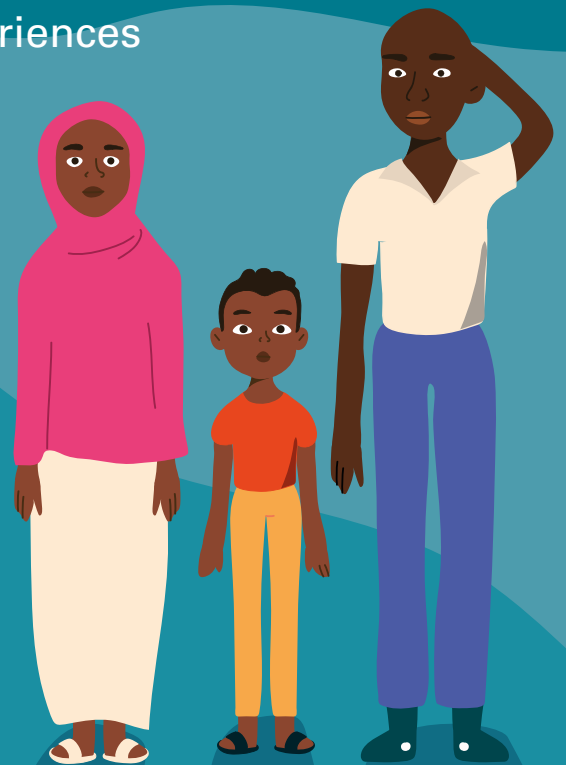


REIMAGINING MIGRATION RESPONSES *in Sudan*

**SUMMARY
REPORT**

Learning from migrant children
and young people's experiences



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**REIMAGINING
MIGRATION
RESPONSES**
in Sudan

**SHORT
REPORT**

Olivia Bueno · Mark Gill · Lucy Hovil
Iolanda Genovese · Tahani Elmobasher

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This paper presents the main findings from a research study with migrant children and young people who were interviewed while living in Sudan. It is part of a wider regional study that focuses on three countries in the Horn of Africa region: Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.¹

This study was carried out in collaboration with the Sudanese National Council for Child Welfare (NCCW).

This report was researched and written by Olivia Bueno, Mark Gill, Iolanda Genovese and Tahani Elmobasher, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.

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1. 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

FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NCCW	(Sudanese) National Council for Child Welfare
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PRI	Peace Research Institute
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 purpose 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, South Sudan and Sudan are included within the Horn of Africa. Primary data collection took place in Ethiopia, Somalia 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"²

2. 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.³ 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.

3. 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 7-year old girl
puts her 2-year-old sister
on a mattress, to sleep,
in Borgo IDP Camp,
North Darfur, Sudan



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration is a regular feature of life in Sudan and the broader region. 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 upwards of 3 million migrants in the country,⁴ 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.**⁵

Children and young people make up a significant proportion of this movement.⁶ 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.⁷ This dearth of information also presents a challenge to providing protection to these children and young people.⁸

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.⁹ 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.¹⁰

-
4. 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.
 5. 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. The IOM defines 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.
 6. 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.
 7. 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 against the likelihood that the experience will be negative. See 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.
 8. Child protection as understood by UNICEF includes "preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage." United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Protection', UNICEF, New York, 2006, <<https://www.unicef.org/protection>>, accessed 10 August 2020.
 9. 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, <www.unicef.org/publications/files/Harrowing_Journeys_Children_and_youth_on_the_move_across_the_Mediterranean.pdf>, 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.
 10. See, for example, LandInfo, 'Sudan: Internally displaced persons in Khartoum', November 2008, <www.refworld.org/docid/4ebd2f822.html>, accessed 10 August 2020.

Most of the little 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

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

11. See, for example, 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; 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 18 February 2021. Two exceptions are: a 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; and International Organization for Migration, *The Desire to Thrive Regardless of the Risk: Risk perception, expectations and migration experiences of young Ethiopians migrating along the Eastern Route towards the Arabian Peninsula*, IOM Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa, Nairobi, April 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IOM%20RDH%20Eastern%20Route%20Research_Background%20Analysis_Obock%20Djibouti_0.pdf>, accessed 10 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.

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”.

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

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 Sudan, this recognition should lead to increased efforts to expand freedom of movement, including by replacing or making amendments to the Regulation of Asylum Act 2014 to remove restrictions on freedom of movement for refugees.

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 the 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.

- 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
- Efforts must be made to ensure that those who are underserved are the subject of specific outreach and expansion efforts (for example, unaccompanied migrants and Ethiopians).

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

The vast majority of respondents cited multiple reasons for their movement, including both security and economic concerns.

- Efforts should be made to engage with children's perspectives and experiences, in order to gain a better understanding of their decision-making strategies and to respect their agency.
- In Sudan, this should include provisions to clarify and extend long-term status, with a path toward citizenship for migrant children and young people who do not want to move onward.

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

15. See UNICEF and IOM, *Harrowing Journeys*; and 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, pp. 1333–1358.

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, no. 72, 2018.

CHAPTER 1

6

MIGRATION IN SUDAN

Sudan has a complex profile of population movements: it is a source of outward migration, a point of transit and a host. An estimated 1.8 million people are internally displaced, including 800,000 children. Many others migrate from the peripheries to Khartoum and other cities in search of work. Sudan is also host to an estimated 1.1 million to 1.3 million refugees.¹⁹ The vast majority of these (858,607) are South Sudanese, but there are smaller numbers of refugees from Eritrea, Syria, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic, Yemen and Chad.²⁰ Sudanese laws require refugees to reside in camps, unless they obtain permission to leave (usually for medical treatment or resettlement).

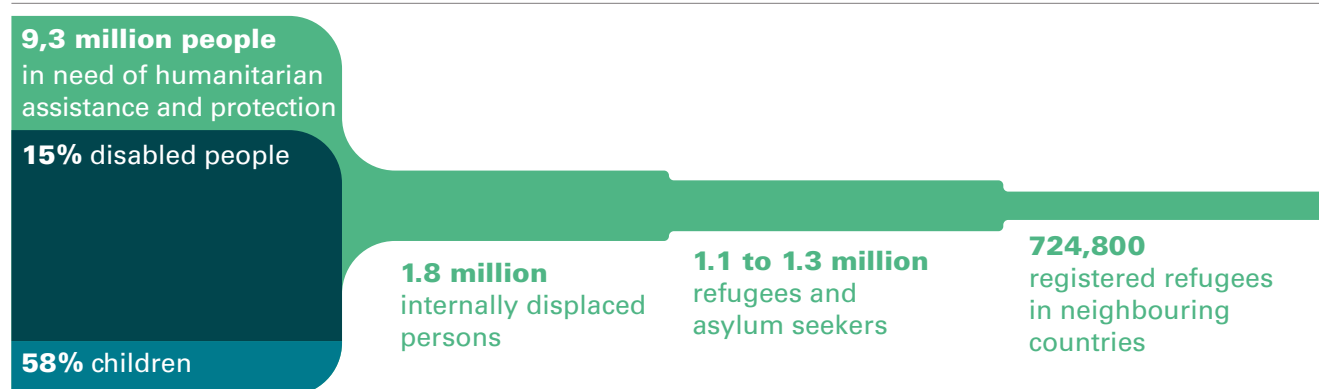
However, in practice only an estimated 30 per cent live in camps. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates

that 52 per cent of refugees are children and 34 per cent are of school age.²¹

There is also significant migration to Sudan for labour, family reunification and other reasons, and significant seasonal agricultural migration in Gedaref state, with the numbers participating annually estimated to be as high as 600,000.²² Sudan is also a source country for migrants: the Sudanese diaspora is estimated at 4.5 million.²³ A significant number of them have fled conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile, or political persecution in other parts of Sudan. Recently, a significant number have attempted to travel through Egypt or Libya to Europe. While the number of those who have travelled toward Europe is difficult to ascertain, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) registered 113,790 returning from Egypt, Libya or Europe in 2016.²⁴

Figure 1: Key figures about migration in Sudan*

Source: UNHCR statistics for Sudanese abroad.²²



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

19. The estimate of 1.1 million appears in: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Sudan Fact Sheet', UNHCR, 13 January 2020, <<http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Sudan%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%202013JAN20.pdf>>, accessed 10 August 2020. The estimate of 1.3 million is given by the Government of Sudan, which claims to be including unregistered South Sudanese refugees: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'South Sudan Situation – Responding to the needs of displaced South Sudanese and refugees', UNHCR, Geneva, March 2018, <<https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-situation-responding-needs-displaced-south-sudanese-and-refugees>>, accessed 7 December 2019.
20. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Sudan Factsheet', UNHCR, August 2019, <<http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Sudan%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20August%202019.pdf>>, accessed 7 December 2019.
21. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Sudan – Population Dashboard, refugees and asylum seekers', UNHCR, 31 December 2018, <<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/67675.pdf>>, accessed 28 January 2019.
22. Better Migration Management, '4th Cross Border Workshop on Seasonal Labour Migration in Gedaref State', 18–19 March 2019, on file with author.
23. International Organization for Migration Sudan, 'Migration Crisis Operational Framework (2017–2019)', undated, <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DOE/MCOF/MCOF-SUDAN-2017-2019_5.5mb.pdf>, p. 11, cited in International Social Services, 'Sudan Report: Preliminary mapping of services provided to children on the move, with a focus on cross border considerations', ISS, Geneva, December 2019.
24. Ibid.
25. Data from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POPREFG.OR?locations=SD&year_high_desc=true>; numbers of internally displaced persons, persons in need of humanitarian assistance and children from United Nations Children's Fund, *Humanitarian Action for Children*, January 2020, <<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2020-HAC-Sudan.pdf>>, accessed 11 August 2020; see also United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Action, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Sudan*, January 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Sudan_2020_HNO.pdf>, accessed 11 August 2020; and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: in Forced Displacement in 2018, 2019*, <<https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>>, accessed 11 August 2020.

CHAPTER 2

8

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED AND HOW?

The mixed-methods research took place in Khartoum state and in eastern Sudan (in Gedaref and Kassala states), 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 one younger child was interviewed in the qualitative research.

The research was conducted in Khartoum state (including the Khartoum and Omdurman localities), Gedaref town, Shagarab and Umgargor camps, and the Gallabat and Lugdi border points in eastern Sudan. The sites were chosen to reflect the diversity of migration within and from Sudan, 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 teams of researchers from the Peace Research Institute at the University of Khartoum, and the Faculty of Law at the University of Gedaref, with training given by the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.

A total of **467 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 in Figure 3).

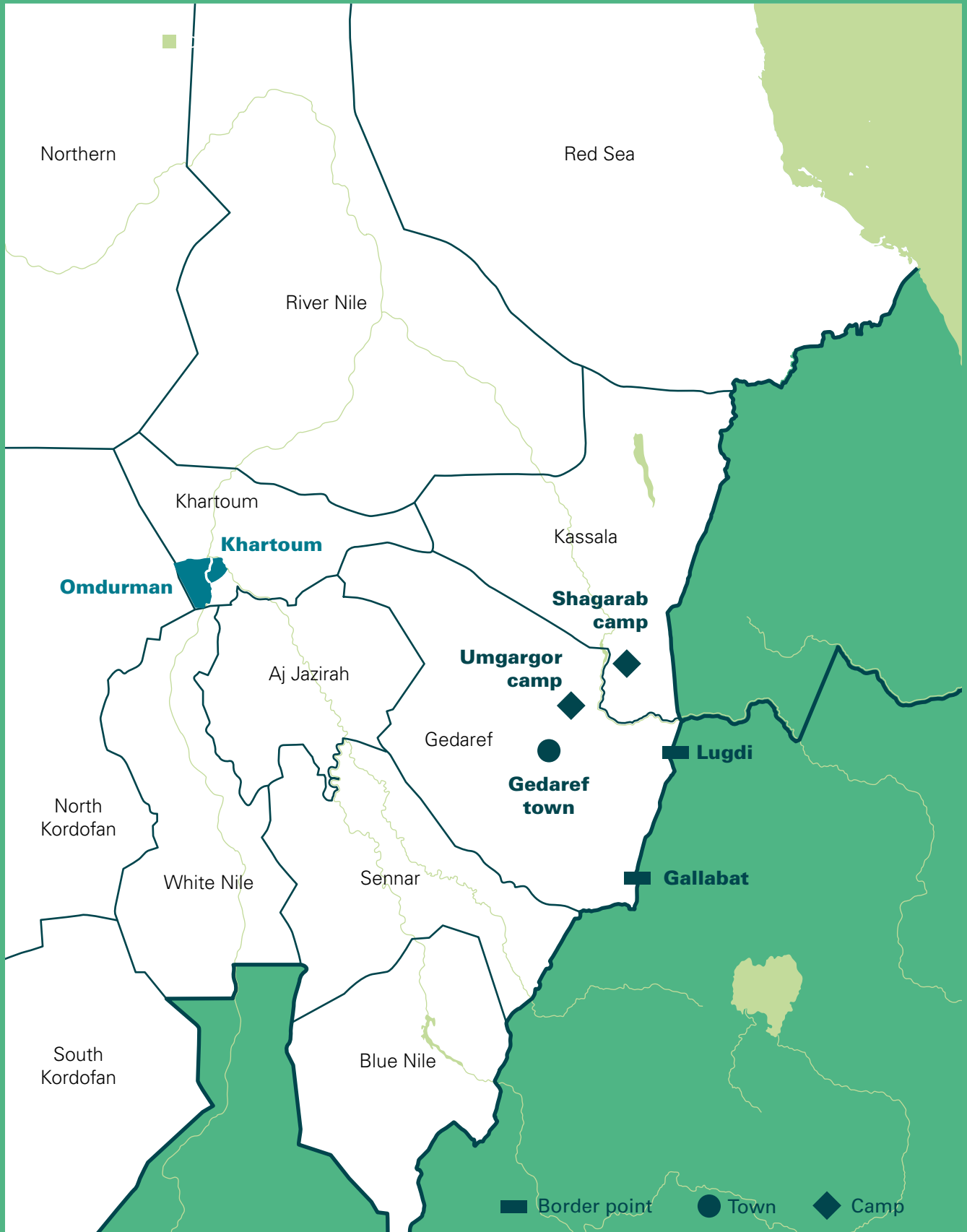
The questionnaire was piloted and then tailored for use in the research, in order to gather objective and systematic data from respondents. The survey tool was designed to objectively capture the attitudes, behaviour and knowledge of children and young people regarding a wide range of issues related 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 both Khartoum state and eastern Sudan, 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 the multi-country synthesis report.²⁶

26. 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.

