *Refuge*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2009, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/eb26/ddaf1930125185fc50a68c70e2aea8abe9bd.pdf?_ga=2.1102193.1779008032.1614040743-1702157969.1604265953>, accessed 10 August 2020.
 26. United Nations Children's Fund, "No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate".
 27. International Organization for Migration, Displacement Tracking Matrix, 'Somalia — Border Point Flow Monitoring, January–October 2019', IOM, Geneva, 2019, <<https://dtm.iom.int/somalia?page=1>>, accessed 20 August 2020.
 28. International Organization for Migration, Displacement Tracking Matrix, 'Cross Border Movements: Somalia', IOM, Geneva, February 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/02_Somalia_FMP%20Dashboard_February_2020.pdf>, accessed 11 August 2020.
 29. United Nations Children's Fund, "No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate".
 30. See Lewis, Ioan, 'The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa', *Journal of African History*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1960, pp. 213–230, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/180241?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=somali+pastoralism+and+migration&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dsomali%2Bpastoralism%2Band%2Bmigration%26filter%3D&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_SYC-5187%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A5f718f3ba133da82f1b81a281b7c2f35&seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents>, accessed 10 August 2020.



A woman, displaced by drought, stands outside her temporary shelter near the town of Ainabo.



CHAPTER 2

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED AND HOW?

The mixed-methods research focused on the positive and negative experiences of migrant children and young people.

The research took place in Somaliland and Puntland, with migrant children and young people. Eligible respondents for the quantitative research were defined as those aged between 14 and 24 who had left their habitual residence to live somewhere else either permanently or temporarily, or who had previously left their habitual residence and returned within the past 12 months. The analysis distinguishes between children (aged 14–17) and young people (18–24). This allows comparisons to be drawn between age groups, and reflects the reality that many children transition to adulthood while on their journey or away from their home area.

The minimum age of 14 was set for the quantitative research to reflect both ethical considerations associated with interviewing younger children and the appropriateness of the survey tools. Children aged 10–14 were considered to be eligible for the qualitative research; in this case, the research was carried out by more experienced researchers and where interview maps could be more easily adapted to the demands of interviewing younger children. Ultimately, however, only three younger children were interviewed in the qualitative research.

Ten locations were selected for the research: Badhan, Berbera, Borama, Bossaso, Galdogob, Galkayo, Garowe, Hargeisa, Lowyaddo and Togwajale. The sites were chosen to reflect the diversity of migration in the country, and included various types of location, including camps, urban areas and borders.

Drawing on a desk review of the relevant literature, the research approach combined qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews were conducted by local teams of researchers from the University of Hargeisa and the Peace and Development Research Centre. These researchers were trained by the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti. A total of **418 quantitative interviews** were conducted with children and young people, using

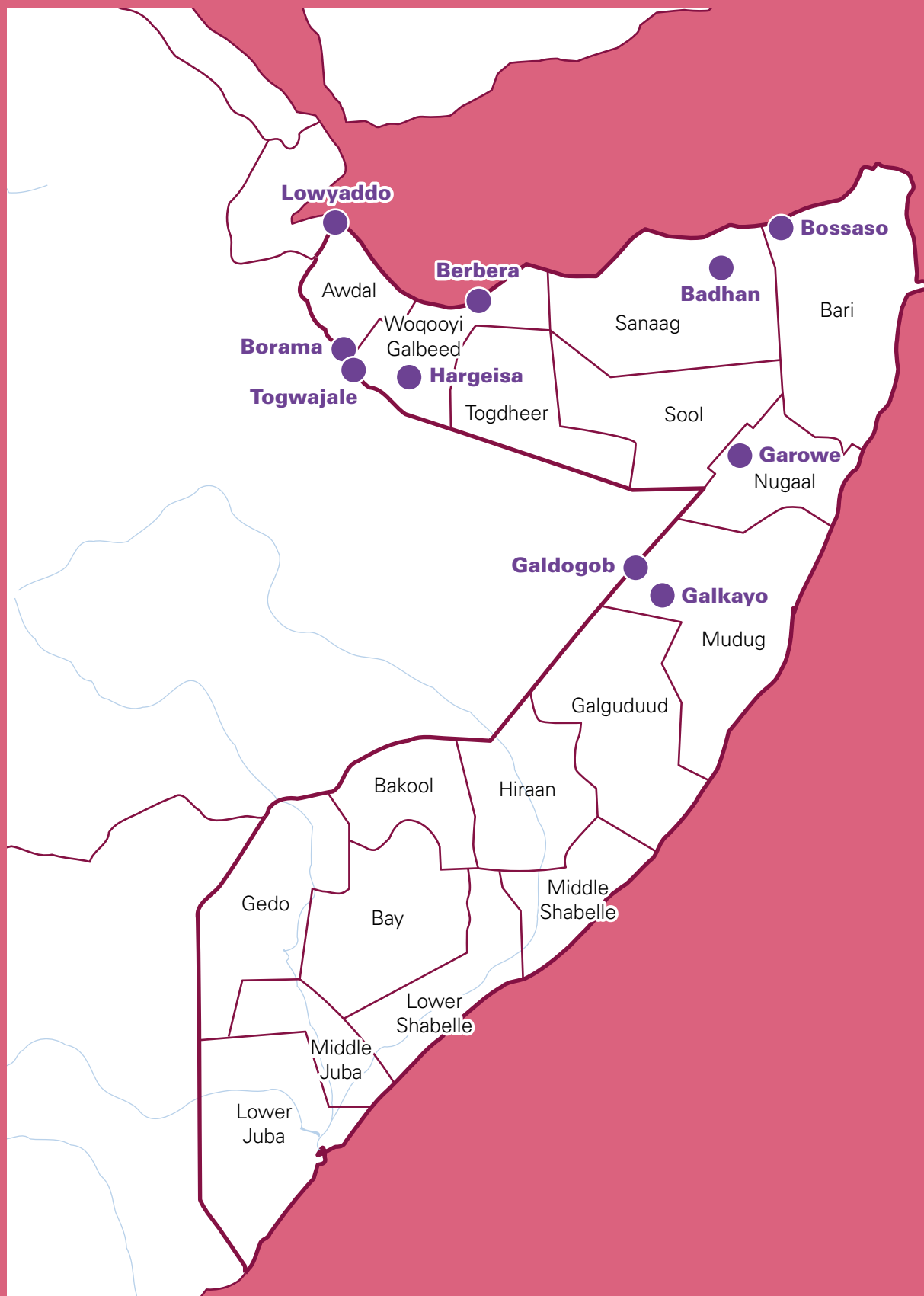
a standardized approach and a questionnaire developed by UNICEF Innocenti (a detailed breakdown of interviewees is presented below). The questionnaire was piloted and then tailored for use in the research, in order to gather objective and systematic data from respondents. The survey tool was designed to objectively capture the attitudes, experiences and knowledge of children and young people regarding a wide range of issues related to their movement, the risks they faced and their wider well-being and experiences. Efforts were made to ensure that the survey instrument was child friendly, by making sure the questions were clear and the overall length did not strain the attention span of the respondents.

The data from these interviews provide insights from children and young people themselves, and should therefore be a fundamental point of evidence to inform programmes, policy and advocacy. It is important to note that the researchers did not seek to externally verify any of the responses, or to map the existence of services or support that might or might not have been available in the different locations. That would have lain outside the methodological and ethical frameworks of the study, which focused on collecting the perspectives of children; however, it could prove a useful focus for future research. Interviews took an average of 45 minutes to administer. Qualitative interviews, which averaged about an hour, allowed for more in-depth discussion of particular issues.

The sample size was selected in order to provide robust quantitative data from across Somaliland and Puntland, and to allow disaggregation of the data by key indicators such as gender, age, nationality and reason for movement. Additional disaggregation of the combined data set is provided in a multi-country report.³¹ Respondents were selected through a variety of means, including with the help of local community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), through the networks of the implementing partners, snowballing, referrals and simply by approaching potential respondents in public places and locations known to have a high proportion of migrants.

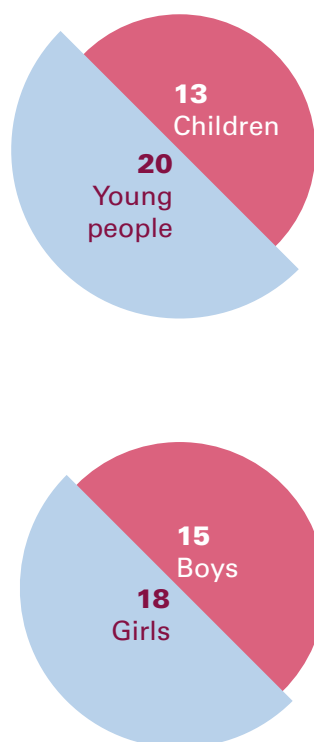
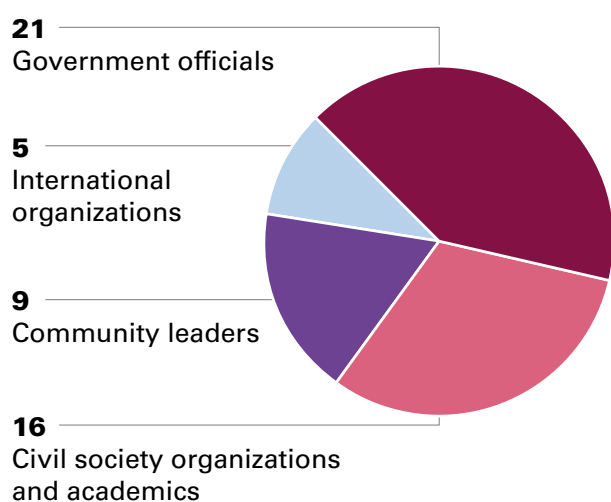
31. Hovil, Lucy, et al., *Reimagining Migration Responses: Learning from children and young people who move in the Horn of Africa*, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2021.

Map 1: Children on the Move research sites



Note: The designations employed in this publication and the presentation of the material do not imply on the part of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities or the delimitations of its frontiers.

The boundary and names shown on the designations used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Figure 2a: Qualitative interviews – children and young people**Figure 2b: Qualitative interviews – key informants**

A deliberate effort was made to include children and young people young people, with no access to any form of assistance, or to protection structures, either governmental or NGO support services, to ensure that information could be gathered on obstacles to access. The quantitative approach allowed for a measurement of the extent to which children and young people (the survey respondents) faced different types of risk, harm and negative experiences, as well as the prevalence of other indicators covered in the research.

The qualitative interviews were used to provide additional in-depth analysis of the experiences of a smaller number of children and young people, and to explore some more sensitive topics. In addition, a number of qualitative interviews were conducted with key informants who could contribute information about the experiences of migrant children and young people (including government officials with a role in child protection, NGOs providing services for children on the move, and the leaders of migrant communities), in order to gain further insights.

Topic guides were developed to aid the qualitative discussions, which were conducted by the research team. A total of 84 qualitative interviews were held: 33 with migrant children and young people (aged 10–24) and 51 with key informants, of whom 9 were community leaders (see Figures 2a and 2b).

The interviews included a cross-section of nationalities, ages and forms of movement (including internally displaced persons, refugees, other migrants and returnees), and took place between 6 April and 4 May 2019. Relevant research protocols addressing both ethics and protection were developed and used throughout the research process,³² in line with the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis³³ and UNICEF Innocenti's ethical guidelines.³⁴ These protocols were established to ensure that all participants gave informed consent/assent and that the principles of ethical research were adhered to.

32. The ethical considerations for this research meant that some sensitive topics, such as personal experience of female genital mutilation or child marriage, were not covered in the quantitative research.

33. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis', UNICEF, New York, 2015, <<https://www.unicef.org/media/54796/file>>, accessed 5 January 2021.

34. Graham, Anne, et al., *Ethical Research Involving Children*, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2013, <<https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/eric-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf>>, accessed 10 August 2020.

Ethical clearance was obtained from Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board.

Figure 3 shows the profile of the children and young people interviewed in the quantitative research.

Of the 418 interviewed, 59 per cent were boys and young men and 41 per cent were girls and young women. Of the respondents, 4 in 10 (40 per cent) were aged 14–17, while the remainder were aged 18–24 (60 per cent). Of the children interviewed in the research, 23 per cent said that they were not with an adult who was responsible for their care.

Although efforts were made to ensure a balanced sample, it was found that children and girls and young women stayed closer to home and were less visible in the labour migration context (where their youth is considered to make them less employable).

In addition, many girls and young women were reported to be employed in domestic settings, where they are more difficult to locate. There were some differences in the profiles of girls and young women and boys and young men. A higher percentage of girls and young women than boys and young men had children of their own (36 per cent vs. 11 per cent). This may be a reflection of social patterns, where girls and young women are pressured to marry earlier and are paired with older men. Girls and young women were also generally less well educated than boys and young men: 31 per cent of girls and young women vs. 12 per cent of boys and young men had no education, and more boys and young men than girls and young women had at least primary (50 per cent vs. 38 per cent) or secondary (27 per cent vs. 15 per cent) education.

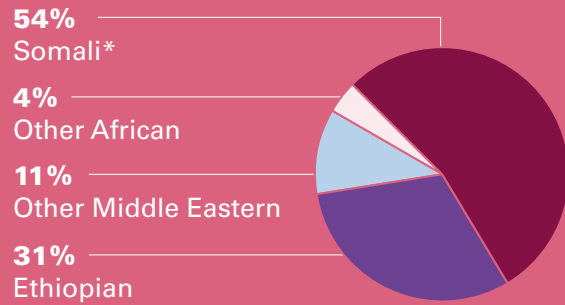


A young girl in an IDP camp learns how to draw.

