

REIMAGINING MIGRATION RESPONSES *in Ethiopia*

**SUMMARY
REPORT**

Learning from migrant children
and young people's experiences



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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 Ethiopia. It is part of a wider regional study that focuses on three countries in the Horn of Africa region: Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan.¹

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1. Lucy Hovil, Mark Gill, Iolanda Genovese, Olivia Bueno, Josiah Kaplan and Ramya Subrahmanian, *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

BOWCA	Bureau of Women and Children Affairs
CBO	Community-based organization
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	Civil society organization
ESSSWA	Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
INVEA	Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOWCY	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

GLOSSARY

Asylum seeker

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

Best interests assessment and determination

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

Child

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

Forcibly displaced

Refers to refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons.

Horn of Africa

For the purposes of this report, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, 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).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration is a regular feature of life in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa 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 natural disasters or inter-ethnic and communal violence. Of the nearly 3 million migrants in Ethiopia,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 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, as well as little understanding of the coping mechanisms that they

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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 of migrants as "An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons." International Organization for Migration, 'Who is a Migrant?', IOM, Geneva, undated, <www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>, accessed 10 August 2020.
 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. 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, 'What is Child Protection', UNICEF, New York, 2006.
 9. See, for example: United Nations Children's Fund and International Organization for Migration, *Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea*, UNICEF and IOM, 2017, <www.unicef.org/media/49046/file/Harrowing_Journeys_Children_and_youth_on_the_move_across_the_Mediterranean-ENG.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2020; United Nations Development Programme, *Scaling Fences: Voices of irregular African migrants to Europe*, UNDP, 2019, <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.
 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, <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, <www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/Child-Migration-Horn-of-Africa-part-1.pdf>, accessed 8 March 2021. One exception has been 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', United Nations Children's Fund, 16 November 2017, <blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/children-and-migration-decisions-evidence-from-the-gallup-world-poll/>, accessed 30 December 2020.

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

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, particularly those who are compelled to seek unsafe and irregular routes.¹⁵

- Children and young people will be willing to take significant risks to pursue the opportunities that migration can offer. In Ethiopia, long-term, sustainable solutions (including access to legal status and (re)integration) need to be found for children and young people who do not want to move onward (but feel ‘forced’ to do so). However, family problems were the second most mentioned reason for moving; therefore, determining the best interests of the child must involve considering alternatives to return, in situations where other solutions are needed.

12. The lack of empirical data on migrant children has been recognized in the literature. See, for example, 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.

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

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

Although a number of programmes have been mobilized to address these gaps, they are often driven by donor priorities aimed at reducing migration from the continent, thereby neglecting those who remain within their country or region of origin. Yet, in reality, the highest levels of movement comprise rural to urban migration and internal displacement within countries; a smaller but still significant number of people cross 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.

- In the context of Ethiopia, a strong child protection system should be promoted through: (1) a robust legal and policy system (finalization of the national migration policy); (2) effective governance structures; (3) a continuum of services (integrated, multi-sectoral and spanning from prevention to response); (4) minimum standards and oversight mechanisms (including strengthening the capacity of the social service workforce for child protection); (5) human and financial resources (increased protection and outreach, particularly in border areas through the presence of social workers, counsellors, capacity building on child rights in training curricula for police, border officials and service providers); and (6) social participation (support trusted protection mechanisms within communities, such as Community Care Coalitions, community-based organizations, family).¹⁷

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

The vast majority of respondents cited multiple reasons for their movement, including both security and economic concerns.¹⁹

- 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 Ethiopia, legislation and policies need to facilitate access to legal status and documentation (including birth certificates, *kebele* IDs, residence permits) to ensure that all children, including migrant children and young people, are able to access services.

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 1

6

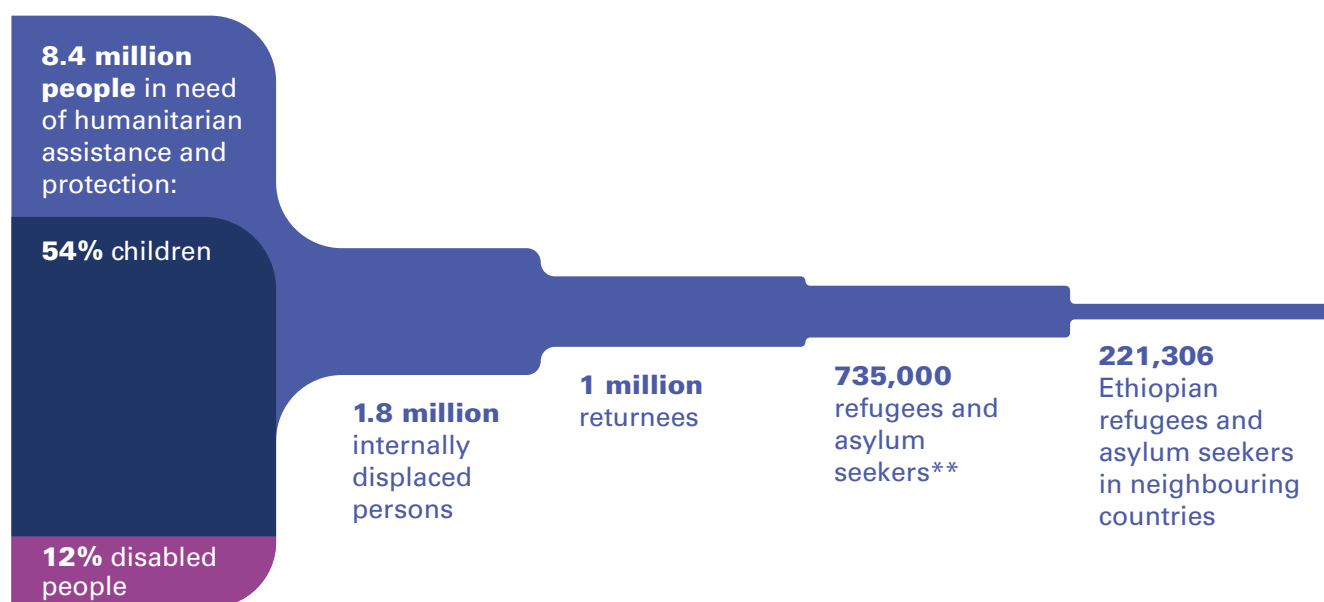
ETHIOPIA: THE MIGRATION CONTEXT

Ethiopia is currently the second largest refugee-hosting country on the continent. It is not only hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees, but it is also at the epicentre of several other forms of movement.²⁰ It has a significant population of internally displaced persons; it continues to generate refugees, albeit in considerably smaller numbers than two decades ago; it is a transit country for migrants moving across the region; it is a major source of international migration; and it has witnessed considerable rural–urban migration within its borders. In addition, Ethiopia’s diaspora is considered to be one of the largest in Africa.²¹

In January 2020, Ethiopia was hosting 1.8 million internally displaced persons²² and 735,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers,²³ while over 2 million Ethiopians were living outside the country.²⁴ In each group, given the demographic prevalence of youth in the region, a significant number (more than 50 per cent) are children and young people. The decrease in the current number of internally displaced persons follows a government-led return process that began in April 2019²⁵ while a recently completed comprehensive (level 3) registration of refugees has contributed to a decrease in their numbers.²⁶

Figure 1: Key figures about migration in Ethiopia*

Source: OCHA and UNHCR statistics.²⁷



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

** Refugees are in addition to the 8.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

20. Zewdu, Girmachew Adugna, 'Ethiopian Female Domestic Labour Migration to the Middle East: Patterns, trends, and drivers', *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2018, pp. 6–19.
21. Kuschminder, Katherine, and Melissa Siegel, *Understanding Ethiopian diaspora engagement policy*, UNU-MERIT working paper series 2011-040, UNU-MERIT, Maastricht, 2011.
22. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020: Ethiopia*, OCHA, New York, January 2020, <reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ethiopia%20Humanitarian%20Needs%20Overview%202020.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2020.
23. Ibid.
24. Ayalew Mengiste, Tekalign, 'Struggle for Mobility: Risk, Hope and Community of Knowledge in Eritrean and Ethiopian Migration Pathways towards Sweden' (PhD diss.), Stockholm University, 2017.
25. United Nations Children's Fund, *Humanitarian Situation Report*, SitRep #6, UNICEF Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 2019, <reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20Ethiopia%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20report%20-%20Mid-year%202019.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2019.
26. As of March 2019, the population of internally displaced persons was 3,043,695 and the refugee population was 905,831.
27. Data from: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020: Ethiopia*; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends in Forced Displacement 2017*, UNHCR, Geneva, June 2018.