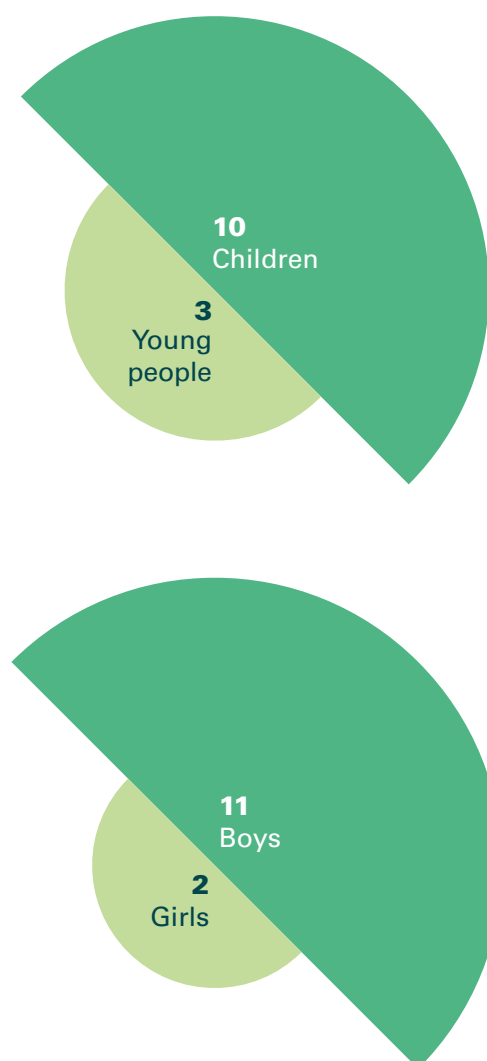
The boundary and names shown on the designations used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Respondents were selected by a variety of means, including with the help of local community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), referrals and simply by approaching potential respondents in public places. A deliberate effort was made to include children and young people who were outside of any form of assistance and protection structures, both government and 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 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 November 2019 and January 2020. Relevant research protocols addressing both ethics and protection were developed and used throughout the research process,²⁷ in line with the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis²⁸ and UNICEF Innocenti's ethical guidelines.²⁹ These protocols were established to ensure that all participants gave informed consent/assent and that the principles of ethical research were adhered to. Ethical clearance was obtained from Health Media Lab (HML) Institutional Review Board.

Figure 2a: Qualitative interviews – children and young people



27. 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.

28. 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 10 August 2020.

29. 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.

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

Of the 467 interviewed, 61 per cent were boys and young men and 39 per cent girls and young women. Of the respondents, 3 in 10 (31 per cent) were aged 14–17, while the remainder were aged 18–24 (69 per cent). Those children interviewed were more likely to be Eritrean and South Sudanese, whereas those Ethiopians interviewed were more likely to be young people. Of the children interviewed in the research, 19 per cent said that they were not with an adult who was responsible for their care.

Although efforts were made to get a balanced sample, it was found that children rather than young people, and girls and young women rather than boys and young men, 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.

Figure 2b: Qualitative interviews – key informants

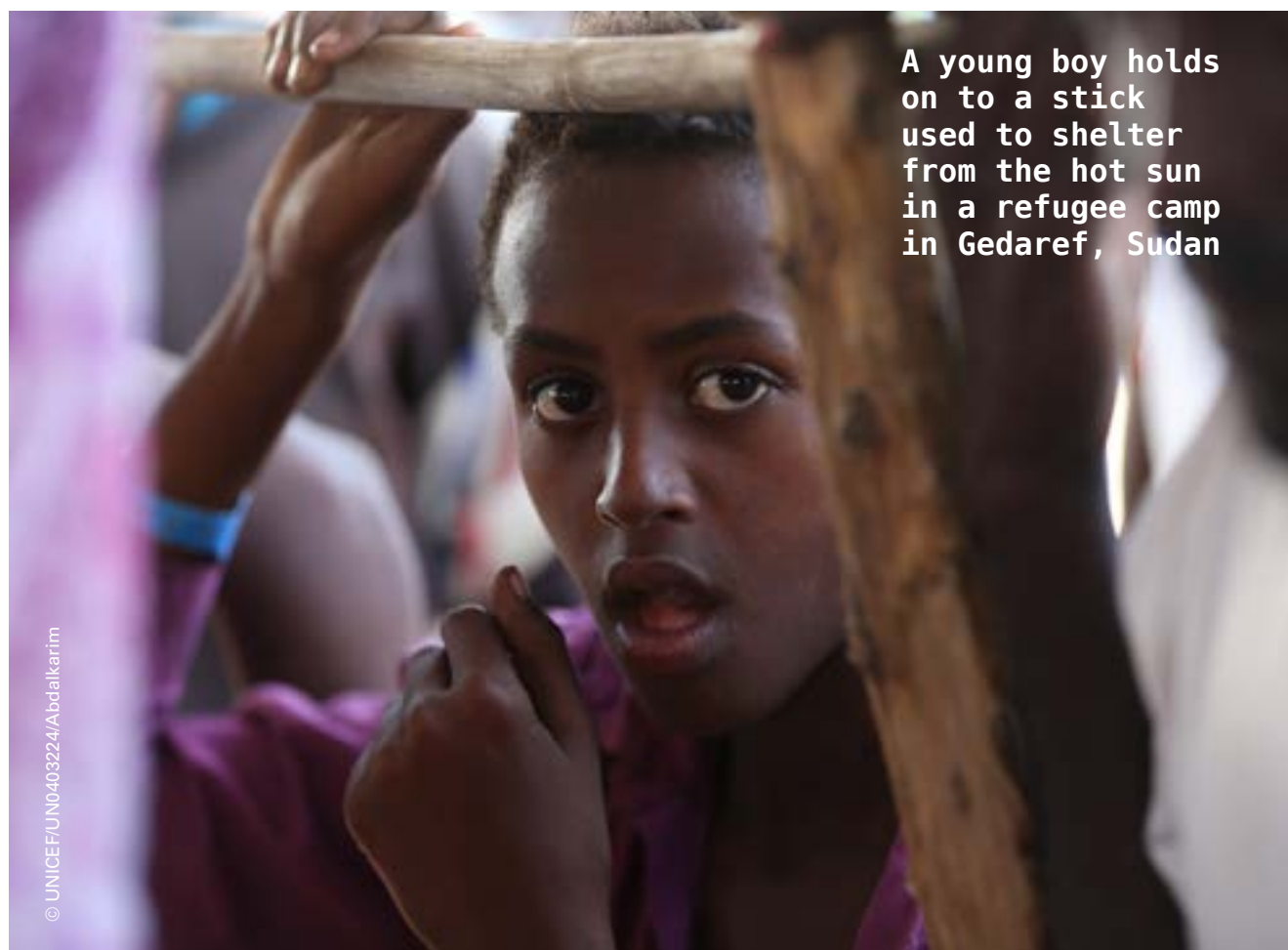
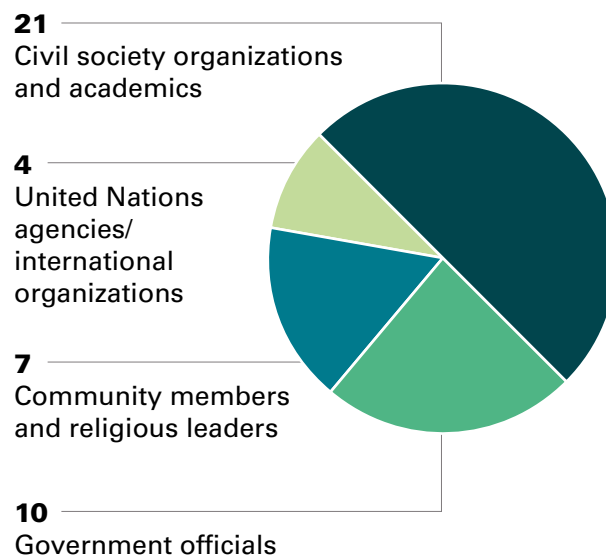
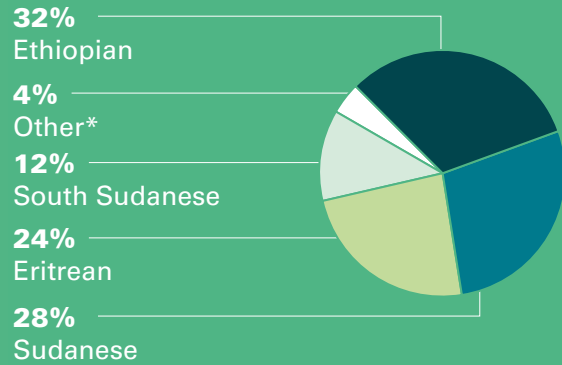


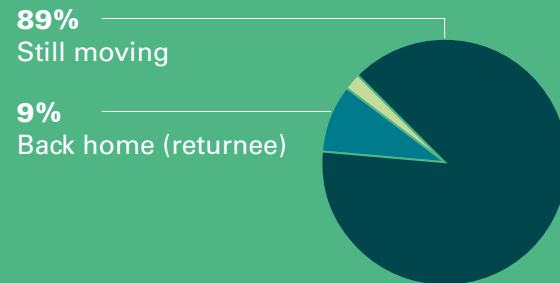
Figure 3: Profile of respondents

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

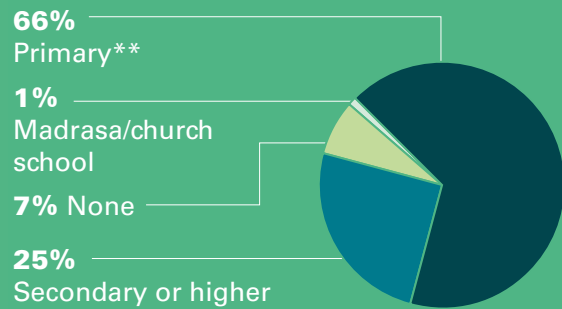
Nationality



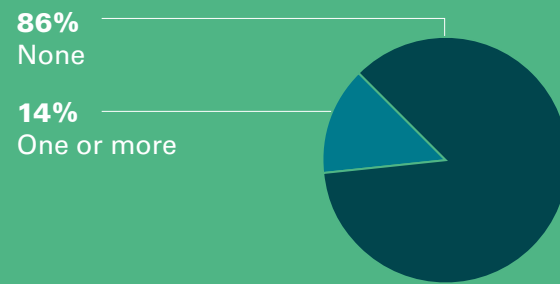
Status



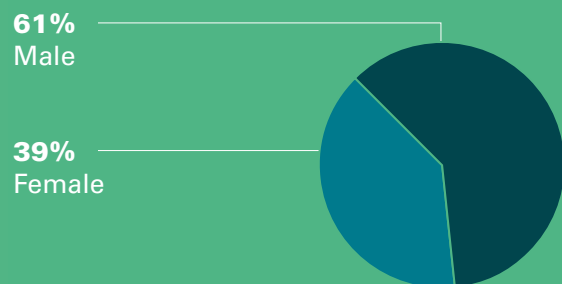
Educational achievement



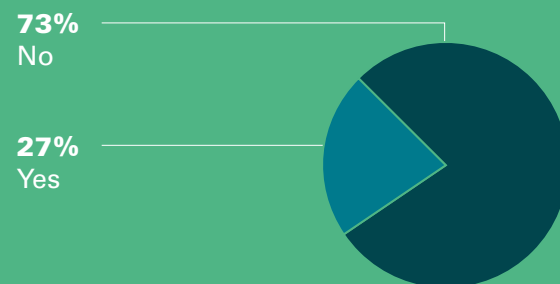
Have own children



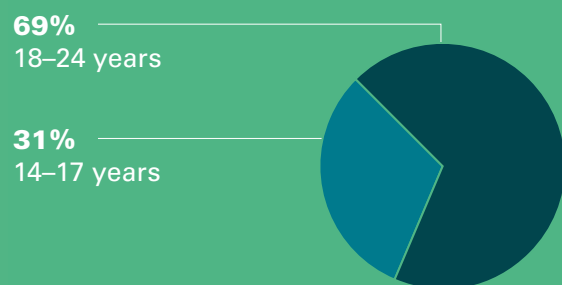
Gender



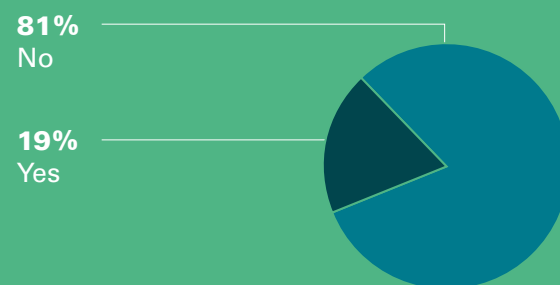
Currently living by themselves



Age



Report not having an adult caregiver/ unaccompanied minor***



* These are 4 per cent 'Congo', <0.5 per cent 'Don't know', and <0.5 per cent 'Somali'.

** This includes 1 per cent who said 'preparatory'.

*** This is based on those aged 14–17, and self-identification of whether or not an adult was responsible for their care.

CHAPTER 3

14

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.

“Because I want to gain some money to finish my education.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 20, December 2019

“People in Eritrea cannot envision a future there because of the military service. Even as a kid, you see bad things, and you come to not trust the government.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, November 2019

Most children and young people move for multiple reasons, but economic hardship is the most common

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 this process by investigating several recurrent drivers that were particularly influential in the 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 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.

Just under half (47 per cent) identified economic hardship as the single most important reason for their movement. This was far more common than the next most important driver – insecurity/war/violence (selected by 27 per cent). No other reason was given by more than 6 per cent of respondents.

In order to fully understand the complexities of the reasons for moving, the second follow-up question involving a ‘prompted recall’ response was asked about other reasons that triggered the move. Figure 4 shows the results for the top five most commonly selected prompted recall reasons for moving. Three quarters (74 per cent) of children/young people said that economic hardship was one of the factors that had led them to move: this was by far the most salient driver, and was selected by twice as many as chose the next factor, insecurity/war/violence (36 per cent).

These findings reflect the challenging economic conditions faced by many in the region, as well as the reality of ongoing violence, conflict and political oppression in parts of the region – a reality that continues to push some to leave their homes. At the same time, the findings point to the fact that many people 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.

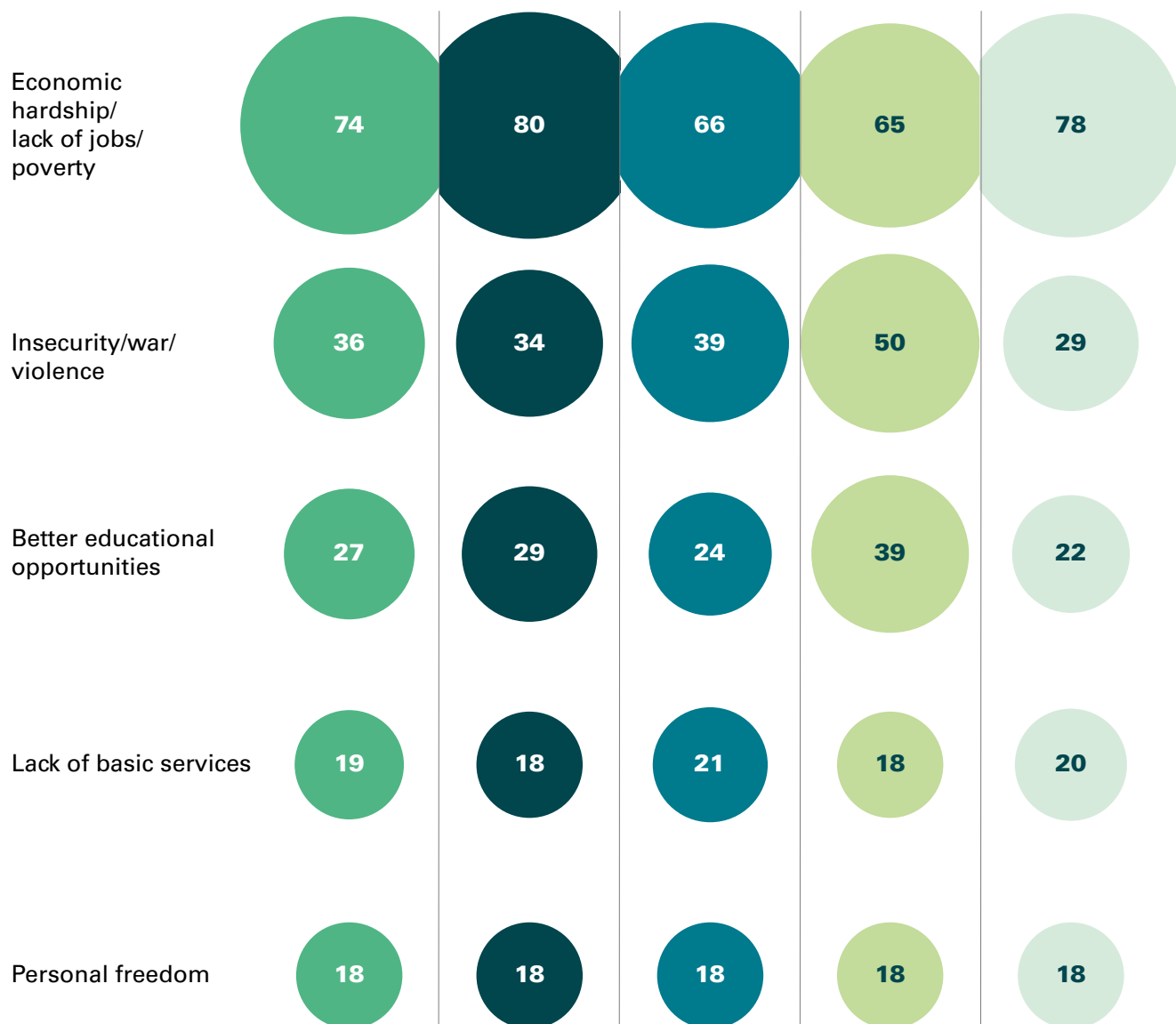
The findings show that young men were significantly more likely to cite economic hardship as a reason for moving than were girls and young women, perhaps reflecting the greater social pressure on boys and young men to contribute to the family finances.