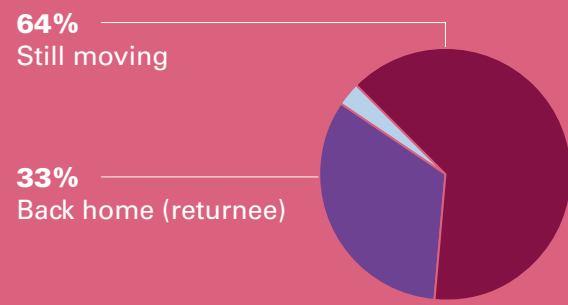
Figure 3: Profile of respondents

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

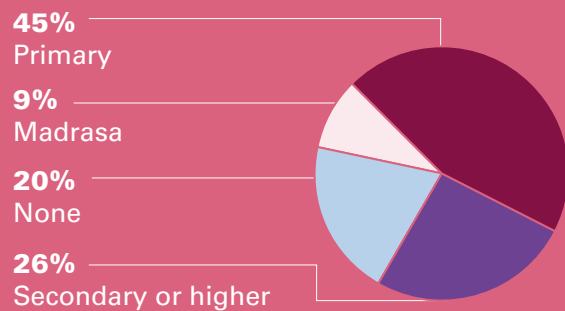
Nationality



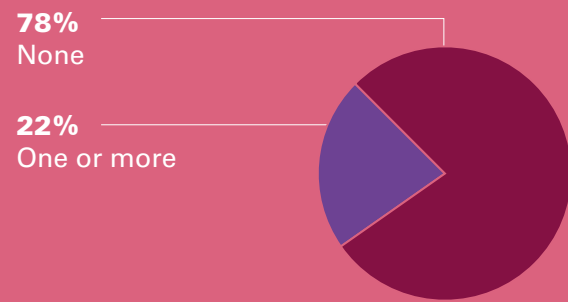
Status



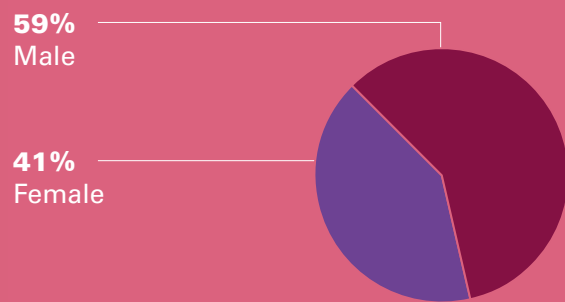
Educational achievement



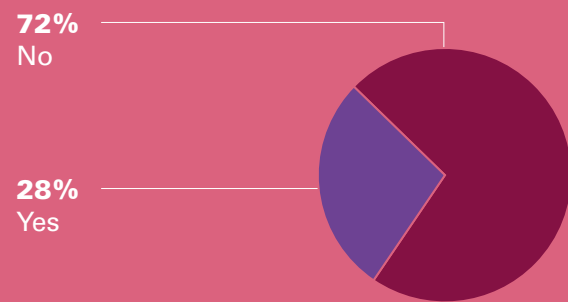
Have own children



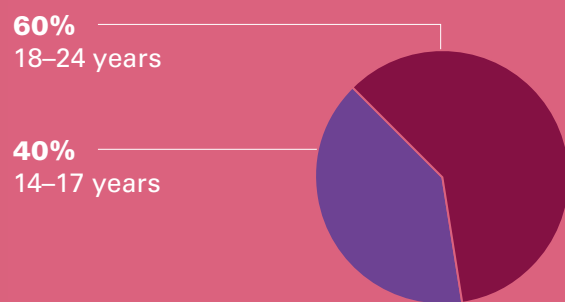
Gender



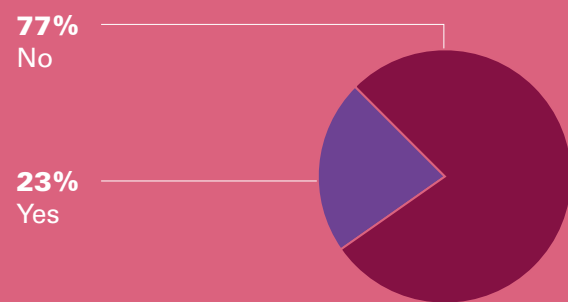
Currently living by themselves



Age



Report not having an adult guardian**



*This includes those who describe their nationality as Somali/Puntlander/Somalilander. It may also include ethnic Somalis from Ethiopia who had recently arrived and described themselves in this way.
 **This is based on those aged 14–17 years and self-identification of whether or not an adult was responsible for their care (N=169).

CHAPTER 3

16

WHY DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE MOVE?

The research asked a series of questions aimed at understanding why children and young people move, who they move with, and what support they receive in their decision making. Although not all movement is negative, addressing the underlying causes of large-scale movements motivated by conflict and destitution is part of the UNICEF Agenda for Action on uprooted children. Creating a more comprehensive understanding of the decision making of children and young people offers insight into how to support those who want to stay and how to provide better options for those who decide to move. It also provides an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the interrelationship between different motivations for movement.

“There was nothing good about life here so I decided to go outside.”

– Interview with Somali male returnee, aged 20, Borama, April 2019

Most children and young people move for multiple reasons

Children and young people weigh up a complex set of factors in reaching the decision to move. While it is important to recognize the holistic nature of this decision-making process, we explored it by investigating several recurrent drivers that were particularly influential in this decision. In order to fully understand the complexities of the reasons for moving, two questions were posed.

First, respondents were asked to give the interviewer the single most important reason they had for leaving their home area. Second, the interviewer read out 15 possible reasons for why people move, and asked the respondents if any had influenced their own decision. This provided for a ‘prompted recall’ of motivations, where the respondent could select as many (or as few) reasons as applicable.

The findings point to the complexity and intertwined nature of drivers of movement. Most respondents had several reasons for moving.³⁵ Many pointed to economic hardship/lack of jobs/poverty (listed by 47 per cent as the single most important reason, and 75 per cent as a reason).

The next single most common reason for leaving was insecurity/war/violence, which was offered as the most important reason by one respondent in four (26 per cent). The desire for better educational opportunities was also an important factor, being listed by 53 per cent as one of the reasons for leaving (and by 9 per cent as the main reason). This finding reflects the challenging economic conditions faced by many in the region, as well as the reality of ongoing violence and concern about opportunities for self-improvement.

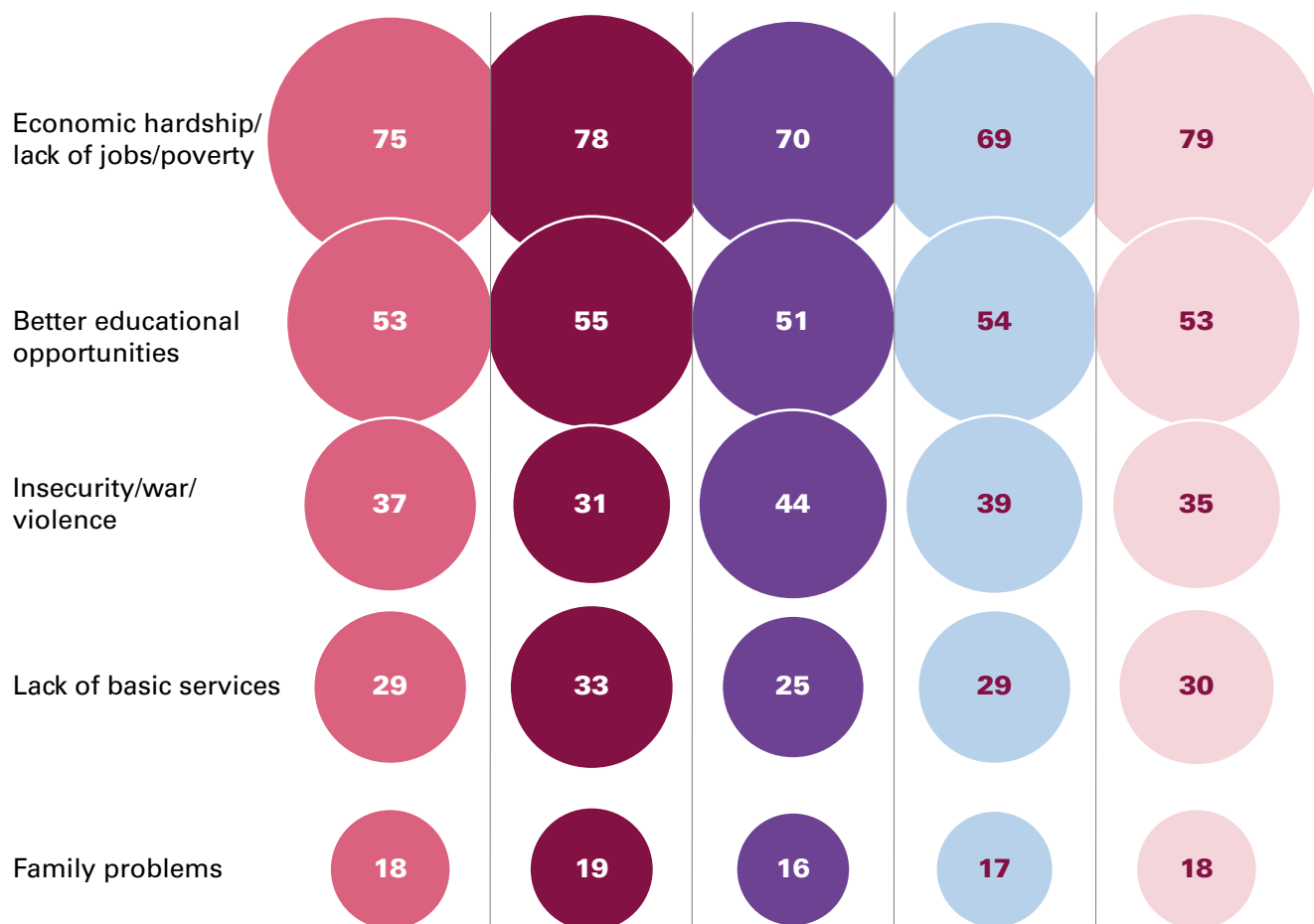
35. Respondents were first asked to give the one main reason why they left their home area. They were then asked if there were any other reasons for their movement, ‘prompted’ by the interviewer, who read out a list of 15 options. The respondents could select as many (or as few) other issues as were relevant. This is a common technique in quantitative research, where respondents are first asked their ‘unprompted’ reason for an action, and are then prompted with a list of other possible reasons (‘prompted recall’). This helps in understanding both the saliency of individual factors and the relationship between them.

Figure 4: Combined reasons for moving

Base: 467 migrant children and young people, November–December 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

Top five reasons for moving from home area (combined single/other reasons)

● Overall (%) ● Male (%) ● Female (%) ● Child (14–17, %) ● Young person (18–24, %)



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At the same time, the findings point to the fact that many move for a **combination of reasons**; this reflects the extent to which challenges of insecurity and lack of economic opportunities often operate alongside one another. The top five reasons for moving are shown in Figure 4.

Girls and young women were more likely than boys and young men to cite insecurity as their primary reason for moving (44 per cent vs. 31 per cent). Meanwhile, boys and young men were slightly more likely to cite economics (78 per cent vs. 70 per cent) or education (55 per cent vs. 51 per cent) as a reason for moving.

Children were less likely than young people to cite economic reasons for moving (69 per cent vs. 79 per cent). This is likely a reflection of the greater pressure on those over 18 and on males to provide economically, as well as cultural norms which encourage women and children to stay at home for their own protection.

It is worth noting that although lack of economic and educational opportunities are the most important reasons for moving, the percentages of **children** who reported that they had been working (22 per cent) and studying (47 per cent) before they left are roughly the same as in the

population as a whole.³⁶ This suggests that it is not just the availability of educational and economic opportunities that is important, but also their *quality*.

These findings underscore the fact that the line between forced and voluntary migration is particularly difficult to discern.

While economic drivers might have been the stated reason for deciding to move, economic challenges are often driven by structural factors that relate to broader issues of insecurity. This creates an overlap between different drivers, and presents a significant challenge for frameworks for assistance that are overly reliant on these categories.

Taking the decision to move

The vast majority (91 per cent) said that it had been their decision to leave home, as opposed to having been forced to leave (8 per cent). This was broadly similar across the genders and age groups.

However, the involvement of families in the decision was more complex. Children and young people were asked whether they had had the support of their parents and/or siblings to move, and who had helped them plan their trip. Almost half of those interviewed said that their parents had not known of their decision to leave (48 per cent). Nearly all the other respondents had moved with the support of their parents (47 per cent). The qualitative interviews indicated that those who had not told their parents took this decision because they thought their parents would object and try to stop them.

It would appear that parental support correlates with the type of migration undertaken. Of those who moved primarily for economic reasons, 27 per cent had parental support, while 66 per cent had left without telling their parents; of those who primarily moved due to insecurity, 87 per cent had parental support and only 12 per cent had left without telling their parents. This indicates that those who said they had moved primarily for economic reasons were significantly more likely to travel unaccompanied by their families, and were also more likely to evade officials or official structures (including child protection services) for fear that their parents would be contacted. Of those who identified as returnees, only 28 per cent had had parental support to move, while 65 per cent said that their parents had not known.