CHAPTER 2

8

WHO WAS INTERVIEWED AND HOW?

The mixed-methods research focused on the positive and negative experiences of migrant children and young people. The research took place in the capital city of Addis Ababa and in five regions across Ethiopia, 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 (aged 18–24). This allows comparisons to be drawn between age groups, and reflects the reality that many children transition to adulthood while on their journeys 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 tool. 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 interview maps could be more easily adapted to the demands of interviewing younger children. In total, qualitative interviews took place with three younger children (aged between 10 and 13) and 19 older participants (14–24 years).

The research was conducted in the regions of Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Tigray, and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), and in Addis Ababa City Administration. The sites were chosen to reflect the diversity of migration within and from Ethiopia, and included: areas with significant numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees; areas with significant rural to urban movement; and areas with significant levels of outward migration.

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 Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), with training given by the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti. A total of **405 quantitative interviews** were conducted with

children and young people, using a standardized 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 of children and young people, their behaviour and their knowledge of 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 across Ethiopia, 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.²⁸ Respondents were selected by a variety of means, including with the help of local community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), OSSREA's network, UNICEF partners, 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 data

28. *Reimagining Migration Responses: Learning from migrant children and young people in the Horn of Africa*. Multi-country research report., UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2021.

Map 1: Children on the Move research sites



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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.

could be gathered on obstacles to access. The quantitative approach allowed for a measurement of the extent to which children and young people (the survey respondents) faced different types of risk, harm and negative experiences, as well as the prevalence of other indicators covered in the research.

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

Topic guides were developed to aid the qualitative discussions, which were conducted by the research team. A total of **85 qualitative interviews** were held: 22 with migrant children and young people (aged 10–24); 20 with family members, community members and members of community-based organizations (CBOs) and faith-based organizations; 14 with representatives from NGOs, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs) and academics; and 29 with government officials and frontline workers (see Figures 2a and 2b).

The interviews included a cross-section of nationalities, ages and patterns of migration (including internally displaced persons, refugees, other migrants and returnees), and took place between July and October 2019. Relevant research protocols addressing both ethics and protection were developed and used throughout the research process,²⁹ in line with in-country requirements, the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis³⁰ and UNICEF Innocenti's ethical guidelines.³¹ These protocols were established to

Figure 2a: Qualitative interviews – children and young people

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

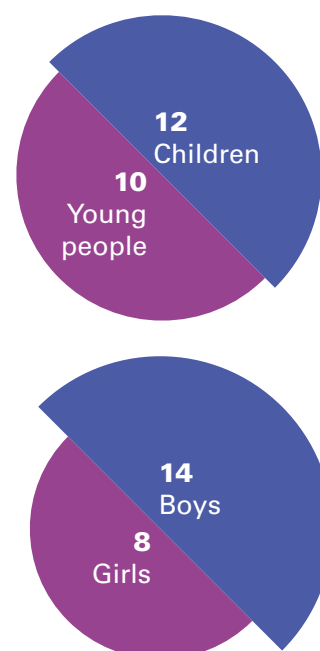
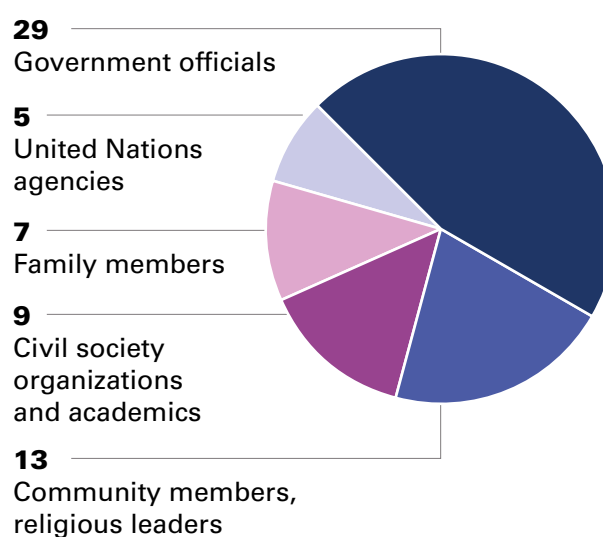


Figure 2b: Qualitative interviews – key informants

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

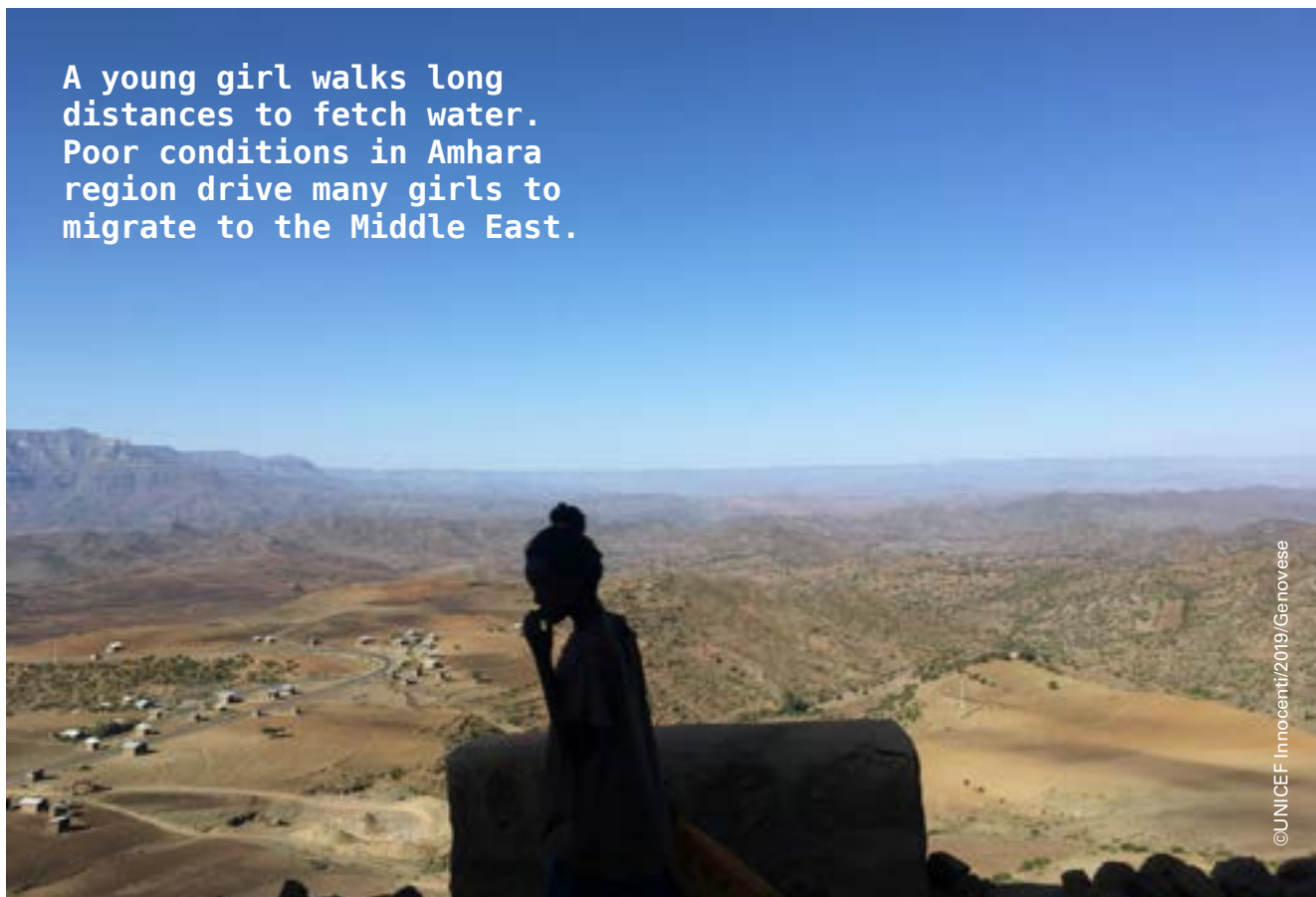


29. The ethical considerations for this research meant that some sensitive topics, such as personal experience of abuse, sexual violence, female genital mutilation/cutting or child marriage, were not covered in the quantitative research, but could have been raised as issues during the more nuanced qualitative discussions.

30. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis', UNICEF, New York, 2015, <www.unicef.org/media/54796/file>, accessed 30 December 2020.

31. Graham, Anne, et al., *Ethical Research Involving Children*, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2013, <www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/eric-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf>, accessed 30 December 2020.

A young girl walks long distances to fetch water. Poor conditions in Amhara region drive many girls to migrate to the Middle East.



ensure that all participants gave informed consent/assent and that the principles of ethical research were adhered to. In addition to receiving ethical clearance both from an external Ethics Review Board, and in country by the Ethiopian Society of Sociologists, Social Workers and Anthropologists (ESSWA), the UNICEF Country Office obtained specific approval from the relevant government counterparts in Ethiopia. A steering committee, led by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, supported and oversaw the research throughout its various stages.

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

Reasonably balanced proportions of boys and young men versus girls and young women (54 vs. 46 per cent), as well as children versus young people (41 vs. 59 per cent), were interviewed for the research. Of the children interviewed, 42 per cent said that they were not with an adult who was responsible for their care.

Three quarters (77 per cent) reported that they were still migrating³² and the remainder (23 per cent) had recently returned to their home area (returnees). It is also important to highlight that 7 in 10 respondents were Ethiopian, but even so just over half (56 per cent) said that they had crossed an international border as part of their journey, demonstrating the high cross-border mobility of Ethiopians.

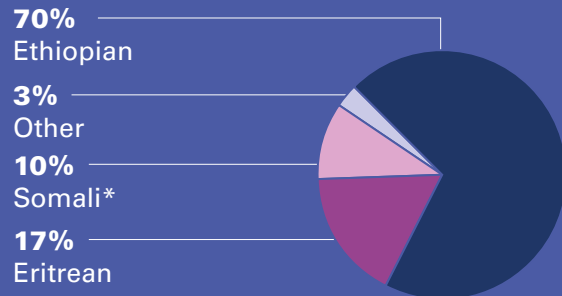
It is also significant to highlight that the vast majority had some level of education. Around one in three (38 per cent) had achieved at least secondary school or higher, and almost three in five (57 per cent) had completed at least primary school. In part, this likely reflects the Government of Ethiopia's significant investment in education. However, it also points to the fact that being within the education system, on its own, will not prevent many children and young people from moving.

32. Have left their habitual residence to live somewhere else either permanently or temporarily, and are currently based in Ethiopia.

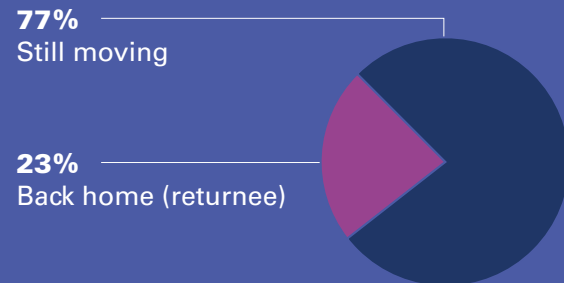
Figure 3: Profile of respondents

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

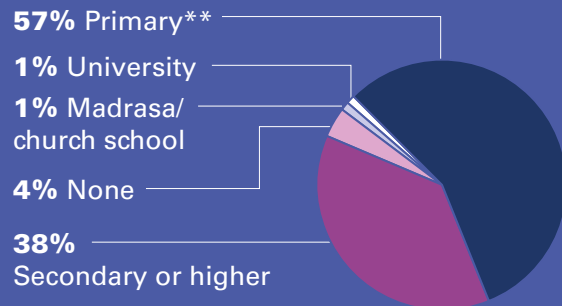
Nationality



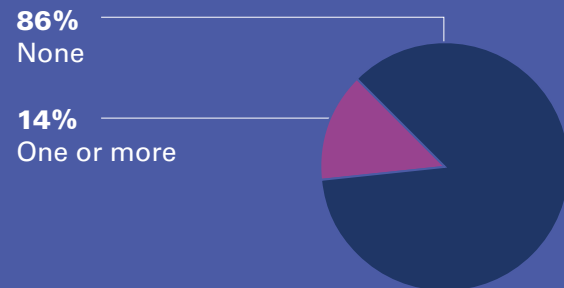
Status



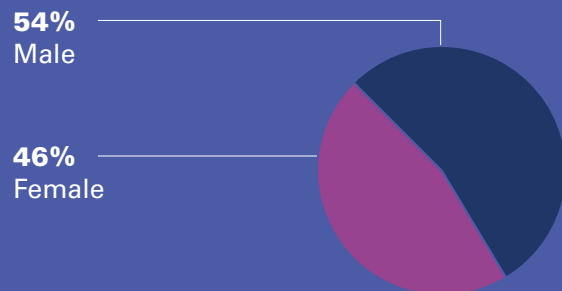
Educational achievement



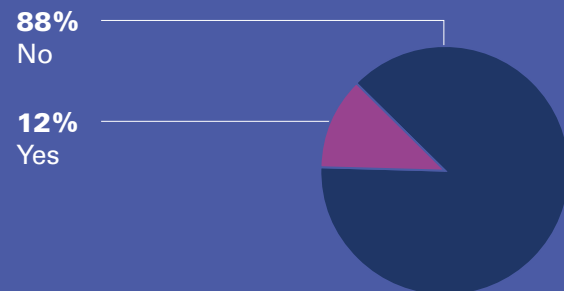
Have own children



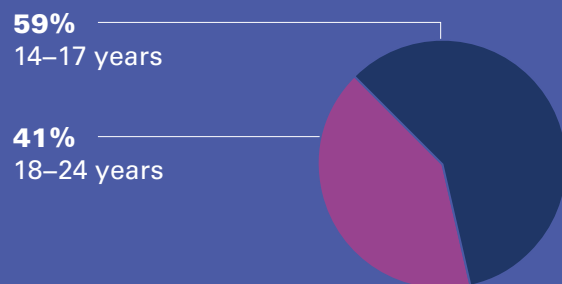
Gender



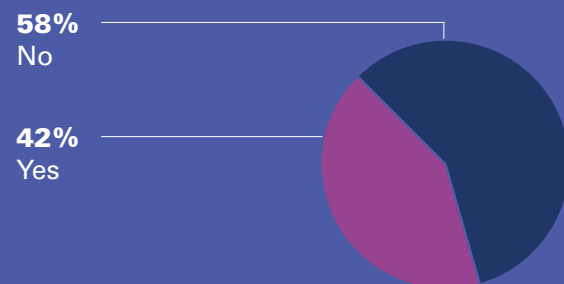
Currently living by themselves



Age



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



*This includes those who describe their nationality as Somali/Puntlander/Somalilander.

**This includes 9 per cent who said 'preparatory'.

*** This is based on those aged 14–17 years, 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.

“In my community, a dead corpse of a migrant is more respected than a poor person at home. So, although I know that illegal migration is surrounded by challenges, risk and death, it is better to die on the move than wait for death at home.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 19, Hosanna, SNNPR, August 2019

Most children and young people move for multiple reasons

Children and young people weigh up a complex set of factors in reaching the decision to move. While it is important to recognize the holistic nature of this decision-making process, we explored this decision-making 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.

There were two key reasons for this group, with a similar proportion who said economic hardship (27 per cent) and insecurity/war/violence (25 per cent).³³ The next most common reason given for children and young people to have left their home area was family problems (15 per cent), followed by being forced by an armed group (8 per cent). There was no significant difference for the main reason for moving by gender. However, there were differences between the age groups: twice as many young people as children left primarily because of economic concerns (34 per cent vs. 17 per cent), whereas a higher proportion of children cited family problems (19 per cent vs. 12 per cent). For Ethiopians, the top three reasons were economics (34 per cent), family problems (19 per cent) and insecurity/violence (18 per cent). For non-Ethiopians, the top drivers were insecurity/war/violence (42 per cent), to join family (14 per cent) and economics (10 per cent).