Figure 4: Combined reasons for moving

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

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

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



16

Young people were more likely than children to cite economics as the primary reason for moving (56 per cent vs. 26 per cent), whereas children were more likely than young people to cite insecurity (43 per cent vs. 20 per cent). There are probably a number of reasons for this. First, young people are more likely to feel compelled to support themselves and to contribute to their families economically than are children.

It may also relate to the national identities of those interviewed: more of the children interviewed were South Sudanese and Eritrean – nationalities whose experience is associated with insecurity; meanwhile, more of the young people were Ethiopian, whose experience is more associated with moving for economic reasons.

Although all these reasons affect both children and adults, they can have a particular impact on children. For example, in Eritrea, widespread poverty has led to a major incidence of malnutrition and UNICEF estimates that 61 per cent of children in that country are not growing well.³⁰

At the same time, another driver that relates particularly to children and young people in Eritrea is forced conscription (cited as the main reason for moving by 11 per cent of Eritreans). National service, which has been described as 'enslavement' by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea,³¹ blights the future of children, who are expected to enlist at the age of 18. In the words of an Eritrean refugee:

"I left home because I was afraid to go for military service, there was no other reason."

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 16, December 2019

South Sudanese, who often moved to Sudan on account of insecurity and violence, also described particular challenges in maintaining family unity in flight. As one South Sudanese community leader said:

"When the war breaks out, [the children] come alone and seek to find a relative, but some fail to do so. Everyone just runs, it is chaos."

– Interview with community leader, January 2020

Taking the decision to move

Four respondents in five (81 per cent) said it had been their choice to leave home, and just over half (54 per cent) said their parents had supported their decision. The remainder left without their parents' knowledge (24 per cent) or in the face of parental opposition (16 per cent).

Young people were more likely to move without

the support of their parents than were children (49 per cent of young people had parental support, compared with 65 per cent of children); the same is true of those moving for economic reasons, as compared with insecurity (46 per cent of those who cited economic reasons as primary had parental support, as compared with 71 per cent of those who cited insecurity as primary). Boys and young men were less likely to have parental support than were girls and young women (46 per cent as compared with 66 per cent).

Family (45 per cent) was the group most likely to have helped respondents plan their journey, but this represented only two in five of the sample. One in five had the help of their friends (21 per cent).

There was no single source of information that the majority of children and young people trusted about the dangers involved in their journey before they began their move. Slightly less than half said they trusted their family (47 per cent), and around one in four trusted their friends (26 per cent); about one in seven trusted community members (13 per cent). Only a very small proportion trusted a smuggler/broker (6 per cent) and one in four did not trust anyone (24 per cent). Boys and young men were more likely than girls and young women to trust their friends (33 per cent vs. 16 per cent), while girls and young women placed greater faith in their family (52 per cent vs. 43 per cent). Similarly, children were more likely than young people to trust their families to provide information about the journey (56 per cent vs. 43 per cent). It is likely that this is related to the lack of parental support. It would seem that, where children and young people have the support of their parents, they are more likely to rely on them for information; if they do not have parental support, their next recourse is likely to be friends.

30. United Nations Children's Fund, *Children, Food and Nutrition: Growing well in a changing world*, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa, Nairobi, 2019, <<https://www.unicef.org/media/60831/file/SOWC-2019-ESA.pdf>>, accessed 28 February 2020.

31. Human Rights Watch, 'Eritrea: Events of 2018', New York, 2019, <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/eritrea>>, accessed 28 February 2020.

CHAPTER 4

18

WHAT RISKS DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FACE IN TRANSIT?

Journeys, whether crossing land or water, through regular or irregular methods of transit, 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 traffickers 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.³² Smuggling and trafficking within and from the Horn of Africa have become highly sophisticated, lucrative and responsive to changes in the policy context,³³ 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).

“We moved at night and in the daytime we hid in the trees and the grass so that we would not be caught by the authorities. I travelled with my younger brother, but it was just the two of us. Because we were longing for our mother, we weren’t afraid, even though the road was long and hard and full of animals like wolves.”

– Interview with Eritrean female, aged 15, Shagarab refugee camp, December 2019

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

According to the research, 16 per cent of respondents travelled by themselves for all or most of their journey, meaning that more than four in five (83 per cent) travelled with other people for most of the way. Of the latter group, family (41 per cent), friends (37 per cent) and people they did not know (32 per cent) were their most frequent travelling companions. Those travelling with their families or members of their home communities were less likely to experience physical harm than were those travelling alone or with people they did not know. This reinforces the need to focus resources on protecting separated or unaccompanied children, which is already a UNICEF priority. Those travelling alone were more likely to be male than female (74 per cent vs. 26 per cent) and young people than children (82 per cent vs. 18 per cent).

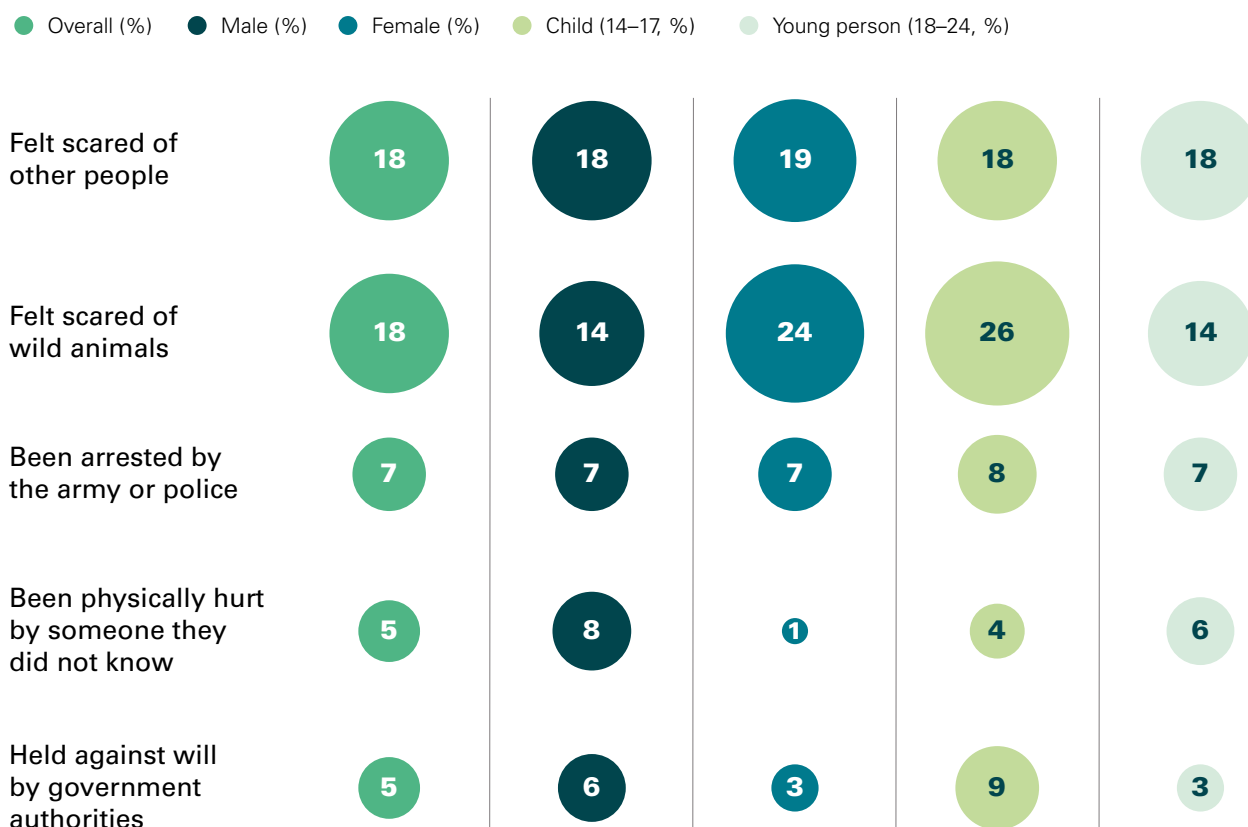
Around two respondents in five faced harm or negative experiences in transit; some groups were more likely than others to experience this

As well as their exposure to different types of harm or negative experiences in their home area and where they currently resided (see chapter 5), respondents were questioned about whether they had experienced any of the harms or negative experiences listed in the questionnaire while in transit or during any part of the journey.³⁴ The majority (61 per cent) reported that they had not. The most common experiences are set out in Figure 5.

32. 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." United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, OHCHR, 15 November 2000, <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>>, accessed 7 January 2021.
33. 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.
34. This question used a standard list of potential types of harm and negative experience and each item was read out to the respondent, who had to select from the items. The full list of items is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Incidence of harm or negative experiences in transit

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



20

The relatively low level of actual violations reported contrasts with some of the other research into the danger of journeys through Sudan. The risk is reported to be particularly high for those who use smugglers: many have reported being kidnapped for ransom, as well as torture and trafficking.³⁵ Some of this may be attributable to research limitations. For example, the most vulnerable children and young people may have their movements significantly controlled, and therefore be less likely to be identified as respondents in the research within Sudan. Key informants talked about resistance to reporting:

“There is a continuous fear of the abusers which inhibits reporting.”

– Interview with civil society representative, Gedaref, November 2019

In addition, for ethical reasons we were unable to explore some serious violations. Efforts were made not to broach these very sensitive topics – for example, sexual or gender-based violence, in the quantitative study. Instead, the qualitative research provides some insights into these areas. As a result, the assessment of harm reported by respondents does not include violations stemming from sexual or gender-based violence which respondents may have encountered.³⁶

Despite these limitations, it is clear that moving is not always dangerous for everyone, and that the experiences of journeys varied considerably, with some groups more vulnerable to abuse than others. The quantitative data showed that Eritreans were much more vulnerable than non-Eritreans to harm, with 57 per cent of Eritreans reporting that they had faced some type of harm, compared with

35. For instance, Hovil and Oette, ‘Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea’.

36. However, another reason relates to the methodology. Other pieces of research have tended to be qualitative in nature, focusing on documenting serious abuses, but not on assessing how common they are.

35 per cent of non-Eritreans. This may be related to government restrictions on exit from Eritrea, which force young people to use more remote and dangerous routes. Even those who do not experience such dangers directly are influenced by them. In the words of one Eritrean boy:

“I didn’t face any problems on the road, but it is very dangerous, full of wild animals and traffickers.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Shagarab refugee camp, December 2019

Some reported using a smuggler; of those who did, more viewed them positively than negatively

Reported use of smugglers/brokers was low. Some 16 per cent of children and young people reported using a smuggler/broker to help them *plan* their journey. Twice as many young people as children reported using a smuggler/broker (18 per cent vs. 9 per cent). As with the level of abuse more generally, this relatively low figure contrasts with other studies (noted above) about the prevalence and seriousness of smuggling, particularly because those earlier studies sought to document the negative impact of smuggling, rather than to assess its prevalence.³⁷ The figure found in this study may not fully reflect all who used, or tried to use, a smuggler. Because the question referred to *planning*, it is possible that those who used a smuggler later might not be included in the figure. In other cases, adults may have engaged smugglers on behalf of children or young people, who may simply have been unaware. Finally, smugglers may be family or community members, and may well have been referred to as such by children and young people.³⁸ While figures show that many do not engage smugglers, for those who do, the smugglers may present a significant risk.

Respondents who reported using a smuggler were asked what type of assistance they had been offered and what assistance they had

actually received. The most common type of assistance reportedly offered by smugglers was help in crossing a border: 63 per cent said that the smuggler had offered assistance in crossing a border, and 67 per cent said that they had actually delivered on this. It appears that, for the most part, the smugglers also delivered on their promise to help with transport (23 per cent received this) and with food and water (36 per cent). However, despite around one respondent in four saying that the smuggler had promised to provide accommodation or a job/money, only a small proportion reported this actually happening.

Nevertheless, more described the smuggler/broker as a good person (58 per cent) than as a bad person (32 per cent). This may be explained by the fact that the majority (74 per cent) said their smuggler had neither threatened nor actually hurt them. One in four, however, said that this person had either threatened to (15 per cent) or had actually physically hurt them (10 per cent).

The reported experiences with smugglers are likely to have been context specific: Eritreans, for instance, often have to rely on smugglers in order to cross from Eritrea into Sudan (or into Ethiopia and then on into Sudan), because of the exit restrictions on the Eritrean side. Smugglers are therefore seen as a lifeline for those desperate to exit.³⁹ On the other hand, Ethiopians crossing into Gedaref state are generally able to move freely, as a result of facilitated seasonal labour migration for Ethiopians, much of which is entirely legal and some of which circumvents various procedural restrictions.

Although negative experiences were relatively rare in the respondents’ answers, it is worth noting that smuggling was related to some of the most severe violations reported, and previous studies have indicated that those involved in smuggling and trafficking networks are particularly vulnerable. Smuggling and trafficking within the region have become highly sophisticated, lucrative and responsive to changes in the policy context,⁴⁰ and can lead to considerable harm during journeys. Not surprisingly, therefore, the use of smugglers has

37. For instance, Hovil and Oette, ‘Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea’.

38. Save the Children and the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, *Young and on the Move*.

39. Estimates cited in Hovil and Oette, ‘Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea’, p. 4.

40. Ibid.

been linked to potential or actual abuse. Importantly, using a smuggler – which is, in part, a response to increased controls at border crossings – places migrants at risk of other harm, including trafficking.

Returnees who had used smugglers to move through Sudan reported that their movements had been severely curtailed; it is thus unlikely that anyone in such a situation at the time of the research would have been accessible to our researchers. For those crossing into Sudan from Ethiopia with the assistance of smugglers, it was recounted that at the border they were passed into the hands of other smugglers and then moved to Khartoum or Hajar in East Nile state, which is a staging post for movement on to Libya or, for a few, Egypt. However, some children and young people are sold to trafficking networks that operate in eastern Sudan, where they are held in houses and other locations until their families pay a ransom. In order to persuade the families to pay, the traffickers often use torture.⁴¹ A young Somali man interviewed for the qualitative research, for example, described being shot at on the Sudan–Ethiopia border; he was injured and was taken to hospital:

“The Sudanese smuggler came and tried to get me from the hospital, and although I was so sick, they forced me to go.”