These findings dovetail with other research on the patterns of irregular migration to Europe and the Middle East – or ‘going on *tahriib*’ – which indicates that children and young people who engage in this type of movement most commonly do not tell their parents. The high incidence of not telling their parents among returnees and those who travel for economic reasons reinforces this association. However, those engaged in other types of movement are likely to have had the support of their families. For example, a young Yemeni man described how some parents encourage their children to leave for their own protection:

“Sometimes the parents compel us to leave, for fear that we will be conscripted into the armed fighting.”

– Interview with Yemeni male, aged 24, Bossaso, May 2019

36. Some 51 per cent of children in Somaliland and 42 per cent in Puntland are estimated to be in school, while 23 per cent are estimated to be employed. United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Somaliland, Education Cannot Wait and UNICEF launch multi-year programme to provide education to more than 54,000 children affected by crises’, Press release, UNICEF, 13 July 2019, <<https://www.unicef.org/esa/press-releases/somaliland-education-cannot-wait-and-unicef-launch-multi-year-programme>>, accessed 24 February 2020; Puntland Ministry of Education and Higher Education, ‘Global Partnership for Education Programme Document 2017–2020’, April 2017, <<https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/puntla1.pdf>>, accessed 24 February 2020; International Labour Organization, Labour Force Survey Somaliland, Report on Borama, Hargeisa and Burao, 2012, <<http://slmof.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Labor-Force-Survey-Somaliland.pdf>>, accessed 26 February 2020.

CHAPTER 4

20

WHAT RISKS DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FACE IN TRANSIT?

Journeys, whether crossing land or water, through regular or irregular method of transport, can be fraught with danger. Children and young people on the road can face violence from security forces trying to control their movement, or from traffickers³⁷ or smugglers. Trafficking involves recruiting or moving people for the purposes of exploitation, whereas smuggling is defined as helping migrants to cross borders illegally in exchange for payment.³⁸ Smuggling and trafficking within and from the Horn of Africa have become highly sophisticated, lucrative and responsive to changes in the policy context,³⁹ and can lead to considerable harm during journeys. Children and young people may also be subject to other types of exploitation, because they are viewed as vulnerable and unable to turn to the authorities for protection, especially if their presence in a country is not considered legal.

Therefore, the respondents were asked about the harm they had suffered and the negative experiences they had faced between leaving their home area and reaching their current location (i.e., specifically during the ‘movement’ part of their journey).

“The first smugglers were very nice to us, but at the border with Puntland they handed us over to another group of smugglers and everything changed. They took us to Bossaso and held us in a house, guarding us until our parents paid.”

– Interview with Somali female returnee, aged 19, Hargeisa, April 2019

Most travelled with other people, but one in five travelled alone

Children and young people who travel with people they know, particularly family members, are likely to have a stronger protective environment than those who either choose, or are forced, to travel alone. In this research, of the respondents around one in five (22 per cent) said they had travelled alone for most or all of their journey; the remainder had mostly travelled with other people. This latter group was more likely to have travelled with friends (54 per cent) than with any other type of person, including family (41 per cent), community members (33 per cent) or people they did not know (31 per cent). Those travelling with their families or members of their home communities were less likely to experience physical harm than those travelling alone or with friends or people they did not know. This reinforces the need to focus resources on protection for separated or unaccompanied minors, which is already a UNICEF priority. However, a substantial minority of migrant children and young people move with their families, meaning any programmes that target migrant children as a whole will need to engage with families as a protective structure.

The majority of respondents had to pay to move

Most of the respondents (57 per cent) paid somebody else for their journey. Half paid this themselves and the remainder used mostly a mixture of family (38 per cent) and friends (17 per cent) to finance their journey. Only 1 per cent admitted to borrowing to pay for the journey, and a small proportion said they had been financially supported by community members (8 per cent).

37. Traffickers are also known in the Somali language as *magafe*, which literally means ‘you cannot escape’.

38. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, ‘Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling’, UNODC, New York, undated, <<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/secondary/human-trafficking-and-migrant-smuggling.html>>, accessed 27 December 2020. The Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime defines trafficking as “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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs; ... (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered ‘trafficking in persons’ even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.”

39. Hovil, Lucy, and Lutz Oette, ‘Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea: The need for an empirically grounded EU policy on mixed migration in the Horn of Africa’, International Refugee Rights Initiative, School of Oriental and African Studies, and Strategic Initiative in the Horn of Africa, 2017, <<https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/26362/1/IRRI%20Report%20final%20Nov%202017.pdf>>, accessed 10 August 2020.

Children and young people who used smugglers described the experience in negative terms

Some 14 per cent of the children and young people interviewed reported using a smuggler to help them *plan* their journey. This figure may not accurately represent the number who used (or tried to use) a smuggler, as the question referred to *planning*; it is therefore possible that those who used a smuggler later might not be included. In other cases, adults might have engaged smugglers on behalf of the children or young people, who may simply have been unaware of the fact. Finally, smugglers may be family or community members, and may well have been referred to as such by the children and young people, rather than as smugglers.⁴⁰ Moreover, even if the number who used smugglers was small, some very serious abuses were reported in the qualitative research (described below). However, in general the findings do show clearly that many people do not engage smugglers.

22

The sample size is too small to draw robust conclusions on the detailed experience of using smugglers, but the research suggests that virtually all the smugglers were men, and most respondents described them as “bad people,”⁴¹ who had either threatened to or actually did hurt them. This indicates that those who use smugglers or brokers are particularly vulnerable.

The qualitative research confirmed high levels of abuse associated with smugglers. One returnee described how.

“Sometimes [the smugglers] came to rape the girls but they would beat you or shoot you if you tried to stop them.”

– Interview with Somali male returnee, aged 20, Borama, April 2019

There was also frequent mention of the risk of trafficking during the journey – either smugglers selling migrants to traffickers or children/young people being deliberately trafficked for purposes of labour. There were some accounts of torture at the hands of traffickers, who typically hold young people for ransom.

While this type of torture and ransom has been well documented in Libya and Sudan, there were also accounts of it taking place within Somaliland and Puntland, albeit with lower ransom demands. One young Somali woman described being held by traffickers in Bossaso:

“They asked our families for money and when they didn’t pay, they tortured us.”

– Interview with Somali female returnee, aged 19, Hargeisa, April 2019

Her parents eventually paid US\$300 for her release.

The findings point to the fact that increased border controls without concomitant protection mechanisms have only made journeys more expensive, more dangerous and more exploitative.⁴²

Just under half faced some form of harm or negative experiences in transit

The respondents were asked if they had faced any of 11 types of harm or negative experiences on their journey (i.e., after they had left their home area, but before they reached their current location). Just under half of all the children and young people surveyed said that they had faced at least one type of harm or negative experience *on the journey*.⁴³ The findings are reported in Figure 5.

40. Save the Children and the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, *Young and on the Move: Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa*, 2016, <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/10080/pdf/young_and_on_the_move_sep_2016.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2020.

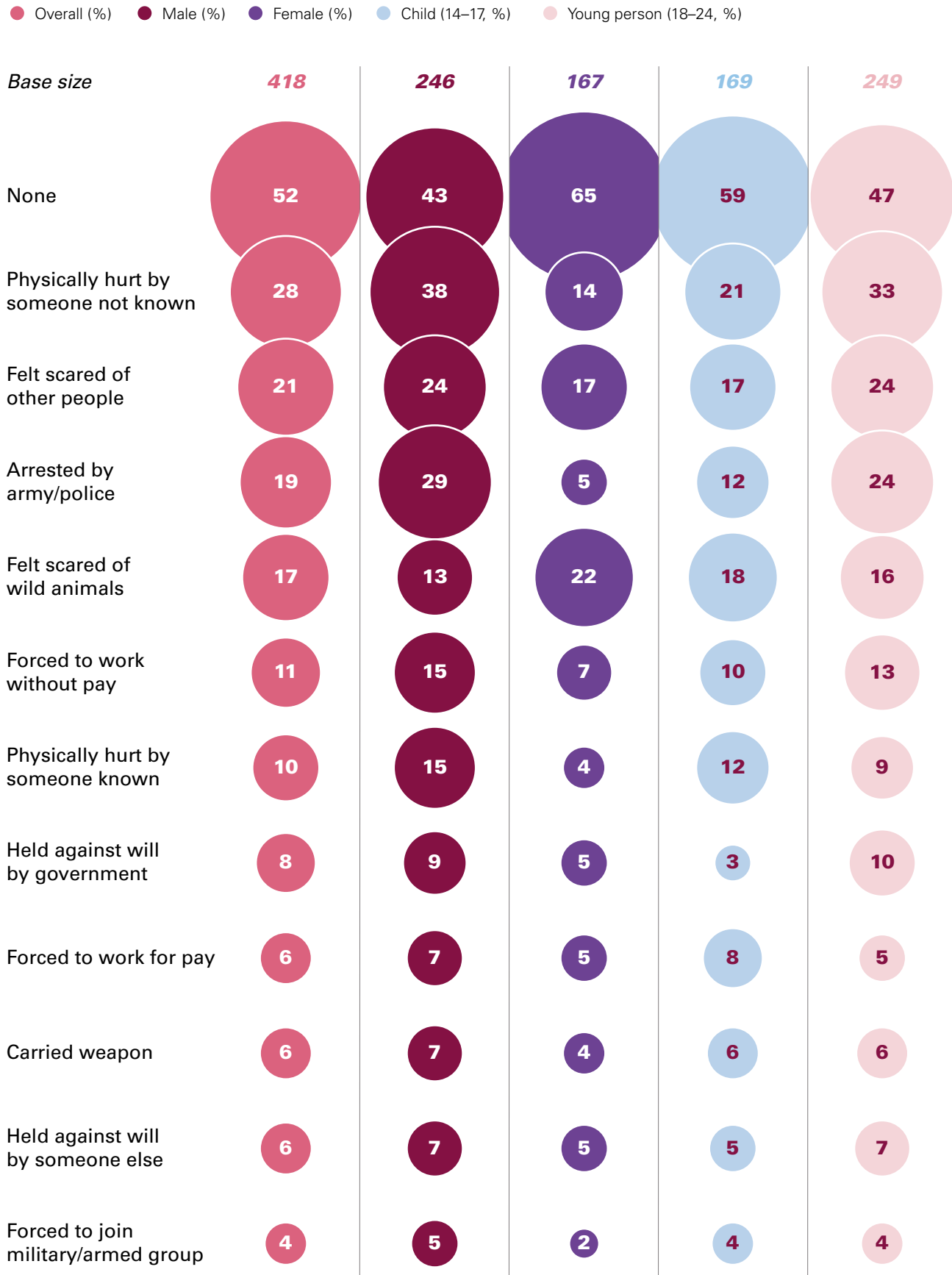
41. Respondents were asked, “Would you describe this person as a good person or a bad person?”

42. Hovil, Lucy, and Lutz Oette, ‘Tackling the root causes of human trafficking and smuggling from Eritrea’.

43. The respondents were asked about their exposure to the same harms and negative experiences in their home area and where they were living at the time of the survey. This is covered in chapter 5.

Figure 5: Incidence of harm or negative experiences in transit

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.



Boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to have **faced harm** or to have had a negative experience: 65 per cent of girls and young women experienced none, compared with 43 per cent of boys and young men. Boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to have been physically hurt by someone that they knew (15 per cent vs. 4 per cent), as well as by someone they did not know (38 per cent vs. 14 per cent); they were also 24 percentage points more likely to have been arrested by the army or police. This indicates that boys and young men are more vulnerable to certain types of harm than are girls and young women. This could be related to the fact that they are more likely to be moving for economic reasons, which may push them to move farther and without parental support, thus increasing the risk. It is worth noting, however, that because the survey did not ask about sexual violence or exploitation, certain particularly gendered types of harm cannot be analysed.

In the qualitative research, specific harm was described in detail, including beatings, sexual abuse, difficult travel conditions and being held for ransom. Although these elements paint a concerning picture, we cannot assess the frequency with which they occur. This limits the picture of harm that we can analyse.

Most had a negative experience of crossing borders

In all, 7 in 10 children and young people recalled crossing a border as part of their journey: 72 per cent recalled crossing a border (although a high number (44) did not answer this question). This may also include a number who crossed borders within Somaliland and Puntland. They were then asked more detailed questions about the last border they had crossed.

Typically, this border was described as an official border (76 per cent); their experiences were generally negative. Only just over half felt that the last border they had crossed was safe (38 per cent felt that the last border they had crossed was not safe); 57 per cent described it as a lonely place; and 59 per cent as a place where the authorities did not care about their needs (see Figure 6). This highlights the need to develop greater child protection capacity, services and support in border areas.