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. Half of all children and young people said that economic factors (50 per cent) were one of the reasons that they had left, followed by family problems (43 per cent) and security concerns (36 per cent).

The complexity of the drivers was reflected in the qualitative interviews. Eritrean refugees described how they had fled in order to escape the oppressive actions of the Eritrean state, including long-term national service.³⁴

33. The research sample also includes children and young people who reported being displaced from other countries due to war/violence.

34. For more information, see 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,

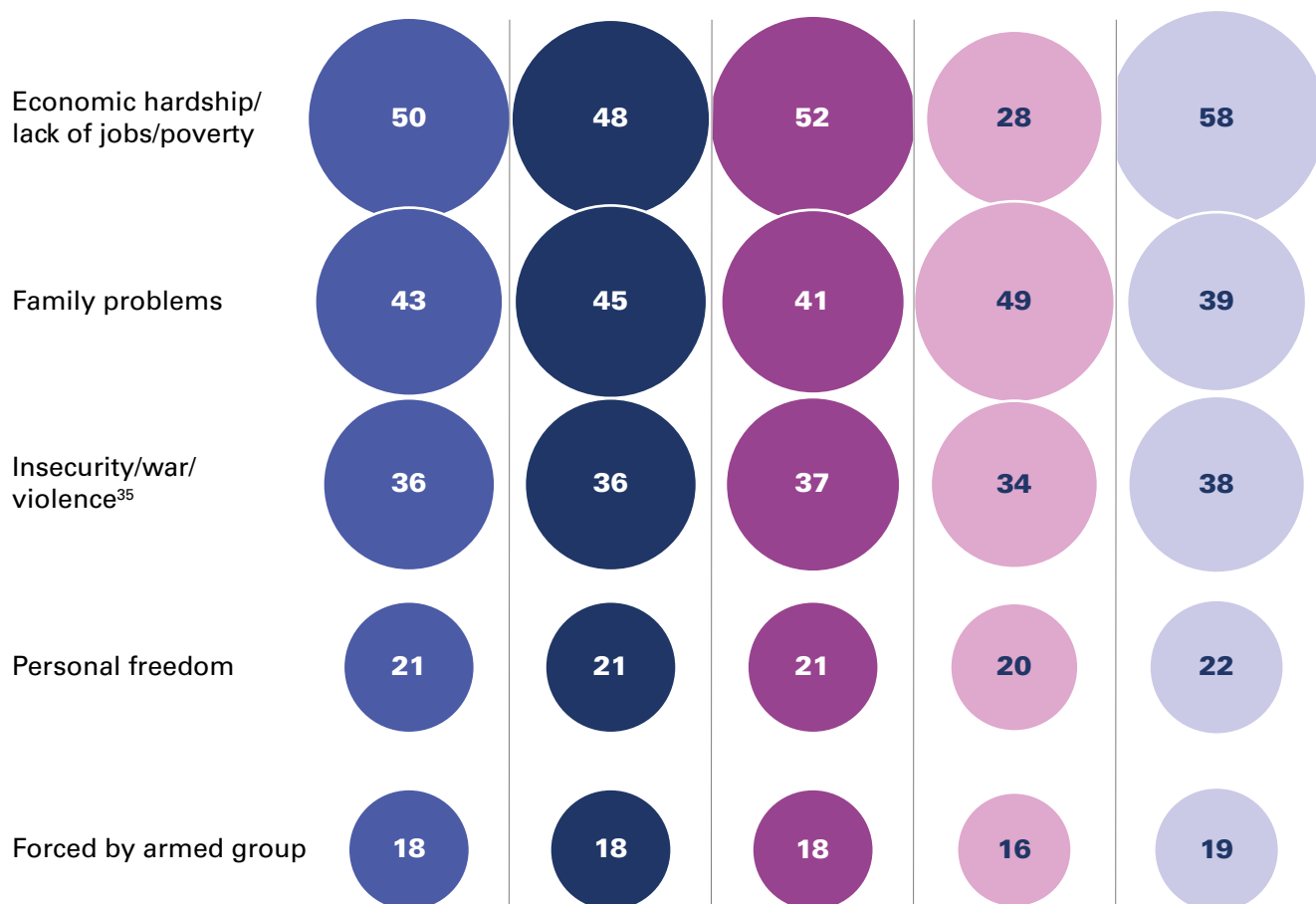
eprints.soas.ac.uk/26362/1/IRRI%20Report%20final%20Nov%202018.pdf, accessed 10 August 2020.

Figure 4: Combined reasons for moving

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

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

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



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As one young man said:

“Having seen colleagues arrested and taken to prison, when I reached the age for national service I escaped and came here.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 24, Addis Ababa, September 2019

Fear of conscription was highly associated with Eritreans. Of 22 individuals who cited this as a reason for moving, 19 were Eritrean.

Others cited violence, as one young Somali woman, who said:

“I live in this refugee camp because of the war in Somalia. If Somalia becomes peaceful, I would like to go back.”

– Interview with Somali female refugee, aged 20, Sheder refugee camp, Somali, September 2019

35. The research sample also includes children and young people who reported being displaced from other countries due to war/violence.

At the same time, peer pressure also plays a role, particularly for Ethiopians. In total, 18 per cent of Ethiopians cited “to join friends/encouraged by peers” as one of the reasons that they moved, compared with 3 per cent of non-Ethiopians. The qualitative research gave additional examples. An Ethiopian child reported moving because:

“... apart from repetitive abuse and violence at home, I was very impressed by the information of friends ... and decided to join them.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 15, Hosanna, SNNPR, August 2019

One man described how his 14-year-old son recently left without telling him:

“... because other people were leaving ... They feel hopeless and they see all their friends leaving, so that’s why they leave.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, community representative, Addis Ababa, September 2019

Some parents encourage their children to leave despite the heartbreak of separation and the risk involved:

“Rather than watching their children tortured and jailed, [parents] prefer to send them out.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, community representative, Addis Ababa, September 2019

For Ethiopians, drivers of migration relate to economic pressures, domestic challenges and ongoing tensions within and between different communities. Ethiopians who were living in settlements for internally displaced persons described fleeing inter-ethnic and communal violence in their home areas, often losing everything they owned.

Other Ethiopians pointed to domestic pressure at home, which drove them to move, either to support their families or as a result of domestic violence and abuse. A 14-year-old girl said that she had moved to a nearby town to repay her mother’s debt so that she would not lose her house;³⁶ and a 10-year-old boy described how his mother mistreated him:

“She punished me severely when I went to fetch water as I usually took some time to play before taking the water to her.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 10, Shashamene, Oromia, September 2019

Cultural practices that favour boys and men over girls and women were also cited. Others moved in search of the opportunities that migration was seen to offer. Qualitative interviews confirmed that peer influence was also common among Ethiopian children and young people, who are persuaded to move by friends who have already made it to the Middle East or Europe.

Many of the NGO workers and community members interviewed talked about the combined impact of poverty, family breakdown and/or death of parents, violence in the home, early marriage, the practice of FGM/C and peer influence as key drivers of movement to urban areas for children and young people living in rural areas.³⁷ While much of this movement was within Ethiopia, a small number of those interviewed had left home with the intention of moving abroad to the Middle East, South Africa or Europe; or had moved to Ethiopia from another country but had decided to move on.

The net effect of these different drivers is that there are numerous profiles of children and young people moving into, within and from Ethiopia, including rural to urban migrants, victims of trafficking, smuggled children and young people, children living on the streets – including many left behind by migrating parents – and internally displaced persons and refugees.

36. Interview with Ethiopian female, aged 14, Mekelle, Tigray, August 2019.

37. For instance, interview with Ethiopian female, community member, Addis Ababa, September 2019; interview with legal expert at BOWCY, Wolaita, SNNPR, August 2019.