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

Another described moving in dangerous conditions:

“We all had to squish in the back. They said you have to sit like that or walk, so there was no choice, we just had to go in the pick-ups. Some fell out of the pick-ups on the way. Out of the 88 that had left Yemen, only 74 made it to the village.”

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

Most had a negative experience of crossing borders, whether official or unofficial

Border areas are often particularly dangerous. Three in four children and young people (74 per cent) recalled crossing an international border as part of their journey. The experience was generally negative. Respondents were also asked if the border was a lonely place or somewhere that they could find help; if it was somewhere where the authorities did or did not care about their needs; and if it was safe or unsafe. Just over half felt that the border they had crossed was safe (58 per cent); however, a large majority described the border as a lonely place (64 per cent) and a place where the authorities did not care about their needs (67 per cent). This points to the fact that border areas are sites of particular risk, and it also indicates the need to develop greater child protection capacity, services and support in border areas.

Those who recalled crossing a border were asked to select different terms to describe the last border they had crossed (i.e., the border into Sudan) (see Figure 7).

Overall, 53 per cent said that the last border they had crossed was an official border crossing, while 23 per cent had used an unofficial crossing. The prevalence of the use of unofficial border crossings is likely to be related to a number of factors. First, despite the fact that South Sudan seceded from Sudan in 2011, a broad agreement on border demarcation was only achieved in late 2019, meaning that some areas of the border were still contested.⁴² Second, restrictions on exit from Eritrea discourage the use of formal border points along the Eritrea–Sudan border. Third, it was reported that a majority of the children and young people who crossed the Ethiopian border had used informal crossing points because there were only two official border points in the state; there may be additional costs associated with crossing formally; and the border area is generally well known.⁴³

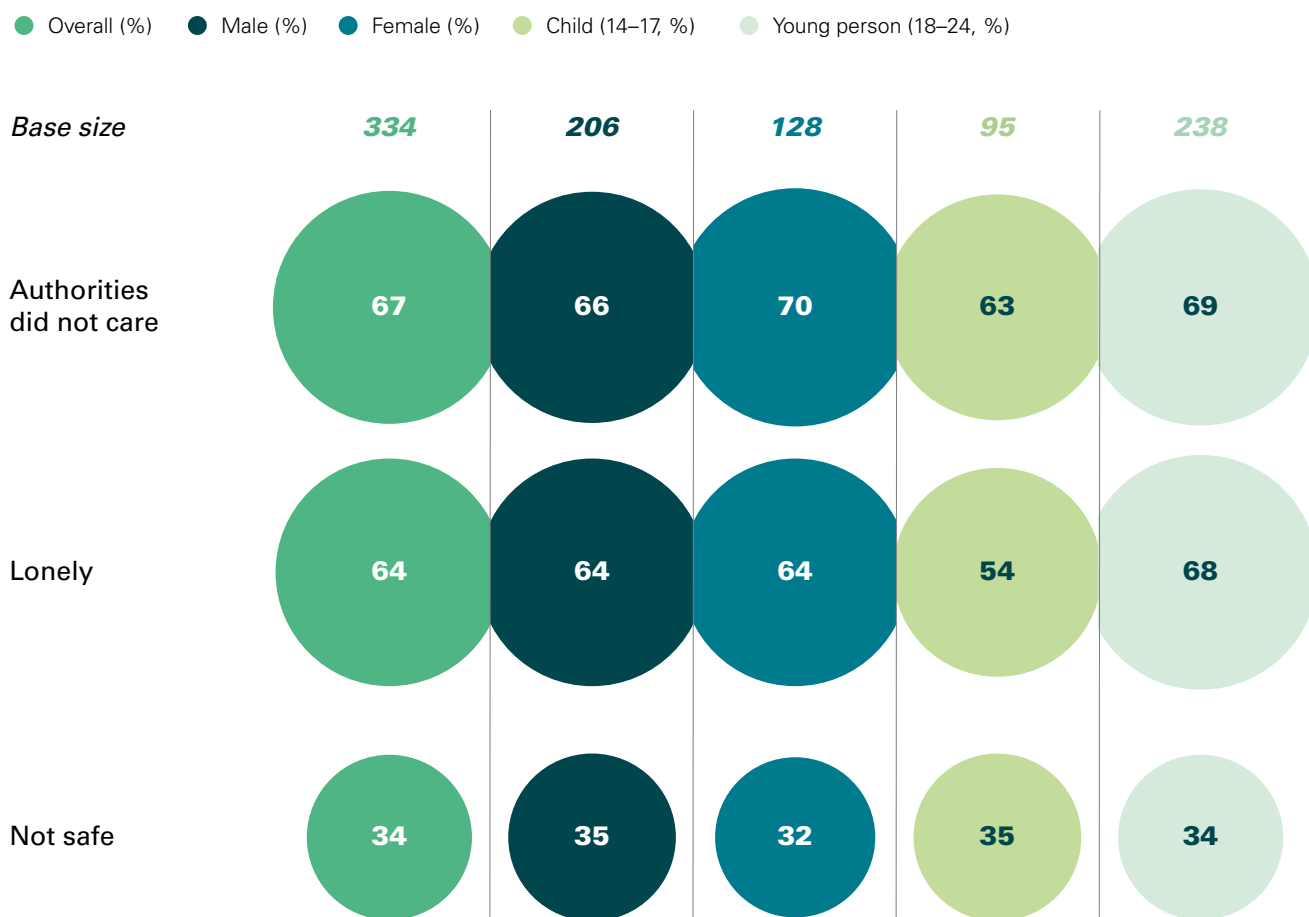
41. Ibid.

42. Sudan Tribune, ‘Sudan, S. Sudan Sign Agreement on Border Demarcation’, 23 October 2019, <<https://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article68362>>, accessed 11 August 2020.

43. Eldin, Ahmed Gamal, and Tadele Ferede, ‘Assessment of Seasonal Migration Management on the Sudanese Border’, Final Report, June 2018.

Figure 6: Crossing borders

Base: 334 migrant children and young people, November–December 2019, Sudan.



The relatively high number of children and young people who reported using both informal and formal border crossings means that it is therefore possible to compare their perceptions of the two types of border crossing (see Figure 7).

On these parameters, official borders are seen as safer than non-official borders; but still there appears to be a lack of support and care, irrespective of the border type.

Significant numbers were detained or deported at the border

The data revealed that nearly one respondent in five had been detained at a border (17 per cent) or had been deported from a country by the authorities (11 per cent) while on their journey.

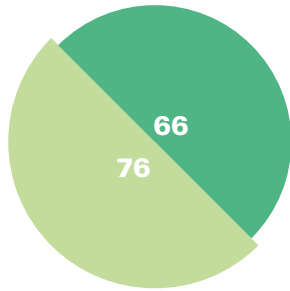
Furthermore, children were more likely than young people to have been detained at a border (25 per cent vs. 12 per cent) or deported from a country (17 per cent vs. 7 per cent). That said, it is not clear how many of these deportations occurred in Sudan. All children with an immigration or some other issue crossing a border into Sudan are supposed to be referred to specialized children’s services. In practice, however, key informants reported that this did not occur consistently. 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 greater risk of detention – is concerning and shows how much more needs to be done to ensure that the commitment by UNICEF to prevent children from being detained for reasons relating to their migration (part of the Agenda for Action for uprooted children) is translated into action.

Figure 7: View of border crossings by type

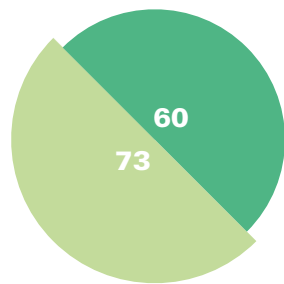
Base: 334 migrant children and young people, November–December 2019, Sudan.

● Official ● Not official

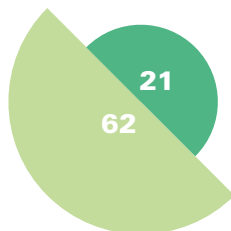
Authorities did not care about my needs



Lonely



Not safe



A young boy rests outside a tent at a refugee camp in Gedaref, Sudan



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 (68 per cent had been there for at least seven months), 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.

“Young people here face a lot of issues. If you have a phone you can get beaten up. I feel really unsafe and so I mostly just stay at home to stay safe.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Khartoum, November 2019

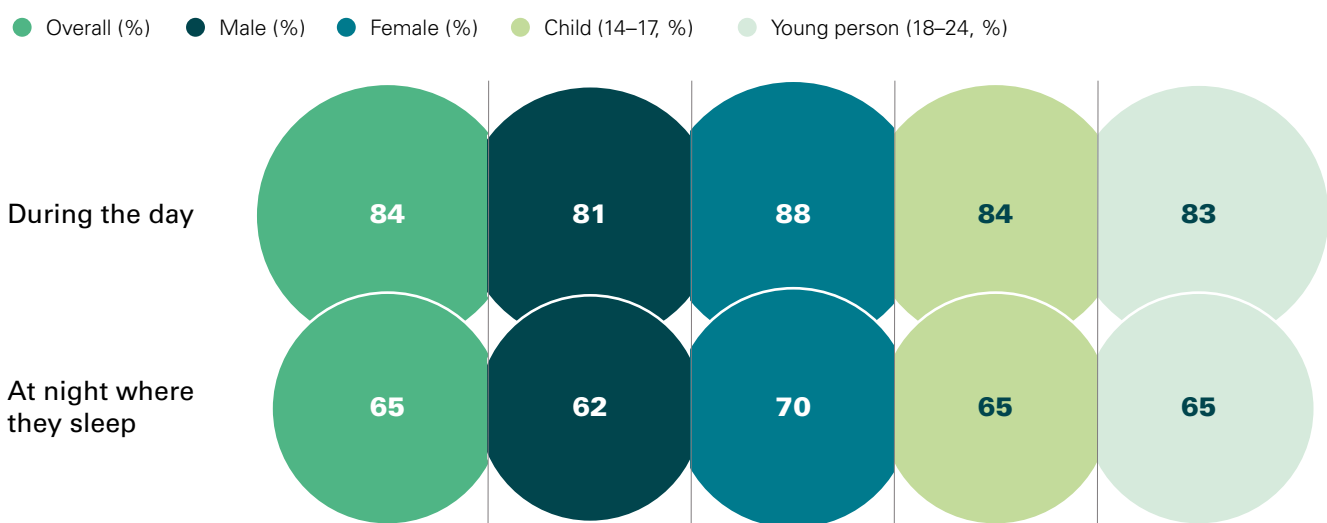
More children and young people reported feeling safe now than before they began to move, although significant numbers still faced insecurity

Most children and young people felt safe where they were currently living, both during the daytime (84 per cent) and at night (65 per cent). This is a typical finding in these types of attitudinal studies – generally, across the world, more people feel safe in the daytime than at night. Nevertheless, more than twice as many children and young people felt unsafe at night as during the day (29 per cent vs. 11 per cent). Boys and young men were also less likely to feel safe – whether at night or during the day – than their female counterparts (see Figure 8).⁴⁴

It is important to highlight the fact that fewer children and young people said they had felt safe before they left home than they did now. Three respondents in five (60 per cent) felt safe in their home area – considerably fewer than reported feeling safe now. In part, this may be a reflection of the fact that decisions to endure the risks associated with movement may be motivated by serious threats at home, and may be the result of careful decision making in the context of difficult choices.⁴⁵

Figure 8: Feeling safe

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



44. 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.
 45. Hovil and Oette, ‘Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea’.

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

Those who said that they felt unsafe at least sometimes were then asked what they did to protect themselves. The question was open ended, meaning that the interviewer wrote in the respondent’s answer, which was then coded post-interview (see Figure 9).

By far the most common response was to do nothing (32 per cent). It is also interesting to note that more children and young people cited carrying a weapon (such as a stick or a knife) (8 per cent) than would seek the protection of the police or authorities (1 per cent).

Below are some of the examples of coping mechanisms that children and young people adopted to stay safe:

“When I feel I’m in danger, I protect myself by using any sharp weapon or running very fast.”

– Interview with Sudanese male, aged 17, Khartoum, January 2020

“If I feel in danger, I just run away.”

– Interview with Sudanese female, aged 12, Khartoum, January 2020

“So, I mostly just stay at home to stay safe.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Khartoum, November 2019

Incidents of harm and negative experiences are similar to those 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 10.

Figure 9: What those who feel unsafe do to protect themselves

Base: 169 migrant children and young people who feel unsafe where they are now, November–December 2019, Sudan.

Q) What do you do to help protect yourself?

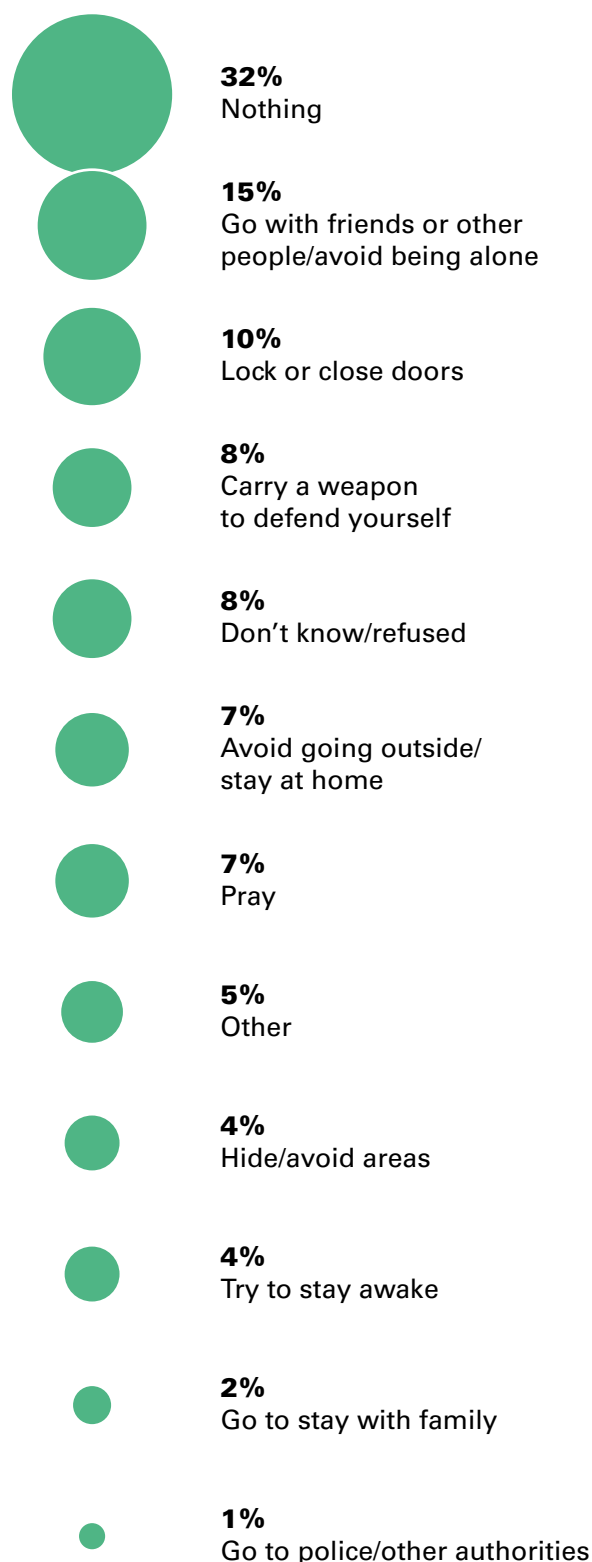


Figure 10: Incidence of harm and negative experiences (now vs. home area)