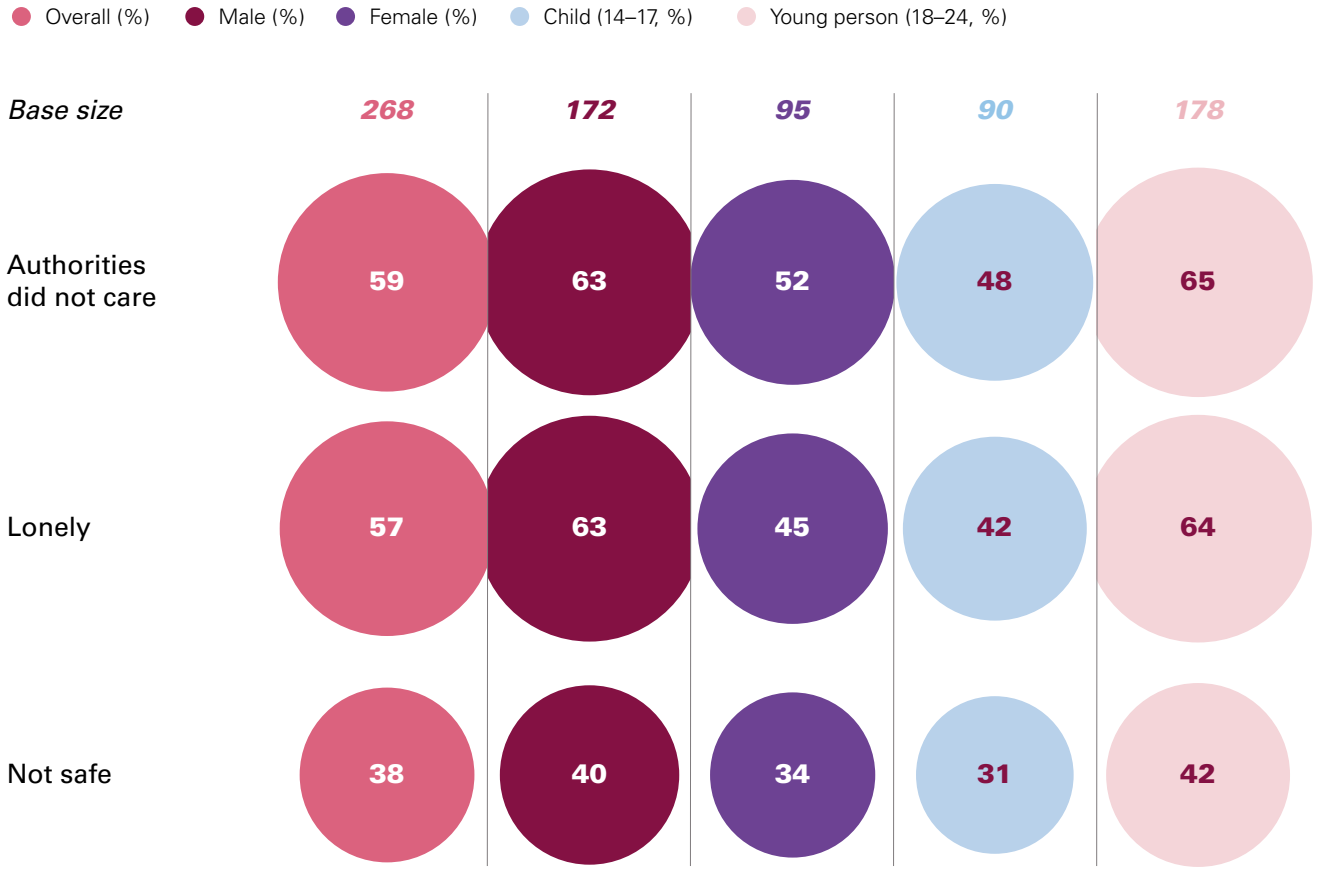
Significant numbers had been detained or deported

A significant proportion of those interviewed also said that they had been detained at a border during their journey (33 per cent) or had been deported from a country by the authorities while on their journey (22 per cent). Some of those who had been detained or deported reported significant mistreatment during the process, including being beaten and threatened by the authorities. Boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to have been detained (38 per cent vs. 26 per cent) or deported (26 per cent vs. 16 per cent), but this may be related to the fact that more boys and young men than girls and young women had crossed a border.

Some children may be detained out of a perceived need to act to protect and return them, but this can still cause substantial trauma. The prevalence of detention and, in particular, the fact that children are at risk of detention is concerning and shows that much more needs to be done to ensure that the commitment to preventing children from being detained for reasons relating to their migration – which is part of the UNICEF Agenda for Action for uprooted children – is translated into action.

Figure 6: Crossing borders

268 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.



CHAPTER 5

26

**THEIR LIFE NOW:
HOW SAFE DO
MIGRANT CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE
FEEL?**

Children and young people were asked how safe they felt where they were living at the time they were interviewed. They were also asked about their experience of, and exposure to, different forms of abuse and harm. Understanding the risk of harm is crucial to preventing violence, abuse and exploitation, which is a core part of the UNICEF Agenda for Action for uprooted children.

Some of those interviewed had lived in their current location for a significant length of time (75 per cent had been there for six months or more), while others had arrived more recently. Wider indicators of vulnerability and poverty were also measured, in order to gain a broader understanding of their well-being and their protective environment.

“I got up to defend my family and he shot me in the leg and chained me to a pole. He then raped my wife in front of my eyes, and hit her repeatedly in the head. I lost a lot of blood and fell unconscious for a while.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 17, Bossaso, May 2019

More reported feeling safer and happier now than before they began to move, but insecurity is a continuing problem

The children and young people interviewed were asked whether they felt happy or sad with their lives, both in their current location and previously, in their home areas. This is a simple question that young people find easy to answer, and is a commonly utilized mechanism in social science research, while self-assessment has been shown to correlate with other measures of well-being.⁴⁴ Just over half said that they felt happy with their current lives (56 per cent), compared with 29 per cent who said they felt sad. More were positive now than they had been back home: 48 per cent had been happy and 38 per cent had been sad before they began their journey. More boys and young men than girls and young women described themselves as sad (35 per cent

vs. 19 per cent), and more Ethiopians than Somalis were sad (42 per cent vs. 18 per cent).

In terms of perceptions of safety, four in five (81 per cent) of those questioned felt safe during the daytime, and a slightly smaller proportion reported feeling safe where they slept at night (72 per cent). As with feelings of happiness, children and young people were more positive about where they were now, compared with their home area (only 55 per cent had felt safe at night before they began their journey).

Those who feel unsafe do not turn to officials or the authorities for help

Those children and young people who felt unsafe where they were now were asked what they did to protect themselves. Their main coping mechanism was to “do nothing” (47 per cent said this), followed by “try to stay awake” (21 per cent). Around 1 in 12 (8 per cent) claimed to “carry a weapon” (like a stick or knife); but none said that they had gone to “the police or other authorities” for help. This may be related to the relatively low levels of confidence in the police and other authorities (see further discussion below).

Incidents of harm and negative experiences seem to be higher now than back home

The respondents were asked about their exposure to 11 different types of harm and negative experiences, both back home (before they began their journey) and now (where they were living at the time of the survey). The results are shown in Figure 7.

As with the findings related to harm and negative experiences in transit, boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to have been physically hurt, both by someone that they knew and by someone that they did not know. They were also significantly more likely to have been arrested by the army or police. Those who

44. Ortiz Ospina, Esteban, and Max Roser, ‘Happiness and Life Satisfaction’, OurWorldInData, <<https://ourworldindata.org/happiness-and-life-satisfaction>>, 2013, revised 2017, accessed 12 March 2021.

were hurt by people whom they did not know were also much more likely to be young people than children. As with the findings for harm in transit, this indicates that boys and young men are more vulnerable to certain types of harm than are girls and young women.⁴⁵

Overall, the numbers of children and young people who had suffered harm and negative experiences were similar at home and where they currently lived (see Figure 8). However, for several types of harm, a higher proportion reported being more exposed now than they had been at home. This is particularly true for “felt scared of other people” (9 percentage points higher), “felt scared of wild animals” (10 percentage points higher) and “forced to work without pay” (7 percentage points higher). The contrast between these more negative experiences and the respondents’ perceptions of greater safety and happiness now suggests that they took account of a wider set of factors in assessing risk. This may be because the nature of the threats was more significant back home (which would particularly be the case for those who moved due to insecurity); or it could be because the act of moving is, in itself, a coping mechanism, and therefore creates the hope among children and young people that they are able to improve their lives by going on a journey. It is also possible that psychological processes may play a role: people tend to place greater weight on the end of an experience than on the middle, and so a negative experience at the end of their time at home might be remembered more vividly than day-to-day experiences in transit or in new surroundings.

A significant minority were still on their own

To gain a better understanding of the protective environment that children and young people have, further questions were asked about their social connections, since isolation and loneliness can be linked to vulnerability.

The majority were currently living with other people – mainly either one or both of their parents (52 per cent) and/or other adults (20 per cent). These children and young people were likely to have access to greater support than the almost 3 in 10 (28 per cent) who were living on their own at the time of the interview. Of those aged 14–17, 14 per cent were living alone. A number of children and young people also expressed other signs of isolation. A small proportion (15 per cent) said that they did not have any friends that they spent time with. The remainder claimed to have either a lot of friends (49 per cent) or a few friends (35 per cent). Those who reported having no friends appeared to show other vulnerabilities. Those who were living alone were less likely than the whole sampled population to feel safe (68 per cent of those living alone vs. 81 per cent of the overall sample).

Many have no documentation

Access to documentation is widely seen as having a protective function – not least if it proves eligibility to access particular services. In order to understand the implications of access to documentation in the context of movement, the research asked about the types of documentation that children and young people had. Ensuring that migrant children and young people have access to documentation is crucial to avoid statelessness and to support the UNICEF core agenda of facilitating family unity and access to status.

Half (48 per cent) of those interviewed reported having no documentation. Of those who did have some, a birth certificate was the most common type of documentation, but even then, only one in five (18 per cent) had one. Twice as many Somalis (17 per cent) as Ethiopians (8 per cent) had a birth certificate. It is worth noting that although these numbers are relatively low, they are actually higher than the estimated average rate of birth registration for children under the age of 5 in the relevant countries (3 per cent in both).⁴⁶

45. It is important to highlight that exploited/trafficked girls might be overlooked in this study as they are often ‘invisible’ within houses or hotels, working or being exploited as domestic workers.

46. United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Birth Registration’, UNICEF, New York, December 2019, <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/birth-registration/>>, accessed 4 March 2020.

Figure 7: Incidence of harm or negative experiences in current location

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

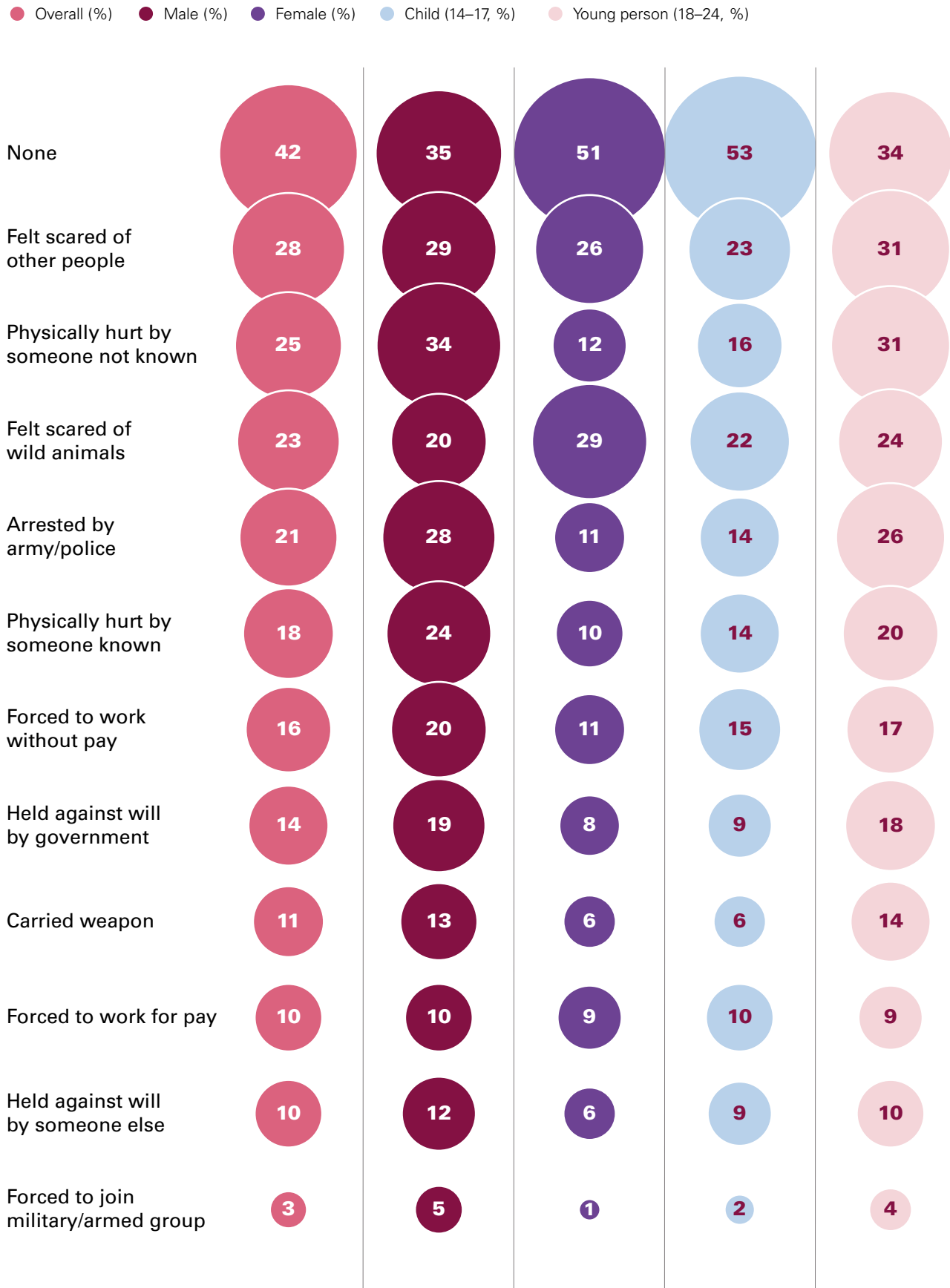
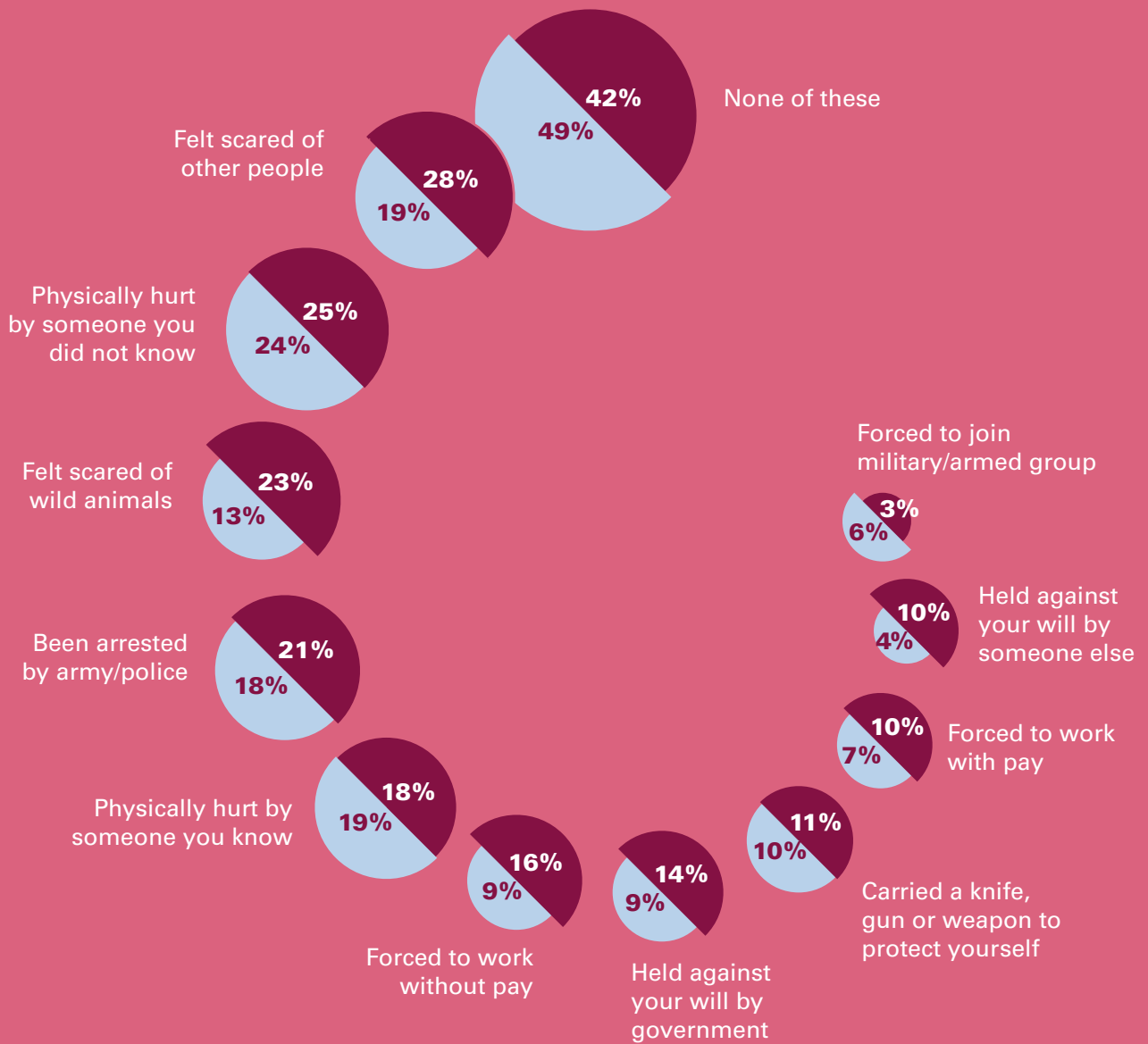