Taking the decision to move

When asked if they chose or were forced to leave, 57 per cent said that it had been their choice to leave and 42 per cent said that they were forced. The breakdown of those who said that it had been their own choice was remarkably consistent by gender and age: 56 per cent of boys and young men and 57 per cent of girls and young women, and 57 per cent of children and 56 per cent of young people said that it was their choice to leave. However, the analysis above underscores the fact that the line between forced and voluntary migration can be complex, particularly in the context of the interaction of various reasons to move and related pressures to stay and the influence of family, friends and communities. Many decide to move as a result of a combination of factors; and drivers of movement also change over time. The voluntary/forced migration binary is misleading as it can create a picture of 'voluntary' migrants who have total freedom in decision making and forced migrants who lack any agency.³⁸ While economic drivers might have been the presenting reason for deciding to move, economic challenges are often driven by structural factors that relate to broader issues of security. This creates significant challenges for frameworks for assistance that are overly reliant on these categories.

In making the decision to move, there was no single source of information that the majority of children and young people trusted to find out about the dangers involved in their journey before they began their move. Slightly less than half said that they trusted their family (46 per cent), and around one in three trusted friends (34 per cent), followed by community members (21 per cent).³⁹ Only a very small proportion trusted a smuggler/'travel agent'/*delala*⁴⁰ (4 per cent) and one in four admitted that they did not trust anyone (25 per cent).

Children and young people were asked about whether they had the support of their parents to move and who had helped them to plan their trip. Roughly half of those questioned (52 per cent)

Children's futures are being negatively affected in Ethiopia, with drought driving school absenteeism, migration and increasing incidences of abuse.

said that their parents supported their decision to leave. Most of the remainder left either without their parents' knowledge (20 per cent) or in the face of parental opposition (16 per cent). Slightly more boys and young men than girls and young women (25 per cent vs. 15 per cent) said that their parents did not know. Family (53 per cent) was the group most likely to help the respondents plan their journey; around one in three had help from their friends (35 per cent).

38. de Haas, Hein, 'The Determinants of International Migration: Conceptualising policy, origin and destination effects', International Migration Institute Working Papers Series 32, 2011, <www.migrationinstitute.org/publications/wp-32-11>, accessed 12 August 2020, p. 14.

39. Community members are defined as people living in the same locality, often sharing common characteristics (i.e., same government, culture, ethnicity, clan).

40. *Delala* is the word used in Ethiopia for brokers, often involved in smuggling and trafficking networks, particularly internal from rural to urban for labour or sexual exploitation.



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Of those who moved primarily for economic reasons, 33 per cent had parental support, 34 per cent said their parents opposed them leaving and 17 per cent left without telling their parents. In contrast, of those who left primarily due to insecurity, 93 per cent had parental support and only 4 per cent left without telling their parents.

This demonstrates that those who said they had moved primarily for economic reasons were significantly more likely not to have a protective family structure around them while moving, and were more likely to evade officials or official structures (including child protection services) for fear that their parents would be contacted.

The findings show, therefore, that the decision to move is a highly complex one and is often taken in a context of minimal choices. The different mix of coercion and choice that characterizes this movement then has a significant impact on each individual's experience of migration. For instance, those who are forced to flee armed conflict and other violence (including those fleeing national service in Eritrea, conflict in Somalia, and inter-ethnic and communal violence in Ethiopia) often have less time to plan their journey and generally move with their families. Those who decide to migrate out of the country often take time to plan their journeys and leave without their parents' knowledge or, in the case of girls migrating to the Middle East, are supported and, at times, pushed to migrate by their families.

CHAPTER 4

20

WHAT RISKS DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FACE IN TRANSIT?

Journeys, whether crossing land or water, through a regular or irregular method 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.⁴¹ Smuggling and trafficking within and from the Horn of Africa has become highly sophisticated, lucrative and responsive to changes in the policy context,⁴² 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 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).

“A large number of children and young people face the risk of being raped, trafficked and attacked by wild animals such as snakes and hyenas, particularly crossing the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In addition to these risks, children and young people have gone missing on their way before they reached their destination.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, community representative, Addis Ababa, September 2019

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

Not surprisingly, those who travelled with people they knew, particularly family members, were likely to have a stronger protective environment than those who either chose to or were forced to travel alone. In this research, around one respondent in five (18 per cent) travelled alone for most of their journey (the same proportion of boys and girls travelled alone) and four in five (82 per cent) travelled with other people. Of the latter group, 45 per cent travelled with their family, 37 per cent with friends and 24 per cent with community members. However, almost half of those who travelled with other people said that it was with people they did not know and the same proportion said that these people changed during the journey, so – even though they were not alone – they would not have had the same level of family or familiar protection as those who travelled with parents, family or community members. Those travelling with their families or members of their home communities were less vulnerable to physical harm than those travelling alone or with people they did not know.

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

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.⁴³

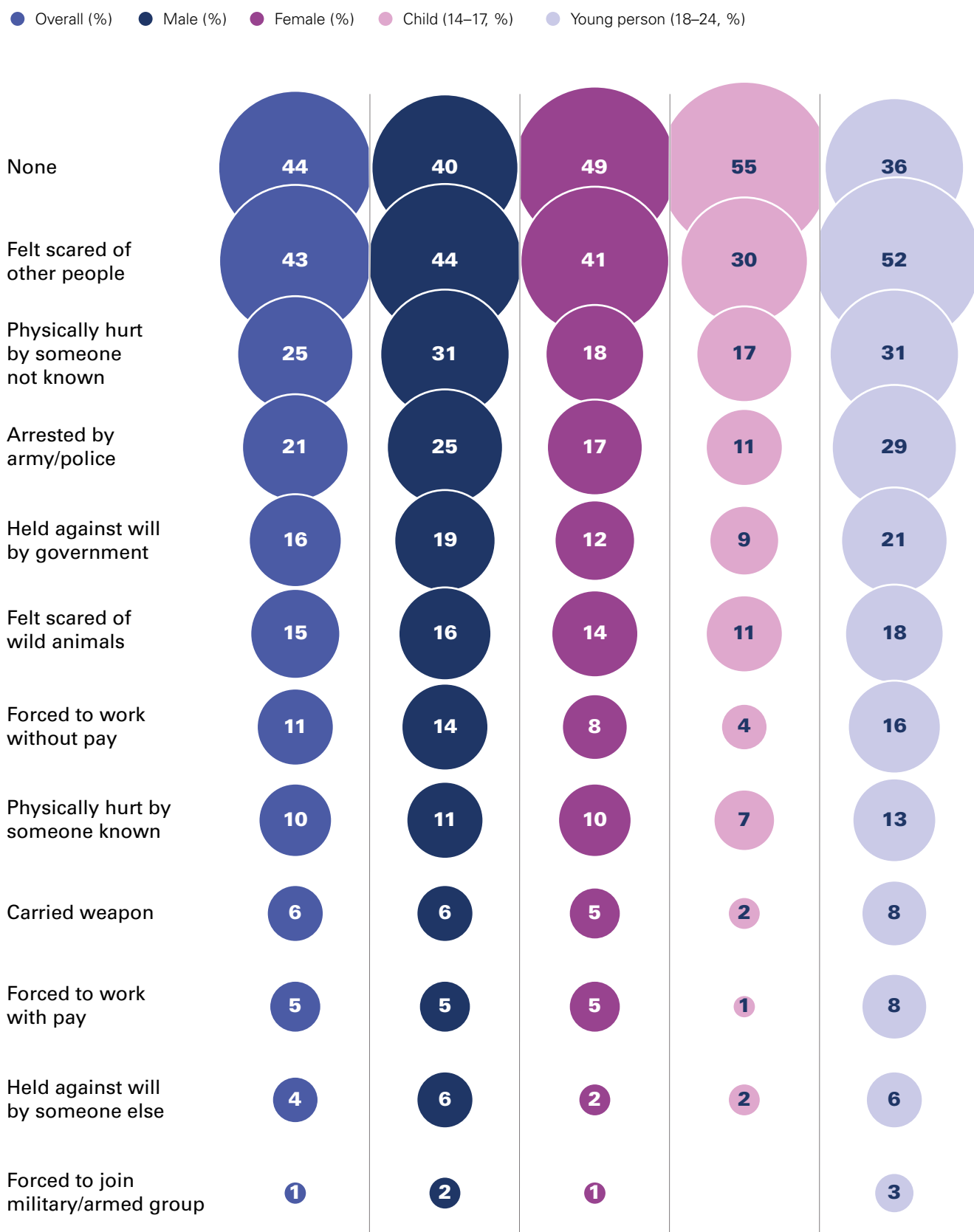
41. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling', UNODC, New York, undated, <www.unodc.org/e4j/en/secondary/human-trafficking-and-migrant-smuggling.html>, accessed 7 January 2021. The Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially 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, <www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx>, accessed 7 January 2021.