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

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

● % while living here ● % in home area

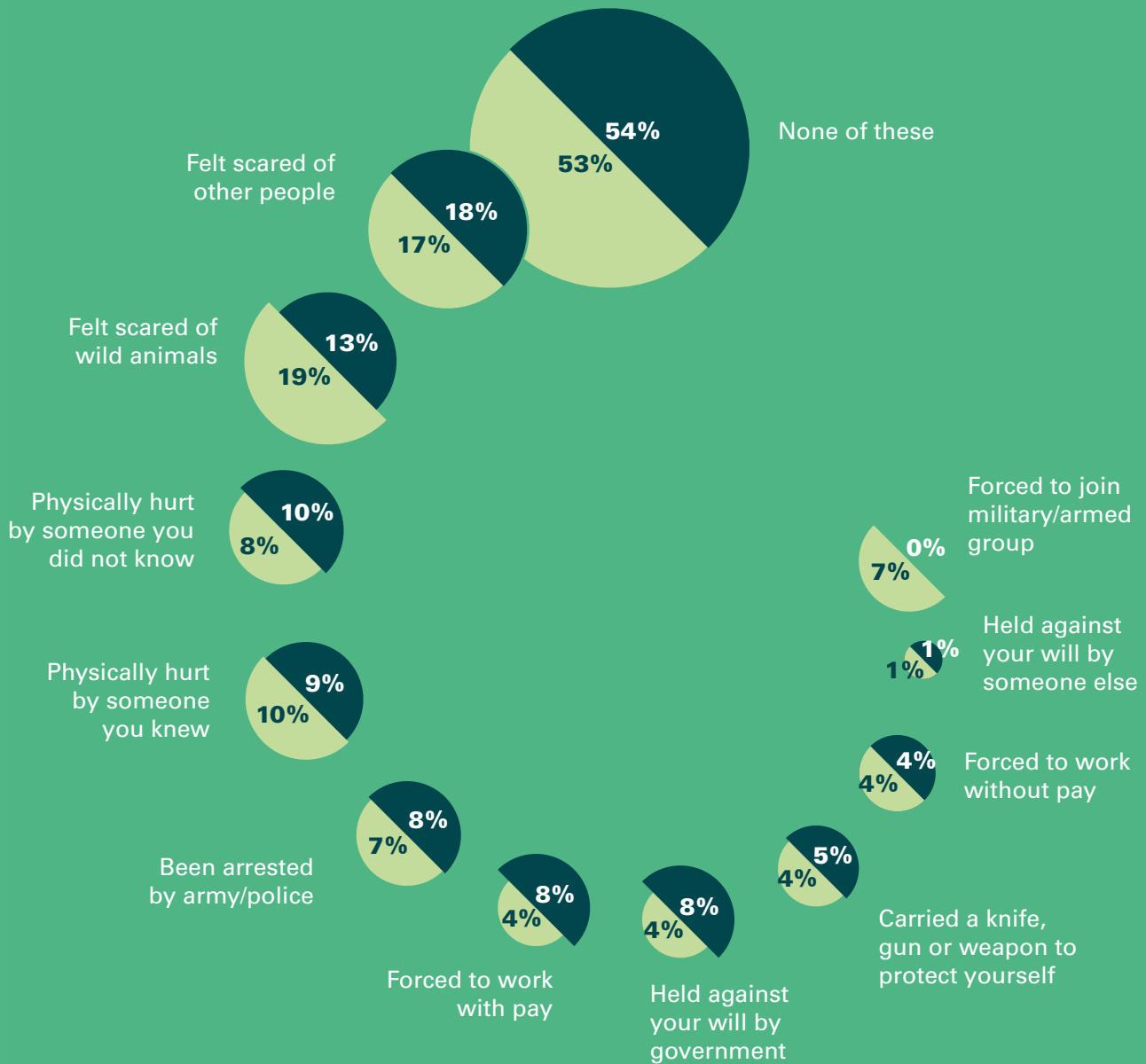
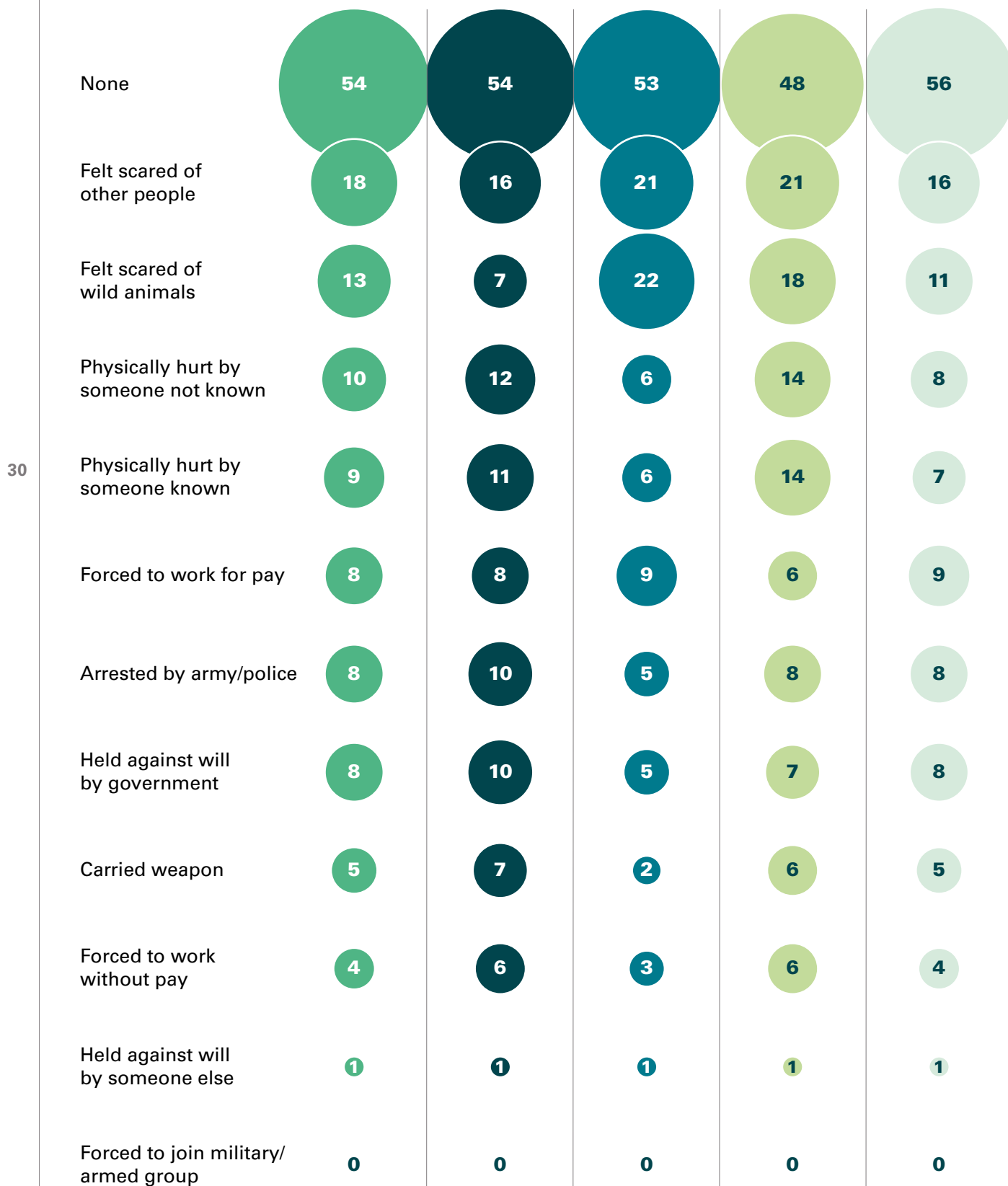


Figure 11: Incidence of harm and negative experiences in current location

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

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



Just over half (54 per cent) said that, while in their current location, they had not experienced any of these types of harm or vulnerability. The most common experiences were having felt scared of other people (18 per cent) or of wild animals (13 per cent). These findings were broadly similar, in most cases, across genders and ages. However, girls and young women were more likely than their male counterparts to feel scared of animals. Children were also slightly more likely to have faced some type of harm or negative experience than their older counterparts (see Figure 11).

More children than young people also reported being forced to join the military or another armed group (7 percentage points more) in their home areas.

The fact that respondents reported feeling safer where they were at the time of the interview, despite facing similar levels of vulnerability and harm, may partly be due to the weighting of the different types of harm. For example, the threat of being forced to join the military or another armed group is experienced specifically by Eritreans, who consistently cited this as their primary concern and the main reason for flight. While their current situation may be extremely challenging, by moving out of Eritrea they have avoided the greater threat of military service. 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.

Fewer felt happy now than back home

Respondents were asked about whether they felt happy or sad with their current life. This is a simple and accessible 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.⁴⁶

More were happy (45 per cent) than sad (35 per cent). One in five respondents described themselves as sometimes happy, sometimes sad (18 per cent). Overall, respondents were less positive than when they were asked the same question about their life back home: just over half recalled being happy (54 per cent) and around a third being sad (33 per cent).

In the qualitative research, those who expressed sadness with their situation focused on the lack of long-term options. For example, Eritrean students close to graduating said that even if they did well at secondary level, they would still be unable to advance to university or work in the formal sector, and they therefore felt pessimistic about their situation.

Of the children and young people, one in four was living alone, but most had friends with whom they spent time

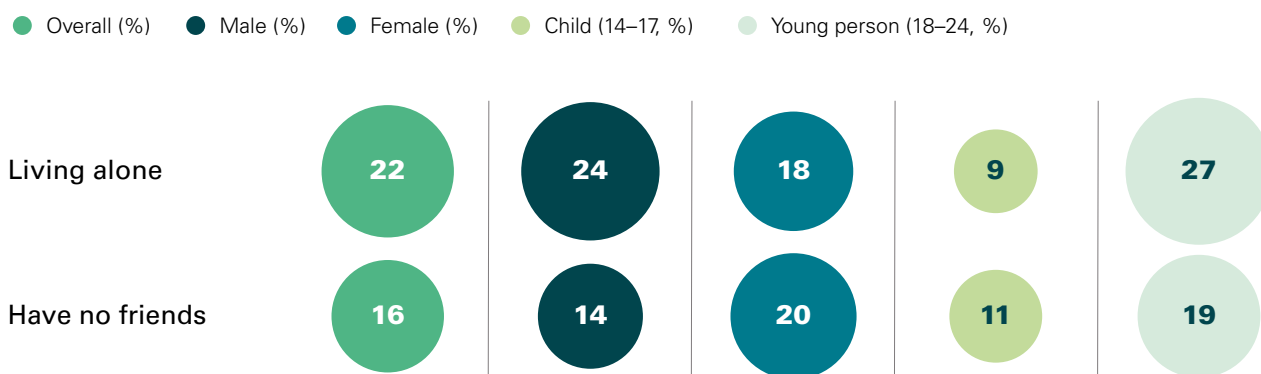
Of all those interviewed, almost one in four (22 per cent) was currently living alone (see Figure 12). Young people were far more likely than children to be living alone (27 per cent vs. 9 per cent). Only about a quarter (26 per cent) were living with their parents, although twice as many were living with other adults (49 per cent).

Overall, 16 per cent claimed to have no friends at all that they spent time with (see Figure 12). Around half (48 per cent) had a few friends and a third (35 per cent) a lot of friends. Those with no friends probably represent a particularly vulnerable subgroup that may be in particular need of assistance.

46. 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.

Figure 12: Children and young people living alone and with no friends

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



Being treated badly

Most children and young people (87 per cent) did not feel they were treated badly by the local people where they currently lived, while a similar proportion (82 per cent) had not felt badly treated back home. The qualitative data, however, point to the fact that relationships between the Sudanese and migrant populations, although generally positive, are increasingly coming under strain, especially in the context of Sudan’s current economic crisis. As one Eritrean student put it:

“The economic situation here is really bad, and it is making Sudanese less welcoming. There are many times when they call me ‘Habesha’ [Ethiopian]. They just call that at you in the street. I feel uncomfortable when I hear this.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Khartoum, November 2019

South Sudanese migrants also reported being told to go home, since they had voted for secession.⁴⁷ In some cases, discrimination was formalized in law. As one lawyer interviewed said:

“Foreigners, especially women, are discriminated against, for example in the matter of bail. For example, they will let me vouch for my sister to get her released, but I can’t do the same for a foreigner.”

– Interview with civil society representative, Khartoum, November 2019

Many children and young people do not have official documentation

Access to documentation is widely seen as having a protective function – not least if it proves eligibility to access particular services. Most of those interviewed for this study had some form of official identification. Around 3 in 10 had a national ID card (32 per cent) or a birth certificate (31 per cent). The next most common documentation was a national passport (19 per cent). Overall, a third of children and young people (33 per cent) had none of the documents listed in the survey.⁴⁸ Children were more likely than young people to have none of the types of documentation (43 per cent vs. 28 per cent).

47. Interview with community leader, Khartoum, January 2020.

48. The sample sizes were too small to assess directly the impact of documentation in the country-specific dataset. However, further analysis will be included in the regional report.

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.

There was a significant difference in access to birth registration by nationality. Although 31 per cent overall had a birth certificate, 55 per cent of Sudanese were registered, compared with only 22 per cent of Eritreans and 17 per cent of Ethiopians. The number of Sudanese with a birth certificate was substantially below the recorded national average of children under 5 who are registered (67 per cent).⁴⁹ This may be an indication that they come from more deprived areas or poorer families. However, although the rates of registration of Ethiopians were substantially below those of Sudanese, they were substantially above the national average in Ethiopia (3 per cent).⁵⁰ This could be an indication that more people are able to undertake late registration and acquire documents later in life, or it could mean that migrants who cross into Sudan come from backgrounds where they are more likely to be registered (e.g., wealthier and/or urban). It could also be an indication that individuals seek out documentation proactively if they intend to migrate. Finally, it could indicate that the rates of documentation acquisition have improved considerably in recent years (the latest figures are from 2016).

While documentation is important, in Sudan access to documentation is of limited utility if it is not accompanied by status that confers adequate rights, including to movement and residence. Although most were able to access some type of documentation and status, the qualitative research indicated that generally this did not confer the right to move legally within the country or to work. The type of permission to stay varies by nationality. Although newly arrived Eritreans and South Sudanese were generally able to access refugee status, this only gave them the right to live in the camps.

Those who want to leave the camps are generally unable to do so legally, as exemptions are typically only granted for medical care and resettlement. Those South Sudanese who had been in Sudan since before South Sudan's secession saw themselves as existing in a legal limbo, as many lost their Sudanese citizenship and their status has not been definitively resolved since.⁵¹ Ethiopians in Gedaref state are generally able to acquire temporary residence at relatively little cost, but this facility is only open to Ethiopians, not to any other nationality.⁵² Furthermore, their temporary residence status is ambiguous: while it grants them permission to stay, the right to work is not addressed (although in practice temporary residence permits are generally used for labour migration).⁵³ Similar temporary permits are also available in Khartoum, but at a higher cost. Some saw these temporary permits as protective:

“I encourage them to get the papers. But for many, money is an issue.”