Figure 8: Incidence of harm and negative experiences (now vs. home area)

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

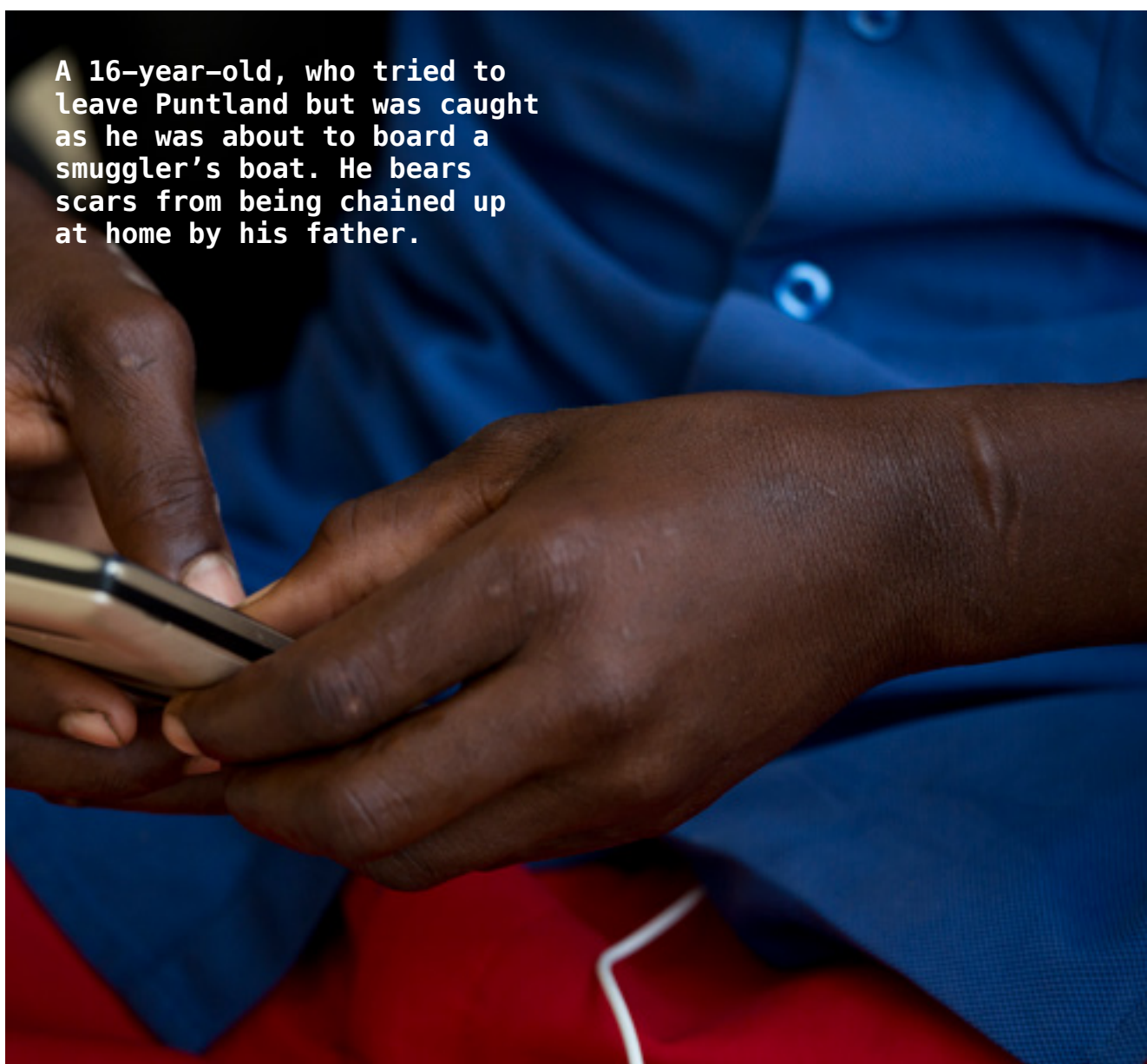
Q) Since you have been staying here/in your home area, have you experienced any of these?

● % while living here ● % in home area



This could be because more people are able to undertake late registration and so acquire documents later in life, or it could mean that migrants who cross into Somaliland and Puntland tend to come from backgrounds where they are more likely to be registered (e.g., wealthier and/or urban). Furthermore, it could be an indication that individuals seek out documentation proactively if they intend to migrate. Or finally, it could indicate that registration rates have improved considerably in recent years (the latest numbers are from 2016). Estimates of the registration rate in Eritrea are not available.⁴⁷

While documentation is important, in Somaliland and Puntland access to documentation is likely to be of limited utility if it is not accompanied by status that confers adequate rights. In the current context in Somaliland and Puntland, it is difficult to secure a status that offers durable permission to remain, other than refugee status. Although there is little enforcement action to identify and deport those who are staying without appropriate permission, lack of status can leave children and young people tense about the future. In this context, more needs to be done to ensure that those who wish to can access a durable status.



47. Although the sample sizes were too small to assess directly the impact of documentation in the country-specific data set, further analysis will be included in the regional report: Hovil, Lucy, et al., *Reimagining Migration Responses: Learning from children and young people who move in the Horn of Africa*, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2021.

CHAPTER 6

32

CAN MIGRANT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS SERVICES AND SUPPORT?

In order to assess the services that children and young people need, how accessible they are and where the gaps are, this chapter presents an overview of the services that children and young people perceive as being available, the systems intended to provide those services, the extent to which children and young people were using them, the barriers that prevented them from doing so, and any other types of support they felt they needed. Understanding these demands and gaps is crucial to delivering on the core UNICEF commitment to ensuring that migrant children can keep learning and can access protection, health and other services, as part of the Agenda for Action for uprooted children.

The survey asked whether the person had accessed a particular service – for example, a shelter – leaving it up to the respondent to decide whether to include formal or informal services, or both. In the qualitative interviews, however, most people appeared to interpret the service as including both formal and informal variants.

“We asked a friend in Bossaso if we could stay with her and she refused. We were scared to ask anyone else for help. If your friends won’t help you, then why would anyone else?”

– Interview with Somali female returnee, aged 19, Hargeisa, April 2019

In both Somaliland and Puntland, significant efforts are being made to ensure that children have access to services. However, these efforts are under-resourced and leave significant gaps.

There are significant gaps in access to key services

Many children and young people were not accessing key services. Although the majority of respondents had access to clean drinking water (69 per cent) and washing facilities, still a significant proportion (31 per cent) did not (see Figure 9). Even more did not have access to a mobile phone (59 per cent) or the internet (79 per cent).

Access to services was broadly similar across genders and age groups, although boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to lack access to washing facilities. Young people were more likely than children to have a mobile phone and children were more likely than young people to not have access to a mobile phone (77 per cent vs 47 per cent).

Apart from shelters, only a minority used all services

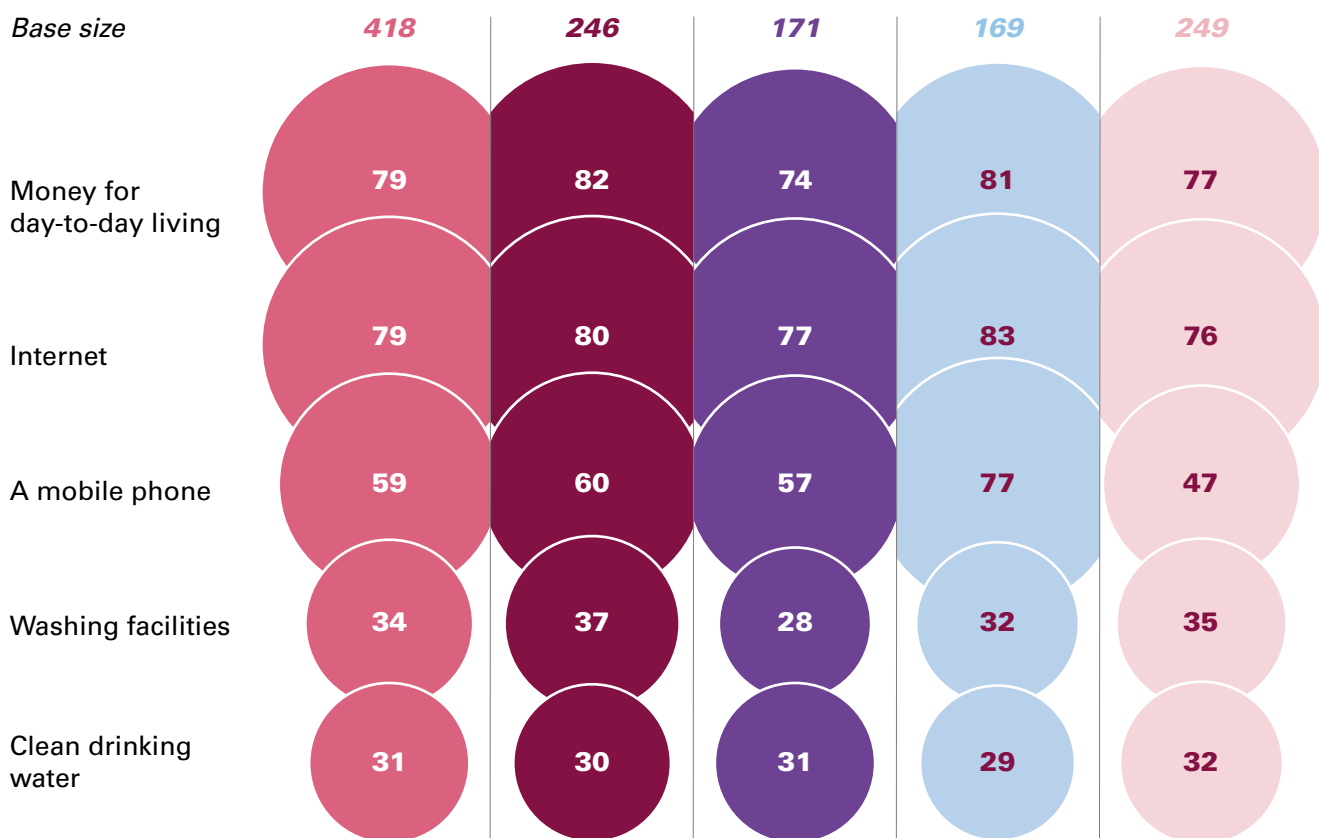
The service or support most used by children and young people was shelter or temporary accommodation (61 per cent). Only a minority had benefited from any of the other services or supports asked about during the research, as Figure 10 shows (the maroon semi-circles show the proportion of respondents who said they had used this service where they were currently living). Only 20 per cent of children and young people had been to a school since they had been living where they were now. Although access to education is a problem in Somaliland and Puntland, with only about half of all school-aged children in school, these figures indicate that access to education is a significantly greater challenge for migrant children than for children as a whole. The specific barriers are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 9: Access to key services

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

Percentage who **do not** have access to the service

● Overall (%) ● Male (%) ● Female (%) ● Child (14–17, %) ● Young person (18–24, %)



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There is substantial unmet demand for a range of support services

To gain a better understanding of where there are gaps in services for children, the respondents were asked to say whether they had wanted to use the service/support, but had been unable to do so (the blue semi-circles in Figure 10 show the proportion of respondents who selected this option for each of the services). Through this analysis, it is clear that, with the exception of an interpreter, at least two in three respondents had wanted to use each service (i.e., had either used it or had wanted to use it but had been unable to do so). The four services and support mechanisms with the highest levels of demand were shelter/temporary accommodation (92 per cent),

health centre/hospital (85 per cent), school (81 per cent) and social workers (79 per cent).