42. Hovil and Oette, 'Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea'.

43. 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: 405 migrant children and young people, July–October 2019, Ethiopia.



The majority (55 per cent) reported experiencing or being exposed to at least 1 of the 11 types of harm or negative experience listed, at some point during their journey. The most common experiences are set out in Figure 5.

Overall more boys and young men than girls and young women said that they had faced one of these types of harm or negative experience during their journey, particularly in terms of having been physically hurt by someone they did not know (31 per cent vs. 18 per cent) and having been arrested by the army or police (25 per cent vs. 17 per cent).

A third had to pay to move

One respondent in three (32 per cent) said that they had had to pay someone for their journey. A similar number of girls and young women (34 per cent) and boys and young men (30 per cent) had had to pay. However, more young people than children (41 per cent vs. 19 per cent) had had to pay. Those who did have to pay were more likely to rely on their family members (58 per cent) than anyone else to meet the costs, higher even than the proportion who said that they paid themselves (37 per cent).

The qualitative data show that the amount a migrant child or young person is able to pay for the journey often has an impact on the level of danger they face during the journey. For instance, those who can afford to fly to Saudi Arabia – whether with legitimate or forged papers – are much safer during the journey than those who have to take one of the treacherous land and sea routes. That said, no amount of money is completely protective, particularly for those who travel with the assistance of smugglers.

The prevalence of ‘travel first, pay later’ schemes offered by smugglers also leads to considerable harm. It enables many children and young people to leave without telling their families (in part because they know their families will discourage them), who often later get a call demanding ransom money for their release.

This has an impact on family structures and communities where there are high levels of outward migration, particularly where families are forced to pay significant ransoms. Many have sold their camels, other livestock, houses, land and any other assets they have to get their children released. One man told of how he started begging on the streets to raise money for his son’s release in Libya:

“It makes you ashamed in your community.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, Jijiga, Somali, September 2019

These stories point to the fact that many families are now heavily in debt, and their only hope is that their child will be able to continue their dangerous journey to Europe or the Middle East in order to send back significant sums of money. In some cases, this happens. But in many cases, it does not – either because the child has failed to reach their intended destination country, or because they are unable to find work when they do – and families are left disappointed that their children and young people are unable to send them remittances.⁴⁴ This creates enormous pressure on children and young people, who know the expectation on them to provide for their family, regardless of their age, as well as placing pressure on the family who have to repay debts accumulated by sending them in the first place.

For the well-being of children and young people, it is therefore crucial to raise awareness with families about the difficulties and limitations around access to work that children and young people face in destination countries (especially when they are under 16) and how pressure from families could expose them to labour exploitation in the black market.

44. Interview with *kebele* manager, Harawa woreda, Somali, May 2019; interview with UNICEF staff, Jijiga, Somali, September 2019.

The impact on families is part of the strategy used by smugglers and traffickers:

“Before agreeing to facilitate the journey for a child, the trafficker asks if he or she has a mother, because they know that she will do everything for her child.”

– Interview with Prosecutor, Tog-wechale, Somali, September 2019

Not surprisingly, many families try to find their children and young people alternative forms of income. For example, in Somali region, families are supporting them to open small businesses, such as buying them a *bajaj* (auto rickshaw),⁴⁵ in order to discourage them from migrating.

Those that used smugglers described the experience as negative

The use of smugglers is a source of potential abuse. Using a smuggler – which is, in part, a response to increased controls at border crossings – places migrants at risk of other harm, including trafficking.

One respondent in five (18 per cent) said that they relied on a smuggler/‘travel agent’/*delala* to help them *plan* their journey. This relatively low figure contrasts with other studies estimating the scale and seriousness of smuggling, particularly because those earlier studies sought to document the impact of smuggling, rather than to assess its prevalence.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷ However, the 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 to provide them with information or connections (67 per cent), transport (51 per cent), documentation (49 per cent) and assistance crossing borders (44 per cent). However, more respondents said that the smuggler had promised each of these things and other support than said they actually provided them. This helps to explain why slightly more respondents said that the smuggler was a bad rather than a good person (44 per cent vs. 39 per cent).⁴⁸ In addition, close to half of those who had received help from a smuggler said that this person either threatened to hurt them (20 per cent) or did hurt them (27 per cent).

The level of physical danger increases at borders, where migrants are transferred to other smugglers. This often leads to increasing levels of abuse by smugglers, including selling people on to traffickers.⁴⁹

45. In the Somali region, families and authorities reported an increased investment in *bajaj* (three-wheeler motorcycles used as taxis) by families for Somali youth. Until a few years ago, Somali young people were not engaged in this business, and the *bajaj* drivers were mainly migrants from other regions. *Bajaj* are known as ‘magafe’ (the same name given to smugglers or traffickers, which literally means ‘you cannot escape’) as it is used by parents to prevent their children from engaging in what they see as high-risk migration.

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

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

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

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

Trafficking is not just a cross-border issue

The findings also show that there are domestic trafficking networks operating within Ethiopia that entice children and young people from rural to urban areas for the purpose of labour and/or sexual exploitation, which confirms other emerging evidence.⁵⁰ Many government and NGO workers interviewed saw this as an increasing issue of concern. As one interviewee said:

“Support is needed for rural children who are abused in everyone’s house.”

– Interview with the head of the Anti-trafficking Task Force, Attorney General’s Office, Addis Ababa, May 2019

In Ethiopia, it is common practice for girls and young women to work as domestic workers for families of every social class. Despite the challenges of reaching out to girls and young women in this situation, many of whom are working in exploitative conditions in hotels and houses, the few who were interviewed during the fieldwork reported exploitative treatment. As one 17-year-old girl explained:

“Through the facilitation of a broker, I work as a domestic worker in a family. It is so hard, but I do not have any alternative. I am not allowed to go out. The church and my home village are the only places I am allowed to go. It is the only way I can go to visit my five-year-old sister in the village once a month and provide for her who is living with neighbours as we are orphans.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, domestic worker, aged 17, Dessie, Amhara, August 2019

Another girl, who was only 15, was working temporarily in a hotel in Bati, a key transit point towards the Middle East. She explained:

“I know I work hard for very little pay, sometimes the employer doesn’t even pay me, but it is the only way I can pay for my school fees and put something aside for future travel to the Middle East. Once a client attempted to rape me. I managed to escape but what is shameful is that the hotel owner knows it, and still allow the client in, and I cannot afford to lose this small job.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, hotel worker, aged 15, Bati – Oromia special zone, Amhara, August 2019

This internal trafficking within Ethiopia has received considerably less international attention than trafficking associated with cross-border movement.

Smuggling and trafficking networks are often embedded in communities

The findings also show that those who recruit children and young people for both smuggling and trafficking networks are often embedded in the communities. As one local official reported:

“We had the experience of a woman returned from Saudi Arabia who became the main smuggler for young people in our town.”

– Interview with local authorities and community dialogue members, Dangla, Amhara, September 2019

This points to the need for responses that focus not just on the criminal networks associated with smuggling and trafficking, but also on the enabling environment in which smuggling and trafficking operate.⁵¹

50. Erulkar, Annabel, Girmay Medhin and Lemi Negeri, *The Journey of Out-of-school Girls in Ethiopia: Examining migration, livelihoods, and HIV*, The Population Council, Addis Ababa, August 2017, <www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2017PGY_OutOfSchoolGirlsEthiopia.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2020.