– Interview with community leader, Khartoum, November 2019

Others disagreed:

“The immigrant IDs are very expensive and you don't get anything in return. They are not useful.”

– Interview with civil society representative, Khartoum, November 2019

The qualitative findings pointed to a correlation between lack of access to documentation and vulnerability to harm. The national authorities can reportedly impede the movement of foreigners. Given the government's encampment policy for refugees, those who move or live outside the camps are at risk of arbitrary arrest, even if they have refugee status.

49. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Birth registration', December 2019, <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/birth-registration/>>, accessed 4 March 2020.

50. Ibid.

51. Interview with community leader, Khartoum, January 2020.

52. Interview with international organization, Gedaref, November 2019.

53. Interview with civil society representative, Khartoum, November 2019.

According to one young Eritrean man:

“I was very stressed as the police had arrested me before and I was so afraid of being arrested again.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 22, Khartoum, November 2019

Another said:

“I worry about being targeted in a raid. In such a case I have only a school ID that I can produce.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Khartoum, November 2019

If Eritreans are arrested, they are generally sent to Shagarab refugee camp in eastern Sudan. Ethiopians, on the other hand, are usually deported. Other nationalities can also be targeted. As a lawyer providing services to migrants and refugees said:

“The government sometimes cracks down and raids immigrant neighbourhoods. The passports and Immigration Act says that you can be arrested for illegal entry. They can deport people and there have been cases where people have been expelled.”

– Interview with civil society representative, Khartoum, November 2019

The South Sudanese expressed less concern about arrest:

“They generally leave us alone and don’t ask us for ID.”

– Interview with community leader, Khartoum, January 2020

However, in some cases those arrested are asked for bribes in exchange for being released. In any case, more needs to be done to ensure that those who wish to can access a durable status.



Tired of playing, a young boy sleeps
at the UNICEF-supported Atfal El Gad
Child Friendly Centre in Tawila,
North Darfur, Sudan



CHAPTER 6

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 perceived 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, 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.

“So I found only a little bit of help. I am still waiting for my family, school and to read the Koran.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Shagarab refugee camp, December 2019

While significant efforts are being made in Sudan to ensure that children and young people have access to services (for example, by funding schools and other services and by creating a child-specific policing unit), it is clear that these efforts are under-resourced.

There are significant gaps in access to key services

Figure 13 shows the proportion of respondents who said that they had access to several key services. The findings demonstrate that, even in the case of those services that the majority of children and young people could access, that access was far from universal.

Three in four respondents had somewhere to wash their clothes/themselves (74 per cent) and access to clean drinking water (74 per cent). Around half had a mobile phone (51 per cent) and a similar proportion of girls and young women (50 per cent) had access to feminine hygiene products (e.g., sanitary pads). Fewer had money for day-to-day living (33 per cent) or access to the internet (27 per cent). More boys and young men than girls and young women had access to the internet (32 per cent vs. 20 per cent) and a mobile phone (55 per cent vs. 46 per cent).

On the contrary, more children than young people **did not** have access to a mobile phone (76 per cent vs. 36 per cent), the internet (85 per cent vs. 66 per cent), or money for day-to-day living (72 per cent vs. 62 per cent). However, a higher proportion of young people lacked access to clean drinking water (29 per cent vs. 18 per cent).

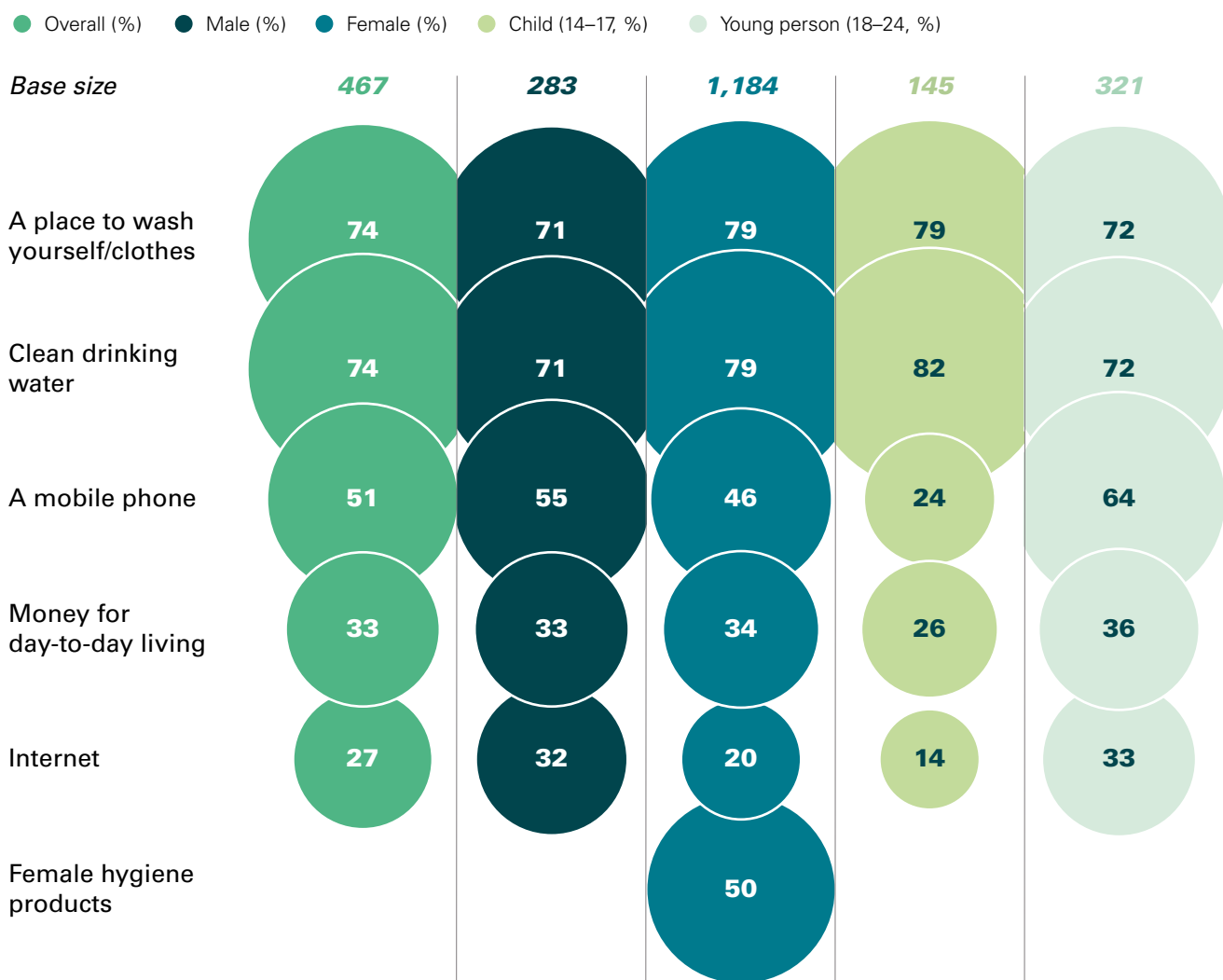
Most children and young people had accessed at least some services and support, but very few had used a social worker

The most frequent service or support that children and young people had received since they had started living in their current location involved a religious-based organization (68 per cent). More than half of respondents had accessed a health centre/hospital (58 per cent) or shelter/temporary accommodation (54 per cent). Of all respondents, 4 in 10 (40 per cent) had been to a school, including 70 per cent of children, indicating that younger respondents were better able to access education – perhaps because primary and secondary education (where one would expect to find children) was more accessible than university or vocational education (where one would be more likely to find young people); or simply because some young people may have finished their studies.

Only one respondent in eight (12 per cent) recalled using a social worker, making this one of the least accessed services of the 15 covered in the survey. However, children were much more likely to have accessed this service than young people (21 per cent vs. 7 per cent).

Figure 13: Access to key services

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



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Understanding demand for and gaps in support and services

To gain a better understanding of where there are gaps in the services for migrant children and young people, as well as being asked whether they had needed or actually used a service, the respondents were also asked to say whether they had “wanted to use the service/support, but were unable to do so”. This enables the approximate level of demand to be determined for each of the services or types of support covered in the research.

Figure 14 shows the proportion of children and young people who had used each service, together with the proportion who had wanted to but been unable to. Overall, the levels of unmet demand

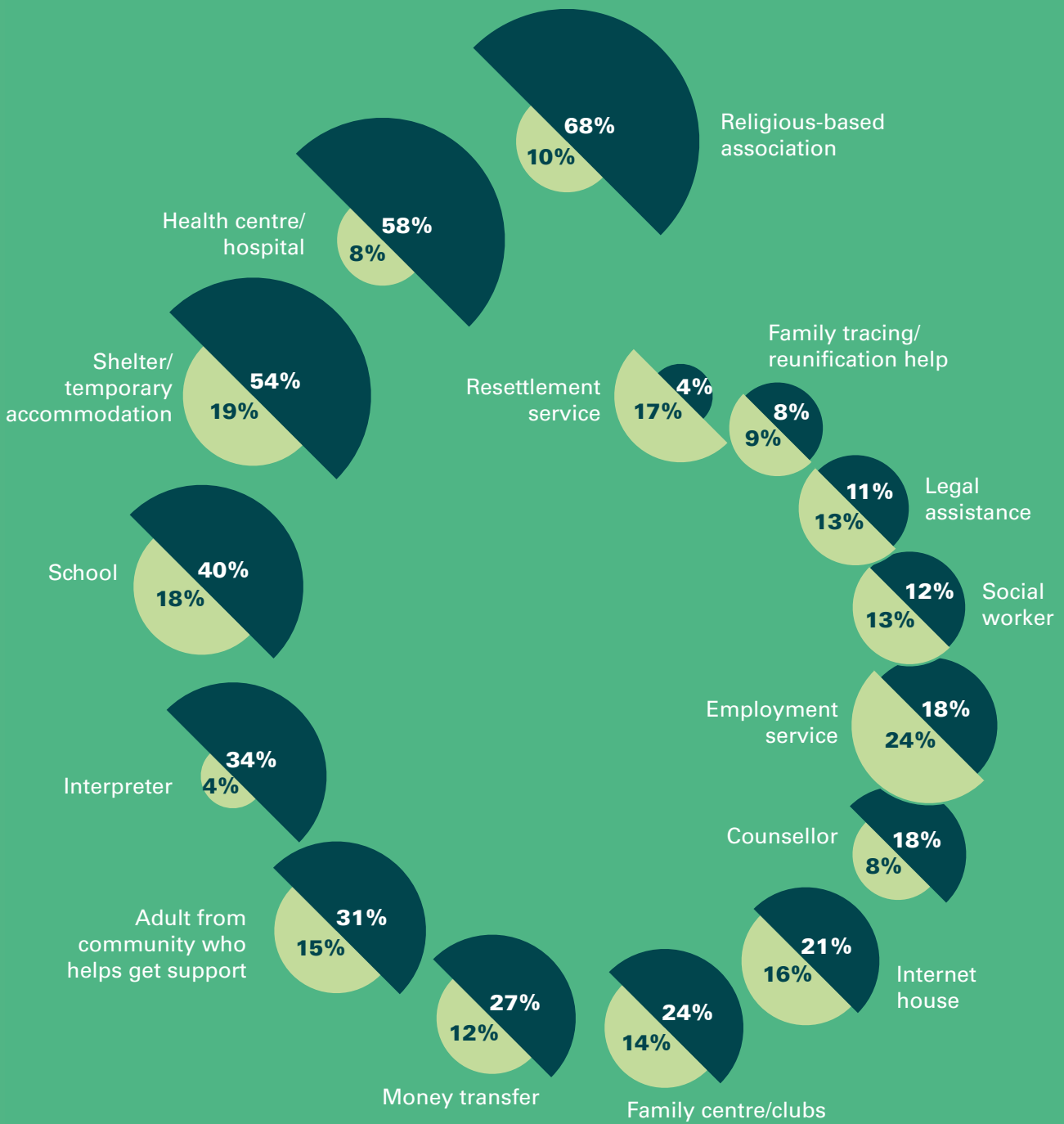
were relatively low. The fact that more respondents were able to access schools and health centres than had wanted to but been unable to is an indication that considerable progress has been made toward the aim of ensuring that migrant children can keep learning and accessing health services. However, the fact that 18 per cent had wanted to access school but been unable to (and 8 per cent had wanted to access health facilities but had failed) indicates that there are still gaps.

The service where there was the highest unmet demand was the employment service, which one in four (24 per cent) had been unable to use. This is also one of three services that more people had wanted to use than had actually done so. The other two were the resettlement service (17 per cent

Figure 14: Demand for services and support

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

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



had been unable to use it) and help with family tracing/reunification (9 per cent had been unable to access it).

The extent of the demand for employment services points to the fact that children and young people want to support themselves, seeing themselves as agents capable of improving their own situation. This is also, to some extent, a reflection of their frustration with other types of services: for many, working is realistically the only way of ensuring that their needs are met.

Combining the proportion who were able to use a particular service with the proportion who had wanted to (but could not), religious-based associations have the highest level of demand. Overall demand for these associations from children and young people was 78 per cent, followed by 73 per cent for shelter/accommodation, 66 per cent for a health centre/hospital and 58 per cent for school. Among children, the demand level was 84 per cent for school. Overall, among children and young people, one in four (24 per cent) either wanted to or had actually used a social worker.

There was a significant difference in access to key services by nationality. Ethiopians were significantly less likely than their Sudanese or Eritrean counterparts to be able to access key services, including schools, hospitals, counsellors and social workers.⁵⁴ **These results indicate that Ethiopians face more barriers in accessing services than other nationalities.** It may be that language plays a role, as Eritreans are more likely to have studied Arabic prior to travelling and to have at least a basic knowledge of Arabic. It may also be a result of discrimination or poor integration by the Ethiopian community.

Despite the significantly lower levels of access to services among Ethiopians, they did not express significantly more demand for them. This lack of demand is probably partly explained by the fact that the Ethiopians surveyed tended to have been in their current location for a shorter time

than their Sudanese and Eritrean counterparts (only 38 per cent of Ethiopians had been there for more than a year, compared with 50 per cent of Eritreans and 72 per cent of Sudanese). However, this is unlikely to be the whole story, as 49 per cent of Ethiopians had been there for at least six months, which is still a considerable period of time. It is likely that other factors also contributed – perhaps less awareness about the services available or frustration about making demands that remained unmet. Figure 15 further details unmet demand by those respondents who wanted, but were unable, to access key services.

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. Some 13 per cent of children and young people said “nothing”, but otherwise the most common answers are shown in Figure 16.

The key difference by gender was that twice as many boys and young men as girls and young women said they needed a job (21 per cent vs. 10 per cent). More young people than children said they needed money (9 percentage points higher) and a job (14 points higher), whereas more children identified school as a need (13 points higher).

It is worth noting that the responses coded here as school/education/training encompass a range of related requests, such as for general education or for specific skills training. Much of the interest in education was related to improving the respondents’ skills, so that they could access employment. There was also a strong link between money and jobs: on the one hand, some respondents wanted money to meet their basic needs; on the other hand, several said they wanted money in order to support or start a business of their own. Below are some typical comments:

54. With regard to schools, 49 per cent of Sudanese and 42 per cent of Eritreans had been to school, compared with only 19 per cent of Ethiopians. With regard to hospitals, 77 per cent of Sudanese and 64 per cent of Eritreans had used a hospital or clinic, compared with 34 per cent of Ethiopians. With regard to counselling, 26 per cent of Sudanese and 27 per cent of Eritreans had used a counsellor, compared with only 10 per cent of Ethiopians. With regard to a social worker, 15 per cent of Sudanese and 22 per cent of Eritreans had used a social worker, compared with only 5 per cent of Ethiopians.