Of the children and young people surveyed, 3 in 10 (31 per cent) had wanted to but been unable to access a shelter, while the figure was double that for the other three services listed – 58 per cent for health centres, 61 per cent for schools and 66 per cent for social workers. There was substantial unmet demand for legal assistance, with 64 per cent saying that they had wanted it, but had been unable to get it (as opposed to only 9 per cent who had been able to access it).

Girls and young women appear to have had better access than boys and young men to shelter and legal assistance.

Figure 10: Demand for services and support

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

● % who have used this service or received this support ● % who wanted to use this service/support, but were unable to

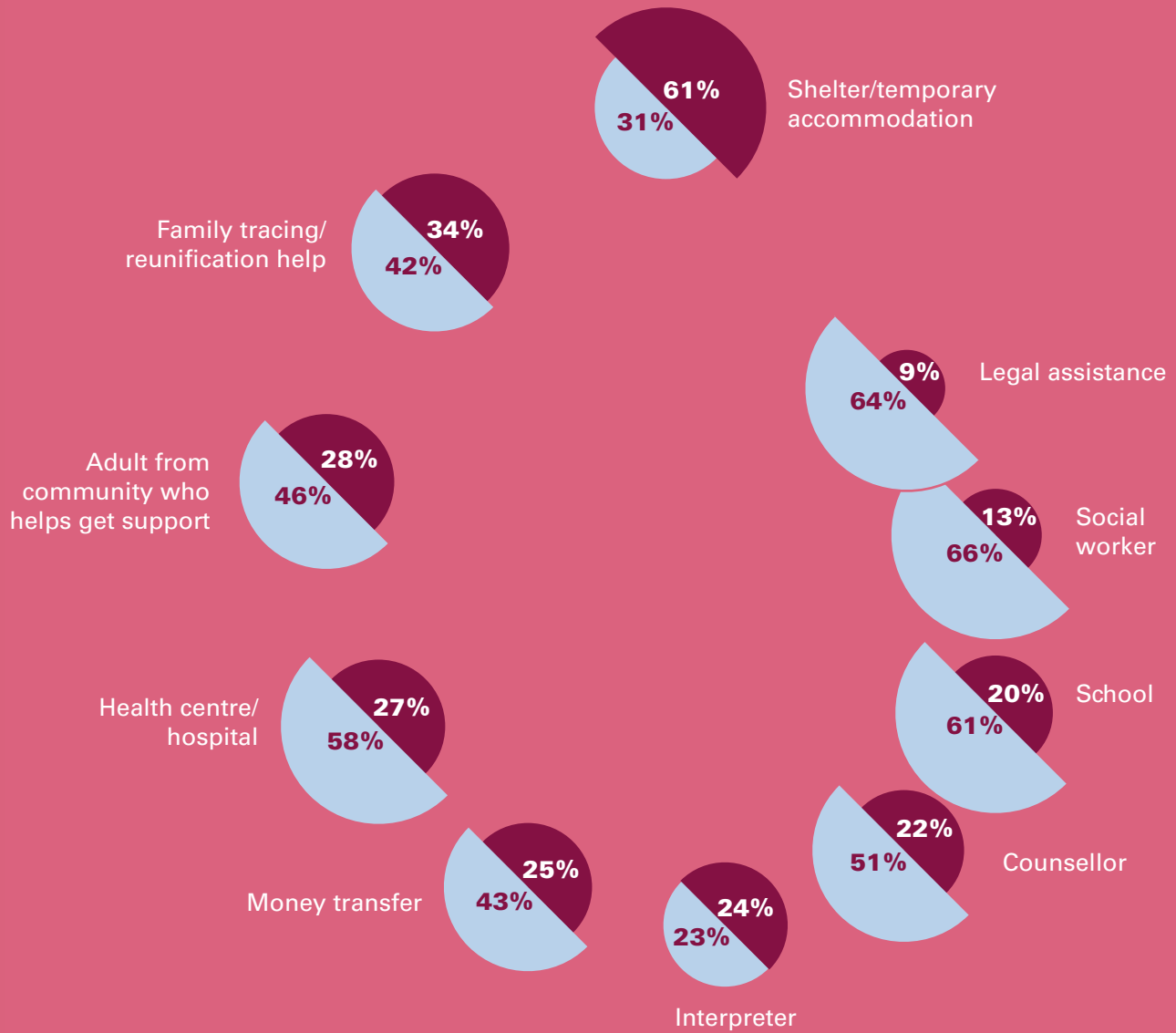


Figure 11: Those unable to access services

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

● Overall (%) ● Male (%) ● Female (%) ● Child (14–17, %) ● Young person (18–24, %)

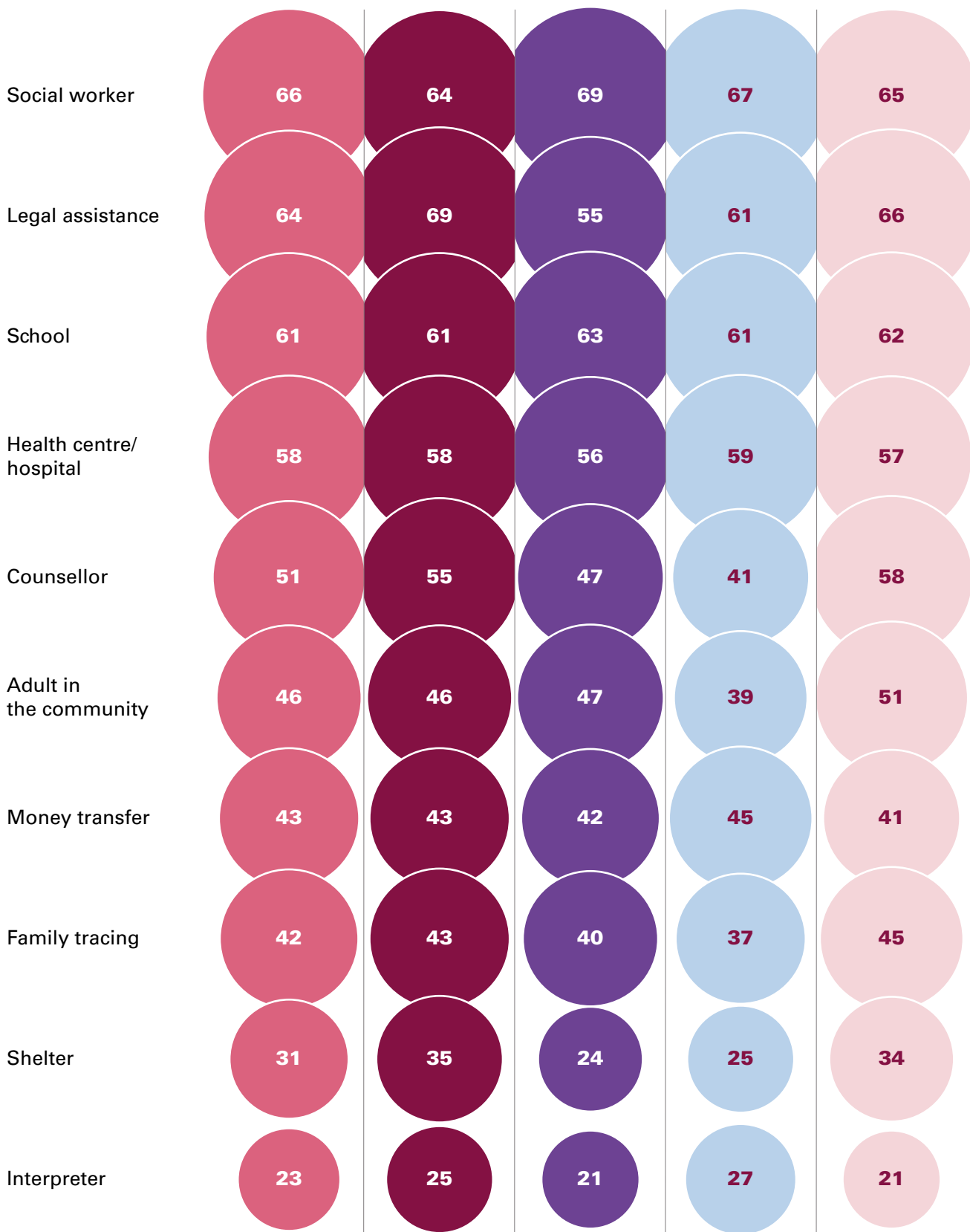
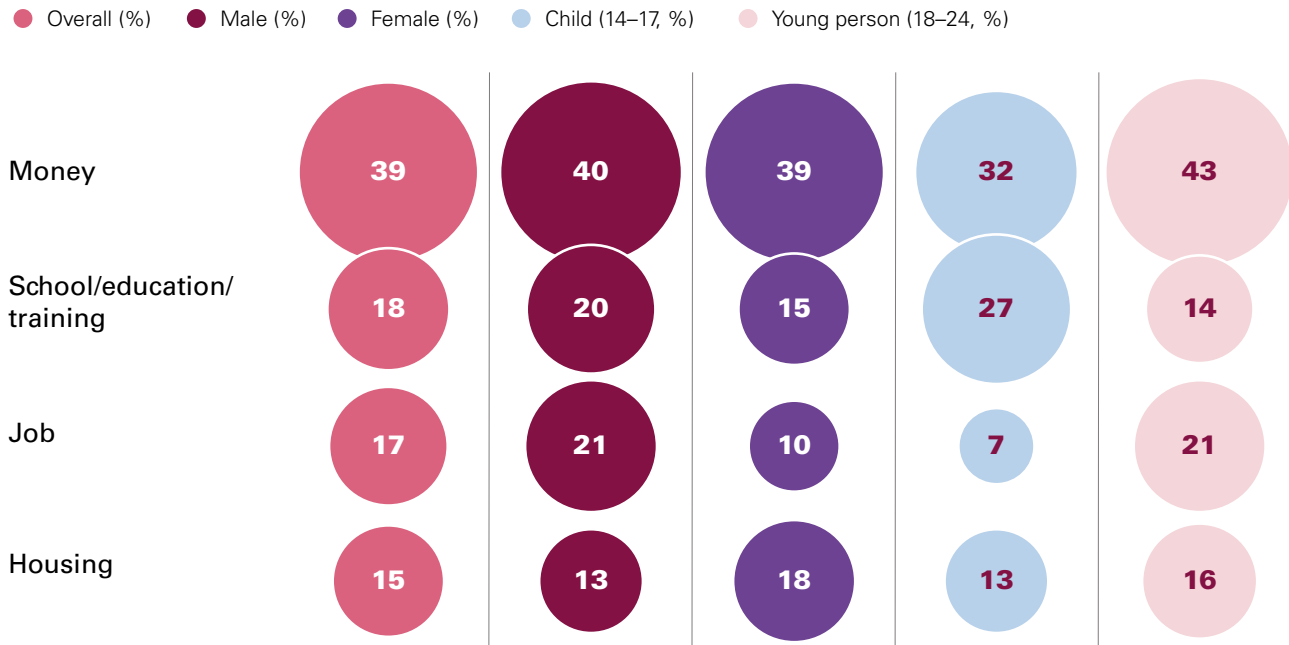


Figure 12: Other types of support that respondents would like

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.



In addition, young people were less likely than children to have used a shelter (25 per cent vs. 34 per cent), while young people were more likely to have wanted to, but been unable to use a counsellor (58 per cent vs. 41 per cent) or gain support from an adult in the community (51 per cent vs. 39 per cent); see Figure 10. These patterns may result from a prioritization of service provision: children generally, as well as girls and young women, may be regarded as more vulnerable, and so may be given priority. They may also reflect other demographic patterns: both children generally and girls and young women are more likely to travel with their families and may therefore have greater support in navigating access to assistance.