51. Ayalew Mengiste, Tekalign, et al., ‘Social Embeddedness of Human Smuggling in East Africa’.

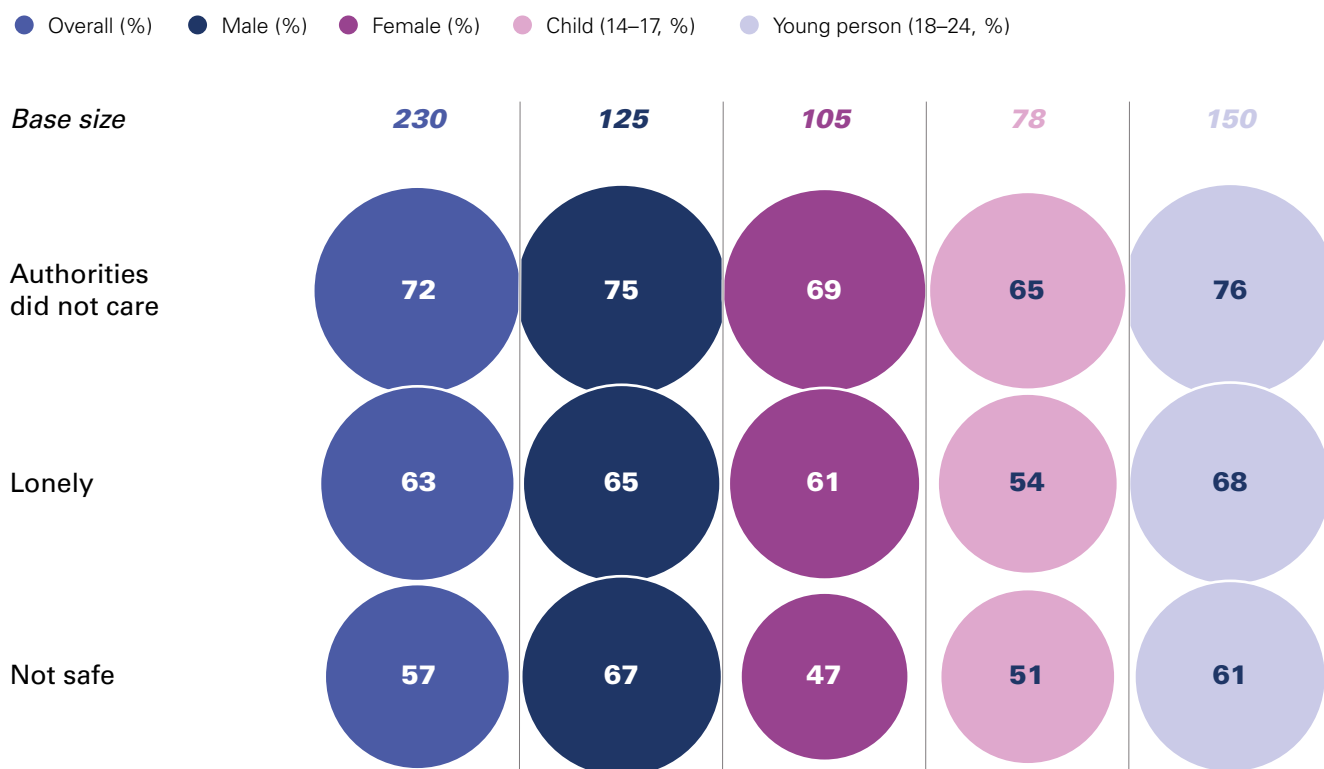
Most had a negative experience of crossing borders

Border areas are often particularly dangerous. More than half (56 per cent) recalled crossing an international border as part of their journey. The majority felt that the border they had crossed was not safe (57 per cent); a large majority described the border as a lonely place (63 per cent) and a place where the authorities did not care about their needs (72 per cent). It is also possible to disaggregate between those who said that the last border they had crossed was an official border crossing (37 per cent) and those who said it was an unofficial one (53 per cent).

As can be seen in Figure 6, slightly more boys and young men than girls and young women described the border negatively, in terms of it being lonely or a place where the authorities didn't care. However, boys and young men were significantly more likely to say that the border was unsafe (67 per cent) than were their female counterparts (47 per cent). Similarly, young people were significantly more likely than children to describe the border negatively. This may be a result of the fact that they are more likely to be travelling without their families, or perhaps this could reflect the success of advocacy for child-sensitive approaches in blunting the most dangerous aspects of border crossing for children.

Figure 6: Crossing borders

Base: 230 migrant children and young people, July–October 2019, Ethiopia.



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 Ethiopia) (see Figure 6).

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 safer than non-official borders;⁵² 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

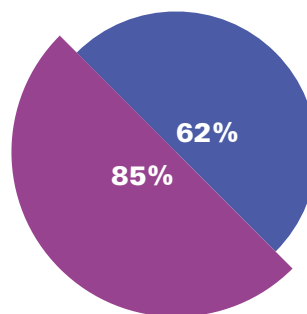
One respondent in five (18 per cent) said that they had been detained at a border, while 14 per cent said that they had been deported from a country by the authorities while on their journey. More boys and young men than girls and young women said that they had been detained (22 per cent vs. 14 per cent) or deported (19 per cent vs. 9 per cent). 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. It 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

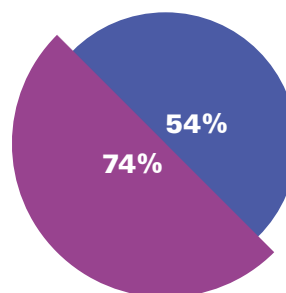
Base: 230 migrant children and young people, July–October 2019, Ethiopia.

● Official ● Not official

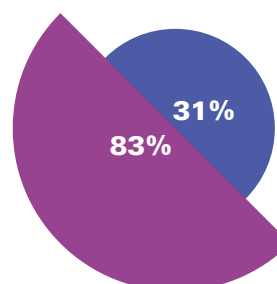
Authorities did not care about my needs



Lonely



Not safe



52. Respondents were asked to identify themselves whether they thought they had passed through an official or unofficial border. The latter are likely to be border crossings where people do not pass through official channels.

CHAPTER 5

28

**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 (25 per cent had been there for at least one year, and a further 51 per cent between 7 and 12 months); others had arrived more recently. Wider indicators of vulnerability and poverty were also measured, in order to gain a broader understanding of their well-being and their protective environment.

“I change often place where to sleep, I select places with light where in proximity there are guards of shops and business, I sleep with other youth.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 20, Amhara, August 2019

Perceptions of safety while on the move

Most children and young people felt safer where they were currently living than before they began to move, both during the daytime (77 per cent) and a slightly smaller proportion at night (67 per cent), although significant numbers still faced insecurity. Slightly fewer boys and young men than girls and young women felt safe,⁵³ either during the day (8 percentage points lower) or at night (9 percentage points lower).

Overall, more children and young people said that they felt safer now compared with their home area (only 50 per cent of children and young people had felt safe in their home areas). This suggests that despite the real and potential exposure to harm and violence that children and young people may face as a result of movement, many more felt that they

had to move in the first place because of concerns for their safety. In other words, what might look like high-risk behaviour to the outside observer is actually careful decision making in the context of difficult choices.⁵⁴

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

The most common response was to do “nothing” (28 per cent). Where children and young people felt that they could do something, it was to go about with friends (24 per cent) or to avoid certain areas (22 per cent). As one young man reported:

“I used to sleep with the other street-children in those very tiny rented rooms – but then I left because it was so crowded you could not even breathe and bad things [such as abuses and rape] were happening to the youngest children.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 24, Bahir Dar, Amhara, September 2019

It is also interesting to note that more children and young people cited carrying a weapon (such as a stick or a knife) (10 per cent) than would seek the protection of the police or other authorities (1 per cent).

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

The respondents were asked about their exposure to 11 different types of harm and negative experiences both back home (before they began their journey) and now (where they were living at the time of the survey). The results are shown in Figure 10.