Figure 15: Unmet demand for access to services

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

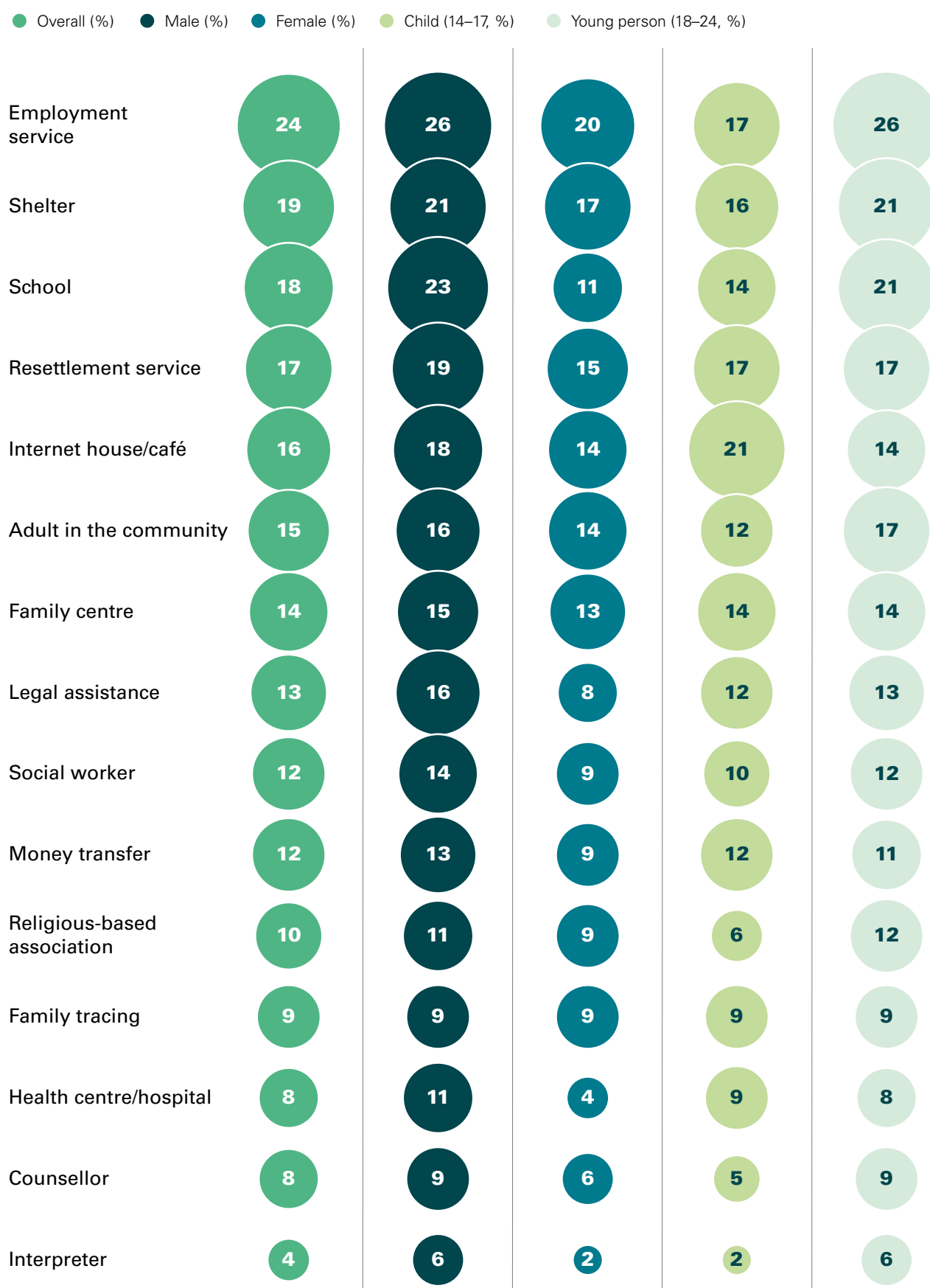
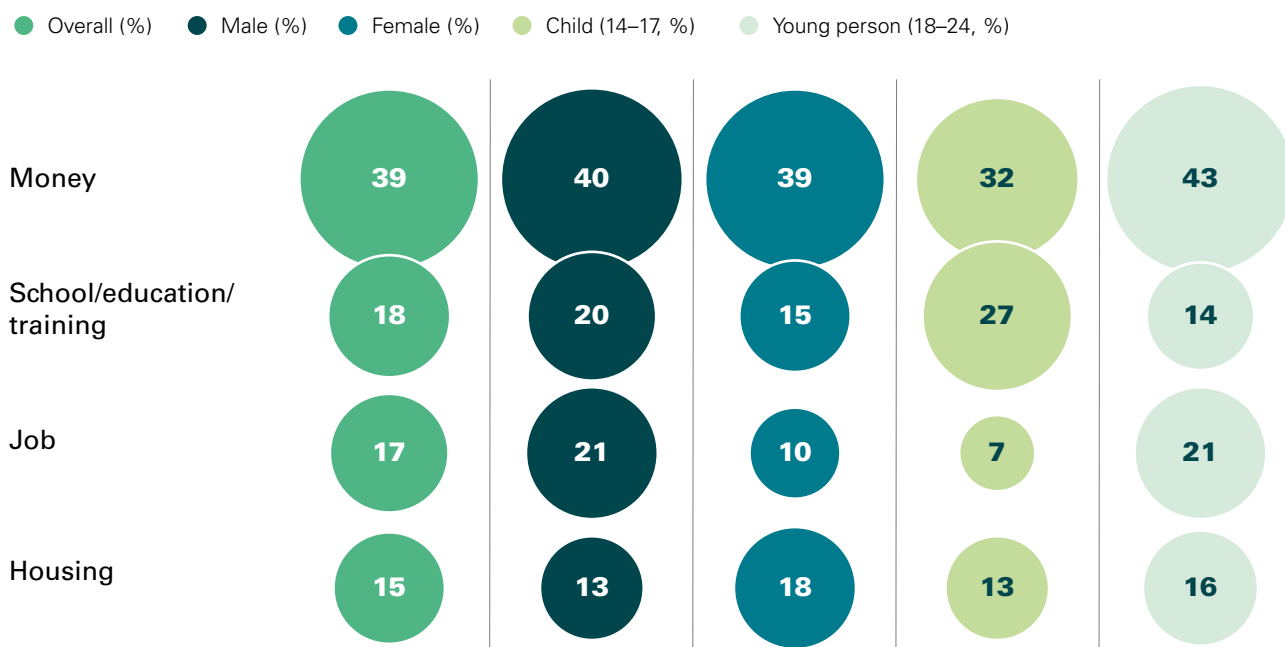


Figure 16: Other types of support that respondents would like

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



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“I need to work to change my life.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 22, Gedaref town, December 2019

“I need money to travel to another area.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 16, Lugdi, December 2019

“I need to work and return to my parents.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 19, Khartoum, November 2019

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.

Across all the services that respondents were asked about, the main barrier was lack of availability (42 per cent), followed by cost (24 per cent) and lack of knowledge of how to access the service (12 per cent). The other factors were obstacles to between 4 per cent and 7 per cent of those who had wanted to use a service. Given the number of responses to each of these questions, it is only possible to look at two services in detail.⁵⁵

For shelter/temporary accommodation, two key barriers to access were identified: cost (selected by 44 per cent) and lack of availability (35 per cent). For employment services, more than half (55 per cent) identified lack of availability as the main obstacle – far higher than any other impediment cited.

It is important to note that the qualitative interviews revealed strong links between availability barriers and cost barriers. When services were not available locally, that increased the cost in terms of both time and transportation. Some pointed out that internally displaced persons, South Sudanese refugees and others in poor areas faced barriers to access, because:

55. These are the services where at least 80 respondents in the survey provided a reason for why they felt they were unable to use this service.

“They have no money for private clinics or for the transport that would be needed to travel to the public ones.”

– Interview with key informant, Khartoum, November 2019

This was also pointed out among Ethiopians in camps in eastern Sudan: although primary schools were available in the camps and were generally accessible, the nearest available secondary school was in the next town:

“For secondary school, they can go if they are able to pay for the fees and the transport. I would say, however, that out of every 20, only 3 can go to school.”

– Interview with Ethiopian community leader, November 2019

The qualitative research revealed a number of **complex and overlapping barriers** that were preventing some children and young people from getting the support or services they felt they needed, as detailed below.

Lack (or poor quality) of services

This was mentioned by many of those interviewed. In some cases, those services identified as necessary were simply not available. For example, **safe houses** were mentioned as a serious gap, particularly in Gedaref. In other cases, as noted above, services may be a long way from the population being targeted. In yet other cases, services were viewed as ineffective. There was concern that, despite the significant resources that have been assigned by international donors to assisting migrants, there was little evidence of their impact. As one social worker said:

“I don’t want to say that there is corruption, but where is all that huge money going?”

– Interview with government official, Khartoum, January 2020

And a local community leader said:

“Partners ... do not provide services as they should ... this makes the efforts of international organizations ineffective.”

– Interview with community leader, Khartoum, November 2019

Calls for accountability have been made, particularly in the context of the current political transition in Sudan. This has probably increased the sensitivity of the population to these issues.

Lack of documentation

Although services, such as schools, are supposed to be equally accessible to Sudanese and non-Sudanese children, in practice there was discrimination. In the first instance, those without documentation had particular difficulty in accessing services (and, as noted above, Eritreans and Ethiopians are less likely to have documentation). In the case of exams, higher fees are charged for non-nationals than for nationals. In such cases, barriers may have been presented as a cost barrier.

Discrimination

As well as barriers related to documentation, non-Sudanese children also reported discrimination. As one key informant noted:

“In practice, even if you go with papers, they will not let you register. Between the issues of religion and language, they often discriminate.”

– Interview with community leader, Khartoum, November 2019

In particular, foreign students reportedly faced marked discrimination when it came to examinations that would allow them to pass on to the next level of education. Migrant children were sometimes blocked from sitting these examinations, both by a lack of documentation and by being asked to pay a significantly higher examination fee than locals; moreover, it had to be paid in dollars, which made it prohibitively expensive for most students.

CHAPTER 7

**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).

Describing the area where they lived at the time of the survey

Children and young people were divided on whether the place where they now lived was lonely (52 per cent) or was somewhere they could get help (45 per cent).

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

Many more respondents believed that the authorities did not care about their needs than believed they did (70 per cent vs. 25 per cent). Perhaps one reason why so many children and young people felt that the authorities did not care about their needs was that only 4 per cent recalled having had any contact with a government official within the past month (and 84 per cent said they had never had any contact). This may also explain why only around a third of survey respondents (35 per cent) believed that government officials would help someone like them (see Figure 17).

Government officials received a similar rating to the police⁵⁶ (41 per cent believed the police would help them), although more children and young people felt that the police would harm them than said the same about government officials (27 per cent vs. 18 per cent). Of the nine groups on the survey list, family (83 per cent positive) and friends (79 per cent positive) were the most likely to be regarded as helpful.

Many more children and young people felt that teachers would help them than said the same about social workers (70 per cent vs. 49 per cent); however, this was mainly because one in four

(25 per cent) said they did not know what to think about social workers, rather than because they believed social workers would do them harm. A fuller disaggregation by gender and age can be found in Figure 18.

Children are somewhat more positive than young people about teachers (85 per cent vs. 62 per cent) and religious leaders (73 per cent vs. 62 per cent), probably reflecting higher levels of contact with these groups among children.

The qualitative interviews captured some views on police and government officials that may help to explain the generally low opinion of these actors. As one example, a key informant said:

“Sometimes the police can take the food that we provide for migrants.”

– Interview with civil society representative, Gedaref, November 2019

Other key informants reflected that the police, particularly the public order police, regularly harassed migrant populations for minor infractions, such as going out in mixed groups, wearing inappropriate dress, selling tea or brewing alcohol.⁵⁷ Furthermore, some reported that police attitudes were problematic:

“In addition to bringing them against their will, they also sometimes treat them badly. So, they come with a bad feeling from the beginning.”

– Interview with government official, Khartoum, January 2020

Community support structures play a vital role

In a context in which so many believe that official mechanisms are unlikely to help them, children and young people look to multiple informal sources of help.

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

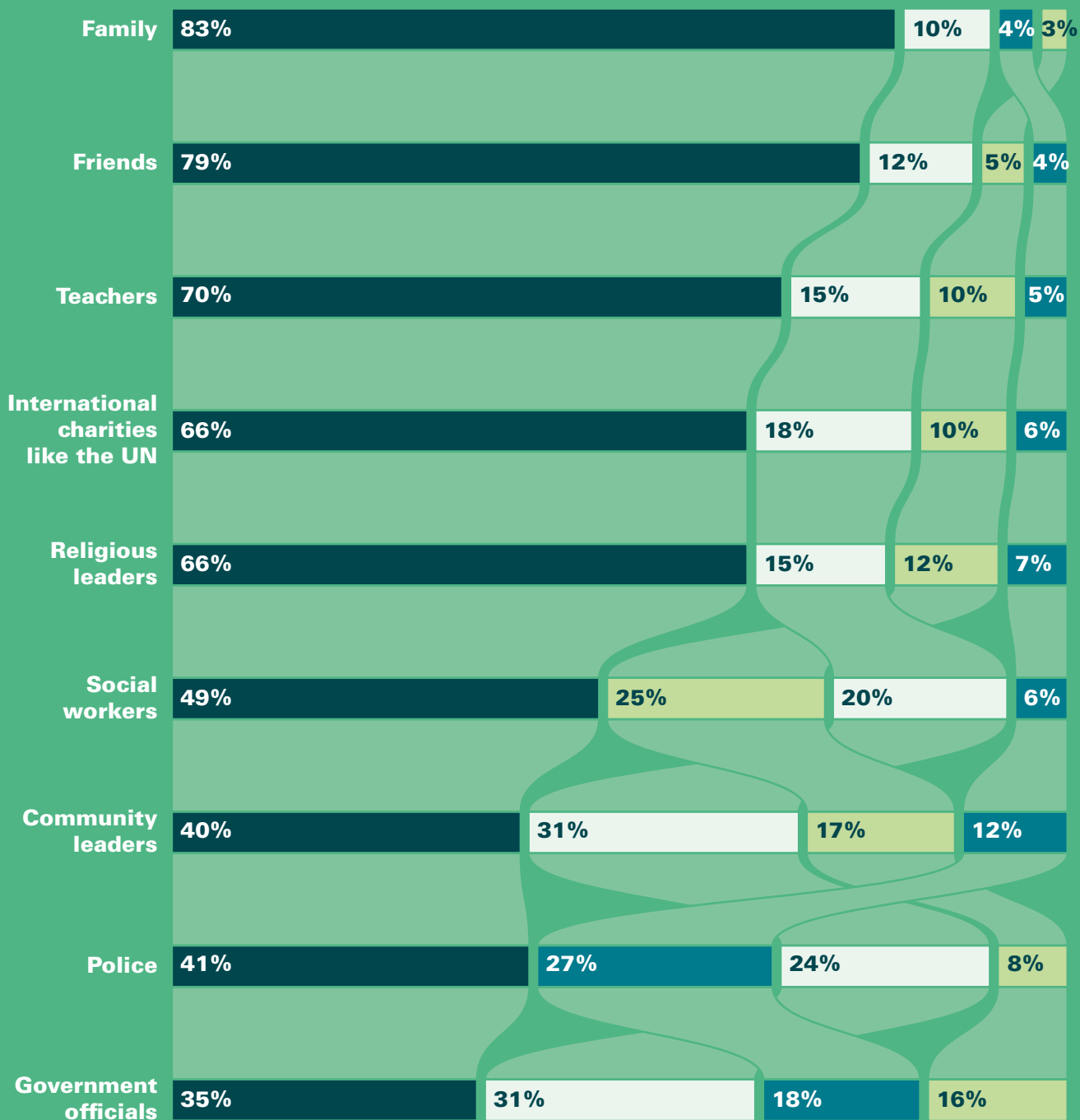
57. Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, *Beyond Trousers: The Public Order Regime and the Human Rights of Women and Girls in Sudan*, 12 November 2009, <<https://sihanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Beyond-Trousers-EnglishFrench.pdf>>, accessed 2 March 2020.