There was also a significant difference by nationality in terms of access to services. Ethiopians were significantly less likely than their Somali counterparts to access certain services, including schools (6 per cent vs. 25 per cent), counsellors (14 per cent vs. 23 per cent), family tracing and reunification (22 per cent vs. 42 per cent) and shelter (48 per cent vs. 69 per cent). Not surprisingly, Ethiopians were more likely to have used an interpreter (24 per cent vs. 16 per cent).

Other support required

Respondents were also asked to identify other types of support that they felt they currently needed, but were not getting. This was designed as an 'open question', where the interviewer recorded the respondent's answer, to be coded post-survey. Of the children and young people, only 1 in 12 (8 per cent) said "nothing", but otherwise the most common answers were as shown in Figure 11.

The responses were broadly similar by gender and age categories, except that boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to ask for jobs (21 per cent vs. 10 per cent), and young people were also more likely than children to do so (21 per cent vs. 7 per cent). This may perhaps reflect cultural expectations that these groups work.

It is worth noting that the response coded here as 'school/education/training' encompasses a range of related specific responses – from general requests for education to requests for training in particular skills. Although the focus on education is laudable, it is highly related to the expressed need for jobs and money: education is seen as an entry point for accessing jobs and other services.

Barriers to accessing services and support

Those respondents who said that they had wanted to use one of the services, but had been unable to, were then asked why they felt they had been unable to use or access the service. The interviewers randomly selected up to three services that the respondents had been unable to access.

Lack of availability and perceived expense were the most common reasons given for not being able to use a service. For example, 70 per cent of those unable to use a hospital or health centre said the reason was the cost. By contrast, half (51 per cent) identified lack of availability as the key barrier to accessing a social worker. For legal assistance, there were several barriers identified by roughly the same proportion of respondents: lack of availability (32 per cent), not being allowed to use a service or not knowing how to use it (both 27 per cent) and cost (25 per cent).

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The qualitative research reveals a number of **complex and overlapping barriers** that prevent some children and young people from getting the support or services they feel they need:

- **Avoidance barriers:** There was a perception among children and young people that the “authorities” want to stop movement. Therefore, there is a tendency, especially among those who still hope to continue their journey, to avoid seeking help.

“We were scared to even ask anyone for help.”

– Interview with Somali female returnee, aged 19, Hargeisa, April 2019

- **Prevention of access by smugglers:** Smugglers/brokers sometimes restrict the movement of migrants, making it difficult for them to access help. In the words of one young woman:



A 17-year-old at her home at an IDP camp on the beach in Bossaso, Puntland.

“Later on we were prisoners, so there was no way that we could ask anyone for help.”

– Interview with young female Somali returnee, aged 20, Hargeisa, April 2019

- **Discrimination on the basis of nationality:** Although the government authorities generally reported that services were accessible regardless of nationality, the differential access to services in practice indicates obstacles for non-Somalis. A number of non-Somali migrants reported experiencing discrimination over access to services and jobs. This complaint was particularly prevalent in interviews with people from Oromia in Ethiopia. In the words of one Ethiopian community leader:



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“Immigration harasses them [Oromo refugees]. They bribe them. If I want to move, then they will ask me for money illegally.”

– Interview with Ethiopian refugee community leader, Hargeisa, April 2019

- **Lack of resources:** Not surprisingly, lack of resources was mentioned by most key informants interviewed. This also emerged in interviews with children and young people, who talked about the fact that services that are supposed to be free, including some schools, are not always free in practice (and possibly particularly not for migrants).

— **Barriers created by lack of understanding:**

In some cases, migrants did not know about available services, and so did not seek them out.

Solutions are needed to overcome these barriers and ensure that migrant children and young people have access to the services that they need. Such solutions would include resources to build up services, action to combat discrimination, and creative strategies to circumvent barriers based on avoidance and lack of understanding. Measures could include forging relationships with new interlocutors who enjoy the trust of migrants, such as community leaders, and new strategies of communication to build migrants’ confidence in service providers and authorities.

CHAPTER 7

40

**WHOM DO
MIGRANT CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE TRUST
TO HELP THEM?**

In order to understand where children and young people look for support – and to whom they turn for it – it is important to comprehend the relational networks within which they operate (or which they lack).

The authorities were generally seen as not caring about children and young people.

Given the findings on the use and demand for different services, it is not surprising that children and young people should have been split on whether they would describe the area in which they lived as a place where they could find help (49 per cent) or somewhere that was lonely (43 per cent). Significantly more migrant children and young people believed that the authorities where they now lived did not care about their needs than did care (55 per cent vs. 32 per cent).

Higher level of distrust in the police than others

Less than half of the respondents thought that government officials, community leaders or the police⁴⁸ would help someone like them (see Figure 13); and indeed, more actually felt that the police would harm someone like them. By contrast, international charities, social workers and religious leaders are much more likely than not to be regarded as helpful.

Perhaps one reason why so many children and young people felt that the authorities did not care about their needs was that only 6 per cent recalled having had any contact with a government official within the past month (and 83 per cent said they had never had any contact). This may also explain why only half of the survey respondents (48 per cent) believed that government officials would help someone like them. This may reflect the generally poor level of resources available to the government and the poor penetration of government services.

In this context, it is unsurprising that the qualitative assessments by migrant children and young people should often have been so dismal.

As one young Ethiopian woman put it:

“No one helps us besides the family.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, aged 21, Borama, April 2019

Or as a Yemeni boy said:

“Refugees here have no rights – no health, no education.”

– Interview with Yemeni male, aged 22, Borama, April 2019

Both of these comments are also likely to be linked to feelings of discrimination expressed by non-Somali migrants.

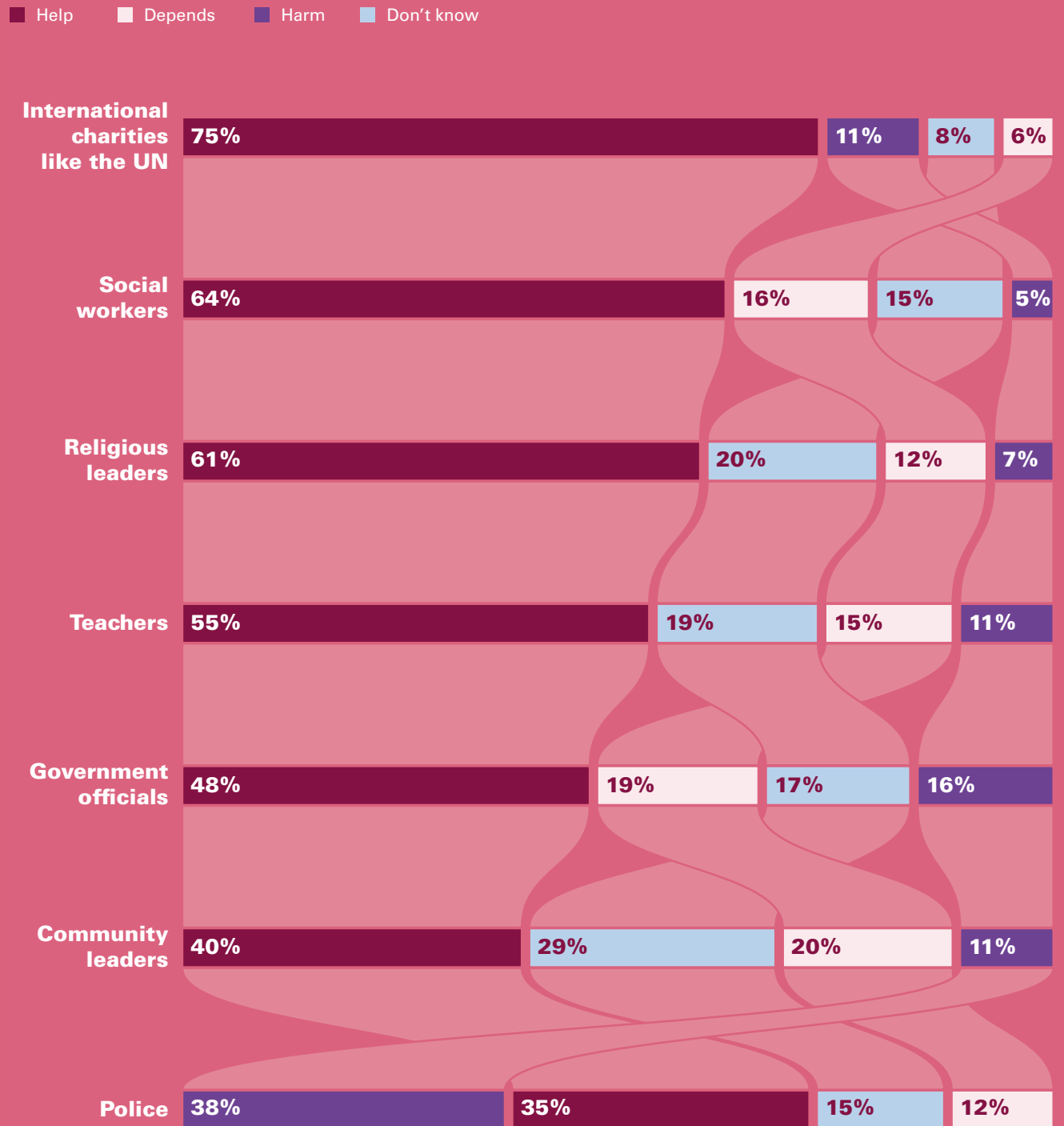
These findings have important implications for the work of UNICEF and other international agencies. It is positive that international charities enjoyed the highest level of confidence: there is an opportunity to leverage this trust in order to engage more positively with the targeted communities. Furthermore, the relatively high level of confidence in social workers indicates an opportunity to conduct successful engagements with the targeted populations through this group. The lack of trust in community leaders and the police highlights concerns about the capacity of the state to respond to protection concerns, as these authorities would traditionally be the first port of call to address insecurity.

48. Although police are government officials, in this research the indicator referring to police was assessed separately.

Figure 13: Whom do children and young people perceive would help them?⁴⁹

Base: 418 migrant children and young people, April–May 2019, Somaliland and Puntland.

Q) Do you think these types of people and organizations would generally help someone like you or harm someone like you?



49. So as to use child-friendly language and facilitate children's understanding, the United Nations agencies were included in the label 'international charities'.

A displaced 10-year-old raises his hand to answer a question during a lesson at his UNICEF-supported primary school.



CHAPTER 8

44

**WHAT ARE THE
MAIN DIFFERENCES
BY GENDER?**

Our findings from the quantitative research show some differences in the experiences and attitudes of migrant boys and young men and migrant girls and young women in Somaliland and Puntland. The purple text highlights the main differences in views between genders, for each of the core indicators covered in the research. The results are ordered thematically to align with the chapters of the report.

Overall, these findings indicate some general patterns. Girls and young women are deprived at home, with fewer educational and work opportunities. This finding points to the need to target community norms and practices in areas of significant outward migration, in order to ensure that girls and women have more equal opportunity and greater choice to stay.

At the same time, boys and young men are more likely to face harm on the journey. A number of factors appear to be linked: boys and young men are more likely to move for economic reasons and without parental consent; this may place them at greater risk of harm than girls and young women – in part because they may be inclined to travel farther (reflected in the lower number of girls/young women crossing borders) and without the support of their families.

Profile

- Boys/young men were more likely not to have children of their own (88 per cent vs. 64 per cent).
- Girls/young women had less education than boys/young men. More girls/young women than boys/young men had no education (31 per cent vs. 12 per cent); boys/young men were more likely to have at least primary education (50 per cent vs. 38 per cent) or secondary education (27 per cent vs. 15 per cent).

Why do children and young people move?

- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to have been neither in school nor working before they left (36 per cent vs. 20 per cent); boys/young men were more likely to have been attending school (51 per cent vs. 38 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to have left with the support of their parents (62 per cent vs. 38 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to have left without telling their parents (57 per cent vs. 34 per cent).
- Girls/young women cited insecurity more often than boys/young men as the main reason for leaving (33 per cent vs. 21 per cent), whereas boys/young men cited economic concerns (52 per cent vs. 39 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men not to have suffered any of the types of harm/negative experience asked about in their home area (57 per cent of girls vs. 43 per cent of boys). Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been physically hurt, either by someone they knew (+16) or by someone they did not know (+19).

What risks do children and young people face in transit?

- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to trust family to provide them with information about the journey (54 per cent vs. 43 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to trust friends (53 per cent vs. 40 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to have been assisted by family in planning their journey (57 per cent vs. 36 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to have been helped by friends (54 per cent vs. 41 per cent) and smugglers/‘travel agents’ (18 per cent vs. 8 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men not to have suffered harm/negative experiences during their journey (65 per cent vs. 43 per cent); boys/young men were more likely to have been physically hurt, either by someone they knew (15 per cent vs. 4 per cent) or by someone they did not know (38 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been deported (26 per cent vs. 16 per cent) or detained at a border (38 per cent vs. 25 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have crossed a border (80 per cent vs. 61 per cent).



Their life now: How safe do migrant children and young people feel?

- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men not to have suffered any of the harms/negative experiences asked about where they now lived (51 per cent vs. 35 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely to have been physically hurt, either by someone they knew (24 per cent vs. 10 per cent) or by someone they did not know (34 per cent vs. 12 per cent).

- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been arrested by the army or police (28 per cent vs. 11 per cent) or held against their will by the government (19 per cent vs. 8 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to report having been treated badly by the locals (24 per cent vs. 10 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men not to have documentation (54 per cent vs. 44 per cent).

Can migrant children and young people access services and support?

- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to feel that they could get help, either generally in the area where they were living (55 per cent vs. 45 per cent) or from government officials (56 per cent vs. 42 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to say that the authorities where they were living did not care about them (60 per cent vs. 47 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to have used a shelter (68 per cent vs. 57 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to be unable to do so (35 per cent vs. 24 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been unable to get legal assistance (69 per cent vs. 55 per cent).

The future: What migrant children and young people would like to do and why

- More girls/young women than boys/young men plan to stay in their current location in the next six months (59% vs. 46%).

A displaced girl leads her donkey away after collecting water from a UNICEF-supported water point in Haddi IDP camp near Borama, Somaliland.



CHAPTER 9

48

**WHAT ARE THE
MAIN DIFFERENCES
BY AGE?**

Our findings from the quantitative research show some differences in the experiences and attitudes of migrant children (14–17 years) and young people (18–24 years) in Somaliland and Puntland. The purple text highlights highlights the main differences in views between children and young people for each of the core indicators covered in the research. The results are ordered thematically to align with the chapters of the report.

It is worth noting that – compared with children – young people face some particular risks. They are more likely to have experienced harm both on their journey and where they currently live. This may be related to communities assigning lower priority to their needs as they grow up and are increasingly expected to take care of themselves. It may also be related to the desire of young people to interact more in the world and to expand their range of movement as they mature. These factors may lead young people into riskier situations. In some areas, such as detention, the increased likelihood that young people will be detained at the border could be related to the success of efforts to sensitize decision makers to international standards that discourage the detention of children.

Despite the fact that young people are more likely to suffer harm, it would appear that those services that respond to their needs are weaker. Young people are less likely to be able to access school, shelter, counselling and support from an adult in the community. While this may reflect a legitimate prioritization of children’s needs, it also exposes a gulf of unmet needs for young people. Not surprisingly, in light of these unmet needs young people have less faith that government officials and community members will help them. This is likely to have a negative impact on future outreach efforts.

Profile

- Children were more likely than young people not to have any documentation (57 per cent vs. 42 per cent), or specifically a national ID card (22 per cent vs. 10 per cent) or voter ID (20 per cent vs. 10 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to cite primary school as their highest level of education (56 per cent vs. 38 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to cite secondary school (28 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have a child of their own (29 per cent vs. 12 per cent).

Why do children and young people move?

- Young people were more likely than children to have been working before they began their journey (35 per cent vs. 22 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have left with the support of their parents (63 per cent vs. 37 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to have left without their parents’ knowledge (57 per cent vs. 34 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have relied on family to help plan their journeys (58 per cent vs. 35 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to have relied on friends (56 per cent vs. 38 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to cite economic hardship as the main reason for leaving (52 per cent vs. 39 per cent).
- Young people were more likely to have been arrested by the army or police (23 per cent vs. 11 per cent) in their home area.

What risks do children and young people face in transit?

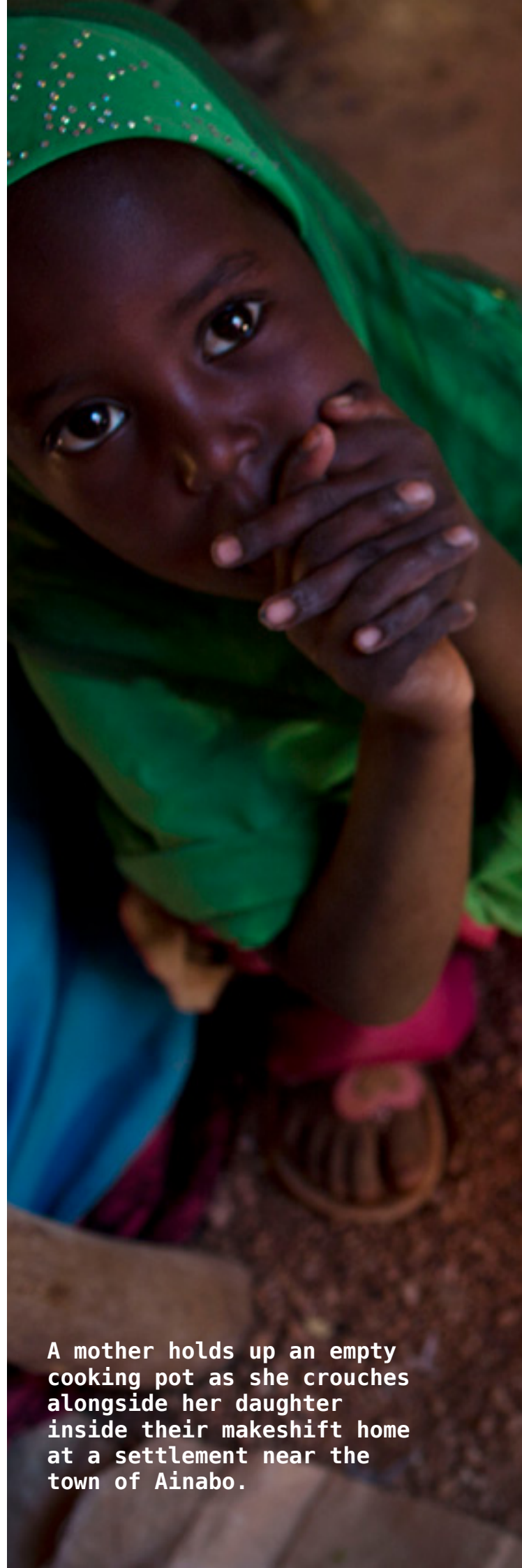
- Children were more likely than young people not to have experienced any of the harm/negative experiences asked about (59 per cent vs. 47 per cent); more young people were physically hurt by someone they did not know (33 per cent vs. 21 per cent) and arrested by the army or police (24 per cent vs. 12 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have been detained at a border (38 per cent vs. 26 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have crossed a border (80 per cent vs. 60 per cent).

Their life now: How safe do children and young people feel?

- Young people were more likely than children to be living alone (37 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people not to have experienced any of the types of harm/negative experiences asked about (53 per cent vs. 34 per cent); young people were more likely to have been physically hurt by someone they did not know (31 per cent vs. 16 per cent) or arrested (26 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to regard the authorities as not caring about their needs (63 per cent vs. 43 per cent).

Can migrant children and young people access services and support?

- Children were more likely than young people to have been to school in the last month (24 per cent vs. 12 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have used a shelter (68 per cent vs. 57 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have wanted to, but been unable to, access a counsellor (58 per cent vs. 41 per cent) or support from an adult in the community (51 per cent vs. 39 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to believe that they could get help, both from government officials (56 per cent vs. 42 per cent) and community leaders (46 per cent vs. 36 per cent).



A mother holds up an empty cooking pot as she crouches alongside her daughter inside their makeshift home at a settlement near the town of Ainabo.



CHAPTER 10

52

**WHAT ARE THE
IMPLICATIONS OF
THE FINDINGS?**

“If we had the means, I would return to Qalaafe. If I am to be idle and jobless, I would rather be that in the companionship of my family and parents in Qalaafe than here in a community foreign to me. But it is too expensive.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 17, Bossaso, May 2019

In summary, the research findings point to the fact that the experience of movement – whether forced, voluntary or a combination of the two – is unique for every child and young person who moves away from home, and responding to this diversity presents a significant challenge. Migration is seen by many who move as an opportunity; but for some it is fraught with danger.

Those interviewed were almost equally divided between those who wanted to stay where they were (51 per cent) and those who wanted to move on (46 per cent). Even among those who are classed as returnees, 40 per cent said they planned to move on in the next six months. A large proportion of those who were moving or had moved recently, therefore, did not feel settled in their current location.

This provides an insight into how children and young people see their future, which is important in establishing whether they hope to integrate in the place where they are currently living, or hope to move on to another location. Protection services need to take both a short- and a long-term view in responding to these challenges of movement.

Building on the findings, the research suggests a number of principles and concrete actions to create a more protective environment for children and young people on their migration journeys.

Services need to work with movement rather than against it

Because mobility is a core coping strategy, children and young people are willing to take significant risks in order to move. They will avoid protection structures if they think that these will limit their aspirations or make them vulnerable to arrest or ‘forced return’. Services need to recognize this and ensure that they are supportive rather than restrictive. This is also critical to delivering on the UNICEF Agenda for Action for uprooted children, which stipulates that migrant children should be able to continue learning and accessing health and other quality services.

As a result, category-driven approaches to understanding and responding to movement often fail adequately to reflect the complexity of movement and the fact that those who migrate often move in and out of different categories. **Therefore, this research advocates a rights-based approach that recognizes children first and foremost as children, rather than in terms of their migration status.**⁵⁰ This approach is embedded in the principle of universality, as laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognizes that all children have rights, without discrimination and irrespective of any extenuating circumstances.⁵¹

- Social and cultural norms that disenfranchise and reduce the opportunities for children and young people should be addressed, with a view to building a more supportive environment that allows children and young people to stay. In the specific context of Somaliland and Puntland, programmes are being implemented to reduce the pressure to migrate. This research shows how complex the drivers of migration can be, and this complexity may need to be taken into account in targeting such programmes. In addition, because communities are sometimes involved in selecting participants for such programmes, they may need to be sensitized to some of these complexities.

50. D’Costa, Bina, and Ton Liefwaard, ‘Human Rights and Children’, Background paper, 17th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights, Bulgaria, November 2017.

51. It also resonates with previous UNICEF research. See, for instance, United Nations Children’s Fund, *A Child is a Child: Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation*, UNICEF, New York, 2017, <<https://data.unicef.org/resources/child-child-protecting-children-move-violence-abuse-exploitation/>>, accessed 10 August 2020.

- Currently, there is a presumption that reunification with their parents is in the best interests of migrant children. While this is likely to be true in most instances, failure to consider circumstances where this may not be the case could expose some children to harm. UNICEF should advocate for, and conduct training to support, more comprehensive assessment of a child's best interests – in particular for groups whose best interests differ from the norm.
- It is critical to ensure that children and young people are not punished for merely trying to leave the country. Although the child protection authorities may have legitimate reasons to intervene in certain cases – for instance, to reunite children and young people with their families – such action should avoid punitive detention conditions; and if, as a last resort, children are placed in detention, they should not be detained alongside adults.

Services need to be expanded and increased to fill the significant gaps identified by the research

Such expansion can begin with the reinforcement of national systems, but it must also be tailored to the needs of migrant children and young people, and ensure that all who need protection services are able to access them. Programmes to build these systems must be empirically informed and tailored to provide maximum impact, given the available resources; and they should prioritize the types of assistance most needed and the groups most in need. **Services must be expanded to reach all migrant children and young people, addressing both practical barriers and discrimination.**

Promoting a strong child protection system can assist in ensuring that services are available for all children. As was suggested in a 2018 UNICEF global evaluation,⁵² an effective child protection system should include the following six elements:

1. A robust legal and regulatory framework, as well as specific policies related to child protection
2. Effective governance structures, including coordination across government departments, between levels of decentralization and between formal and informal actors
3. A continuum of services (spanning prevention and response)
4. Minimum standards and oversight (information, monitoring and accountability mechanisms)
5. Human, financial and infrastructure resources
6. Social participation, including respect for children's own views, and an aware and supportive public

Improving human and infrastructure resources may require capacity building at both the individual and the institutional level, in both government and civil society. Such capacity building could include an increase in evidence generation. Improved cooperation at the regional and international level can also ensure that the rights and needs of migrant children are fulfilled.

- Significant gaps in availability were found across nearly all services in the research, pointing to a need to ramp up support for response in migrant communities generally.
- Particularly high levels of unmet demand were articulated in relation to social workers and legal assistance, indicating particular need to build capacity in those services.

- Children and young people who moved for economic reasons were more likely to have moved without the support of their parents than were those who moved for security reasons. This indicates that particular efforts may need to be undertaken in migrant communities to identify unaccompanied minors or others who are rendered more vulnerable by the disruption of family networks.
- Although policy in most areas stipulated that services should be available to all, regardless of nationality, the research found that in practice some people – particularly Ethiopians – had substantially less access to certain services, indicating a need for concerted efforts to reach this population more effectively.

Services and support systems need to be inclusive

They also need to avoid any simple categorization of those who move. Because the findings show that children and young people do not fit neatly into the existing categories, services and support systems need to respond first and foremost to migrants as children and young people, regardless of category.

In this context, **long-term solutions (including (re)integration) need to be found for children and young people who do not want to move on.**

Even if children have access to services and support, they are likely to face considerable stress if they are uncertain about their long-term status.

Those who have no prospects of being able to work legally or to settle down in their adopted country will likely face additional pressure to move on. Although policies that promote durable solutions, in particular integration, are important for all migrants (including displaced persons), they are especially important for children, who are likely to be particularly negatively affected by uncertainty.⁵³

- In Somalia and the self-declared state of Somaliland, UNICEF should advocate for the expansion of legal options for immigration or legalization of status, with a view to expanding options for durable solutions. Although migrant children and young people are not generally actively targeted for removal, the lack of durable status can undermine their sense of stability and cause long-term harm. Such an expansion of options will be crucial for delivering on the Agenda for Action for uprooted children, which calls for family unity and access to legal status to be facilitated.

53. A useful resource for more detail on pursuing durable solutions for children can be found in Save the Children, 'Durable Solutions for Children Toolkit', 2019, <<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/durable-solutions-children-toolkit#:~:text=The%20Toolkit%20allows%20practitioners%20to,to%20local%20integration%20and%20resettlement>>, accessed 10 August 2020.

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Displaced children sit in class at a UNICEF-supported primary school.

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