Figure 17: Whom do children and young people perceive would help them?⁵⁸

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

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

■ Help ■ Depends ■ Harm ■ Don't know



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

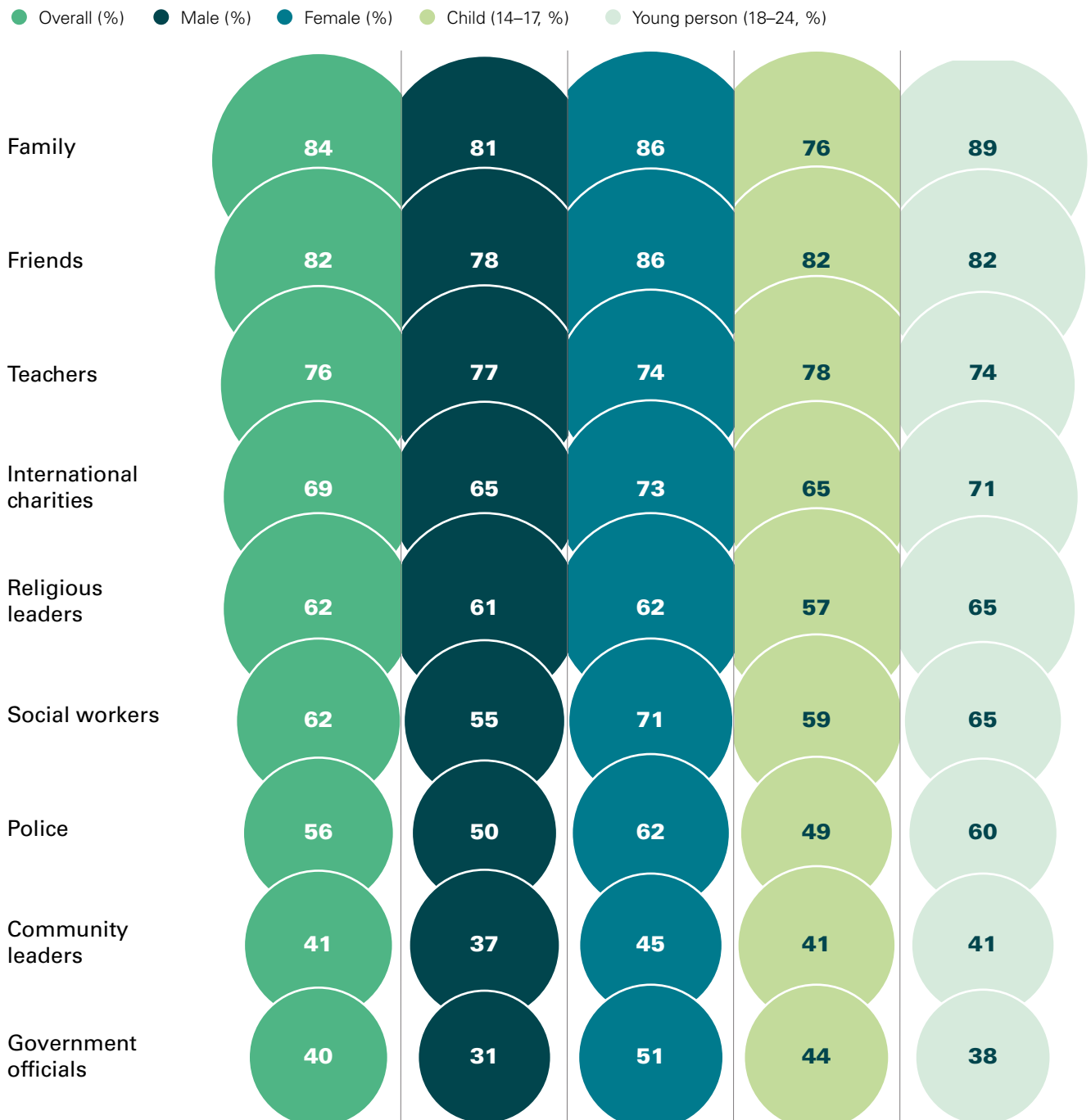
For some – particularly those living in the camps – this may involve remittances from relatives abroad. For others, help comes from family or community structures.

In some areas, local communities (including migrant communities) have come to act as service providers, offering shelter and schooling.

Although concerns have been raised about possible inappropriate action in these community organizations (for example, asking for kickbacks for job placement), they still retain an important role. Some of the migrants are being supported by international organizations, and this can create tensions in the approaches to strengthening the local systems.

Figure 18: Whom do children and young people trust to help them?

Base: 405 migrant children and young people, July–October 2019, Sudan.



CHAPTER 8

48

**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 Sudan. The box 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.

These findings point to some patterns of experience that differ between girls and young women and boys and young men. More boys and young men left home without parental support. This might be related to cultural standards, which place greater pressure on girls and young women to stay near to home and support their families.

The fact that boys and young men are less likely than girls and young women to have parental support to move is likely related to their greater tendency to rely on friends for planning; it may also explain, at least in part, why they are more likely to move alone and why they are more vulnerable to certain risks (likely linked to moving without the family unit as a protective structure).

Profile

- Twice as many boys/young men as girls/young women interviewed were Eritrean (29 per cent vs. 16 per cent) and began their journey in Eritrea (29 per cent vs. 16 per cent). This may be linked to the prevalence of conscription there.
- More boys/young men than girls/young women were working before they left (32 per cent vs. 13 per cent).
- More girls/young women than boys/young men had a child of their own (26 per cent vs. 6 per cent).

Why do children and young people move?

- More boys/young men than girls/young women cite economic hardship as a reason for moving (80 per cent vs. 66 per cent).
- More girls/young women than boys/young men moved with their parents' support (66 per cent vs. 46 per cent).
- More boys/young men than girls/young women moved without telling their parents (31 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- More girls/young women than boys/young men relied on their family to help plan their journey (59 per cent vs. 35 per cent), whereas boys/young men relied more on their friends (27 per cent vs. 13 per cent) or nobody else (32 per cent vs. 19 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to trust their friends (33 per cent vs. 16 per cent) about the dangers involved in the journey, while girls/young women placed more faith in their families (52 per cent vs. 43 per cent).

What risks do children and young people face in transit?

- Twice as many boys/young men as girls/young women travelled by themselves (19 per cent vs. 10 per cent).
- More girls/young women than boys/young men felt scared of wild animals (24 per cent vs. 14 per cent).

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

- More boys/young men than girls/young women felt unsafe, particularly at night (32 per cent vs. 23 per cent).
- More girls/young women than boys/young men said they felt scared of wild animals where they now lived (22 per cent vs. 7 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have a lot of friends (40 per cent vs. 28 per cent).
- A higher proportion of girls/young women hold a national passport (27 per cent vs. 14 per cent).

Can migrant children and young people access services and support?

- More boys/young men than girls/young women had accessed a family centre/club (31 per cent vs. 12 per cent), employment services (22 per cent vs. 13 per cent) and an internet café (26 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- More boys/young men than girls/young women had wanted, but been unable, to access school (23 per cent vs. 11 per cent) and legal assistance (16 per cent vs. 8 per cent).
- More boys/young men than girls/young women had access to the internet (32 per cent vs. 20 per cent) and a mobile phone (55 per cent vs. 46 per cent).
- A much higher proportion of boys/young men than girls/young women were part of a sports group; this was true both back home, before they moved (33 per cent vs. 9 per cent), and where they now lived (27 per cent vs. 6 per cent).
- More boys/young men than girls/young women said that the police would harm someone like them (31 per cent vs. 20 per cent).

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

- A higher proportion of girls/young women than boys/young men said they planned to stay where they were for the next six months (37 per cent vs. 28 per cent).

Sana Ibrahim Abdel Rehman, 9 years old, stands next to the wall she uses as a blackboard in her house in Abu Shouk IDP Camp, North Darfur, Sudan



CHAPTER 9

52

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

Our findings from the quantitative research show some differences between the experiences and attitudes of migrant children (14–17) and young people (18–24) in Sudan. The box 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.

Some of the differences between children and young people are intuitive: children are clearly less likely to be married or to have children; they are also more likely to seek and receive schooling than are young people.

Profile

- More children than young people were Eritreans (37 per cent vs. 18 per cent) or South Sudanese (21 per cent vs. 7 per cent).
- More young people than children were Ethiopians (44 per cent vs. 5 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have only primary education (82 per cent vs. 59 per cent), whereas young people were more likely than children to have secondary education (28 per cent vs. 9 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to be married (18 per cent vs. 3 per cent), and to have children of their own (18 per cent vs. 3 per cent).



Children raise their hands to answer question during a maths class at the Jamhouria Basic School in Ad Damazin, Sudan.

It is interesting, however, that children appear more likely than young people to be supported in their migration. They are more likely to move with their family or with their family's support. They are more likely to be able to access a number of services. However, some children do remain vulnerable: for example, nearly 1 in 10 lives alone, and 30 per cent of them have not been able to go to school where they now live. Beyond these gaps in support for children, however, lie even bigger gaps in addressing the needs of young people. For example, 29 per cent of them lack access to clean water. And most of them seek assistance in the form of jobs and employment, which would allow them to take care of themselves.

It would be interesting to investigate further why it is that children are more likely to be detained than young people, and why they are more likely to plan to stay where they are for at least six months.

Why do children and young people move?

- Young people were more likely than children to cite economics as their primary reason for moving (56 per cent vs. 26 per cent), whereas children were more likely than young people to cite insecurity (43 per cent vs. 20 per cent).
- More children than young people were living in Eritrea when they started their journey (35 per cent vs. 18 per cent), whereas more young people than children started from Ethiopia (44 per cent vs. 6 per cent).
- More children than young people moved with their parents' support (65 per cent vs. 49 per cent).
- More children than young people were in school before they left (74 per cent vs. 58 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to have been working (29 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to report having been scared of wild animals back home (28 per cent vs. 16 per cent).
- More children than young people trusted their families to provide information about the dangers of the journey (56 per cent vs. 43 per cent).
- More children than young people relied on their family to help plan their journey (61 per cent vs. 37 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to use a smuggler (18 per cent vs. 9 per cent) or nobody (30 per cent vs. 21 per cent).
- More children than young people said that they would now be studying if they had not left home (43 per cent vs. 26 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to say that they would be working (36 per cent vs. 25 per cent).

What risks do children and young people face in transit?

- More children than young people walked (61 per cent vs. 44 per cent) or used a lorry/truck (39 per cent vs. 28 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to use a car/minibus (55 per cent vs. 40 per cent).
- More children than young people felt scared of wild animals during their journey (26 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- More children than young people reported that they didn't have to pay anyone for their journey (43 per cent vs. 24 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have travelled by themselves (19 per cent vs. 9 per cent) or with people they didn't know (37 per cent vs. 22 per cent) or friends (41 per cent vs. 30 per cent), whereas children were more likely to have travelled with family (65 per cent vs. 30 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have been detained at a border (25 per cent vs. 12 per cent).

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

- More young people than children were living alone at the time of the survey (27 per cent vs. 9 per cent).
- More young people than children described the area where they lived as 'lonely' (56 per cent vs. 44 per cent) and said that the authorities did not care about their needs (74 per cent vs. 60 per cent).

Can migrant children and young people access services and support?

- More children than young people were members of a sports group (28 per cent vs. 15 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to access a religious-based organization (79 per cent vs. 63 per cent), school (70 per cent vs. 27 per cent), a health centre (68 per cent vs. 53 per cent), to get an adult in their community to help them (41 per cent vs. 27 per cent), a counsellor (27 per cent vs. 15 per cent) or a social worker (21 per cent vs. 7 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have used an employment service (22 per cent vs. 9 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have never gone to school (30 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to ask for support in the form of a job (21 per cent vs. 7 per cent) or money (43 per cent vs. 32 per cent), whereas children were more likely to ask to go to school (27 per cent vs. 14 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children not have to access to clean drinking water (29 per cent vs. 18 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people not to have access to money for day-to-day living (72 per cent vs. 62 per cent), mobile phones (76 per cent vs. 36 per cent) and the internet (85 per cent vs. 66 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have none of the types of documentation asked about (43 per cent vs. 28 per cent), and young people were more likely than children to have a national ID (40 per cent vs. 15 per cent) or a passport (25 per cent vs. 7 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to believe that teachers (85 per cent vs. 62 per cent) or religious leaders (73 per cent vs. 62 per cent) would help them.

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

- More children than young people planned to stay where they were for the next six months (38 per cent vs. 28 per cent).



CHAPTER 10

56

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

“I came to earn money, but I failed.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, aged 18, Khartoum, November 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.

It was revealing that two thirds of children and young people (66 per cent) said that they planned to move somewhere else in the next six months – much higher than the 31 per cent who planned to stay. Overall, therefore, the lack of access to long-term and stable legal status, and the barriers they face in accessing both higher education and employment have left young people feeling that there is no viable option in Sudan, which encourages them to look further afield. While in reality many will not have the means or opportunity to move on (as underlined by the fact that 68 per cent had been in their current location for at least seven months), this does show the need for services to take both a short-term and a long-term perspective in responding to the challenges of movement and migration.

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.

Systems and 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.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰

— In the specific context of Sudan, this recognition should lead to increased efforts to expand freedom of movement, including by replacing or making amendments to the Regulation of Asylum Act 2014, in order to remove restrictions on freedom of movement for refugees.

Services need to be expanded and strengthened 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

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

60. 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*, 2017, <https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_95956.html>, accessed 10 August 2020.

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 to all children. As was suggested in a 2018 UNICEF global evaluation,⁶¹ 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 research capacity. Partnerships at the regional and international level can also ensure that the rights and needs of migrant children are fulfilled.

Children and young people who move for economic reasons are more likely to move without the support of their parents than are those who move for security reasons. This suggests that efforts need to be made to identify unaccompanied migrants within migrant communities.

Efforts must be made to monitor access to services for migrant communities and to ensure that those who are underserved are the subject of specific outreach and expansion efforts. This research, for example, has exposed significant gaps in services for Ethiopians, suggesting

that additional outreach to this community and reinforcement of languages/interpretation capacity for key services and/or additional support for community-based services should be tried as strategies to redress this gap.

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.⁶²

- In Sudan, this should also include provisions to clarify and extend long-term status, with a path toward citizenship for migrant children and young people. This 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.

61. United Nations Children's Fund, Evaluation Office, *Strengthening Child Protection Systems*.

62. 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.

Hawa Addin Sultan stands in evening sunlight near a UNICEF-supported water collection point, in Abu Shouk IDP Camp, just outside El-Fasher, Sudan



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for every child, answers