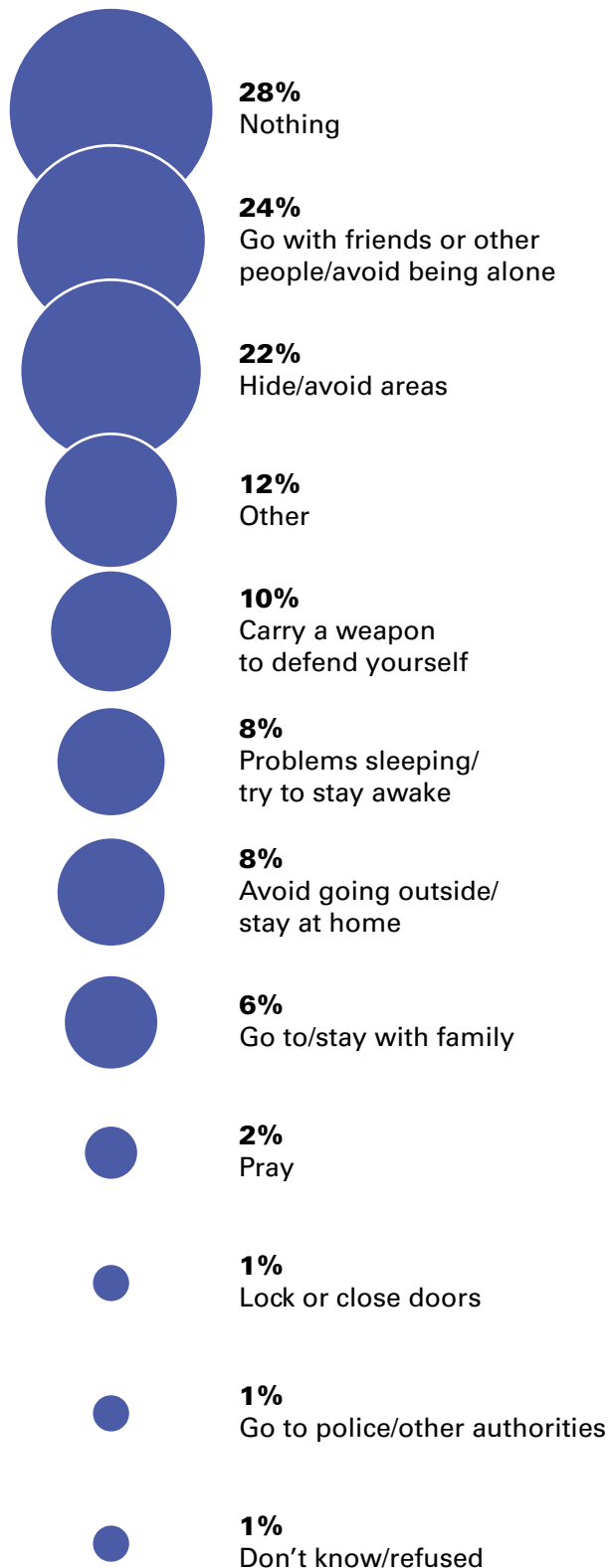
53. It is important to highlight that exploited/trafficked girls might be overlooked in this study as they are often ‘invisible’ within houses or hotels working or being exploited as domestic workers.

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

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

Base: 145 migrant children and young people who feel unsafe where they are now, July–October 2019, Ethiopia.

Q) What do you do to help protect yourself?



The majority said that, while in their current location, they had faced at least one type of harm or negative experience, with the largest single problem being that they had felt scared of other people (37 per cent). A similar proportion said that they had been physically hurt by someone they did not know (23 per cent), been physically hurt by someone they knew (21 per cent) or had felt scared of wild animals (18 per cent). Overall, reports of exposure to these types of harm was fairly consistent between their home area and their experience now, although slightly more children and young people said that they did not experience any of these types of harm where they were now compared with back home (37 per cent vs. 31 per cent).

As with their experiences during their journeys, more boys and young men than girls and young women said that they had faced these types of harm and negative experience since they had been in their current location (only 34 per cent of boys and young men reported experiencing no harm compared with 41 per cent of girls and young women); see Figure 11. This was particularly true of having been arrested by the army or police (10 percentage points higher) and of being physically hurt by someone they know (9 percentage points higher).

As indicated above, those living on the streets are particularly at risk of harm from multiple sources. A 15-year-old boy talked of how he felt at risk from adults:

“Often the police punish and force us to leave the place where we sleep ... At night, people come and disturb us when we sleep. To protect ourselves from any strange act we sleep together and use our dogs to defend us. Therefore, together with other street friends and dogs, we can defend any stranger.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 15, Addis Ababa, September 2019

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

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

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

● Percentage while living here ● Percentage in home area

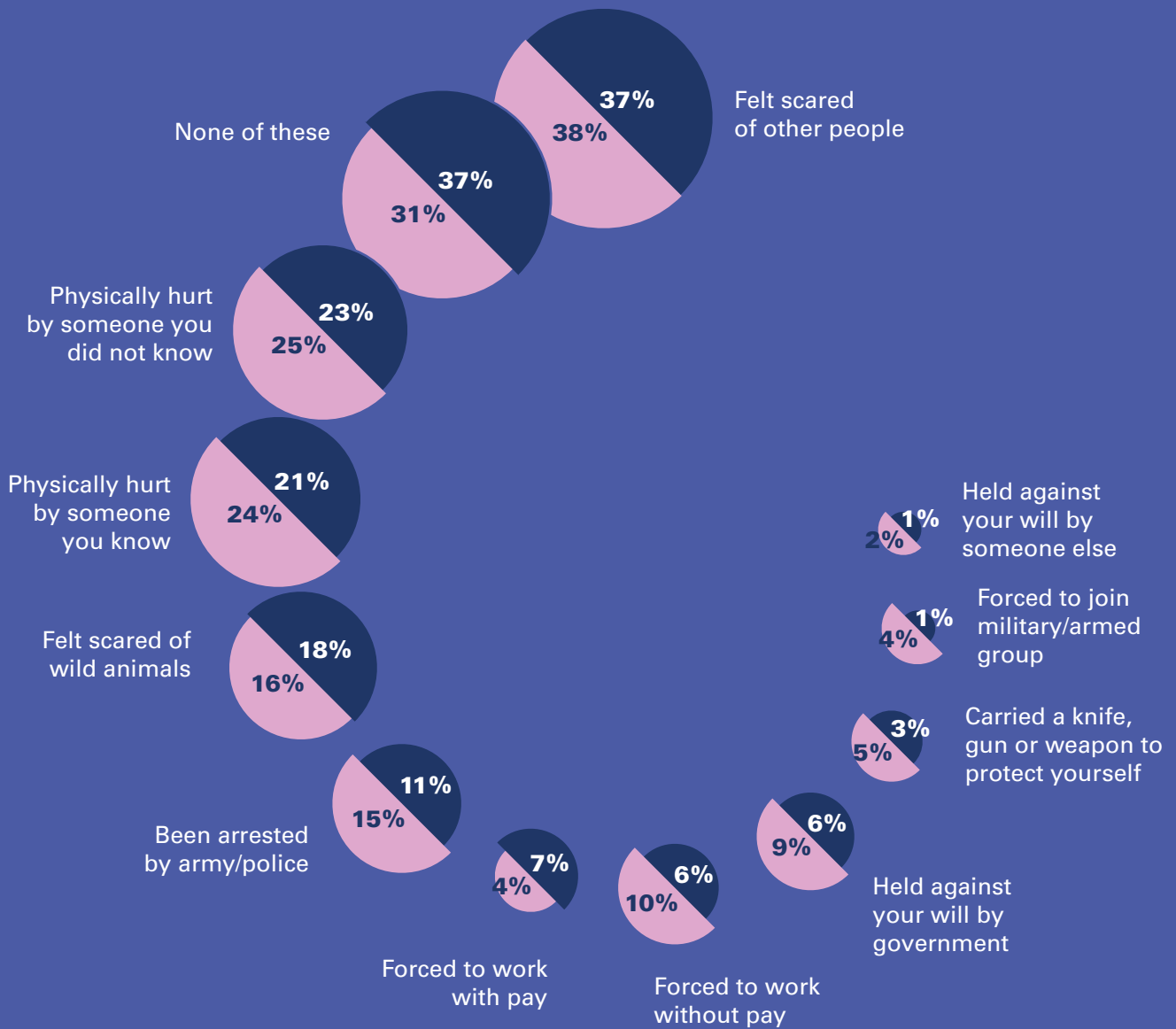
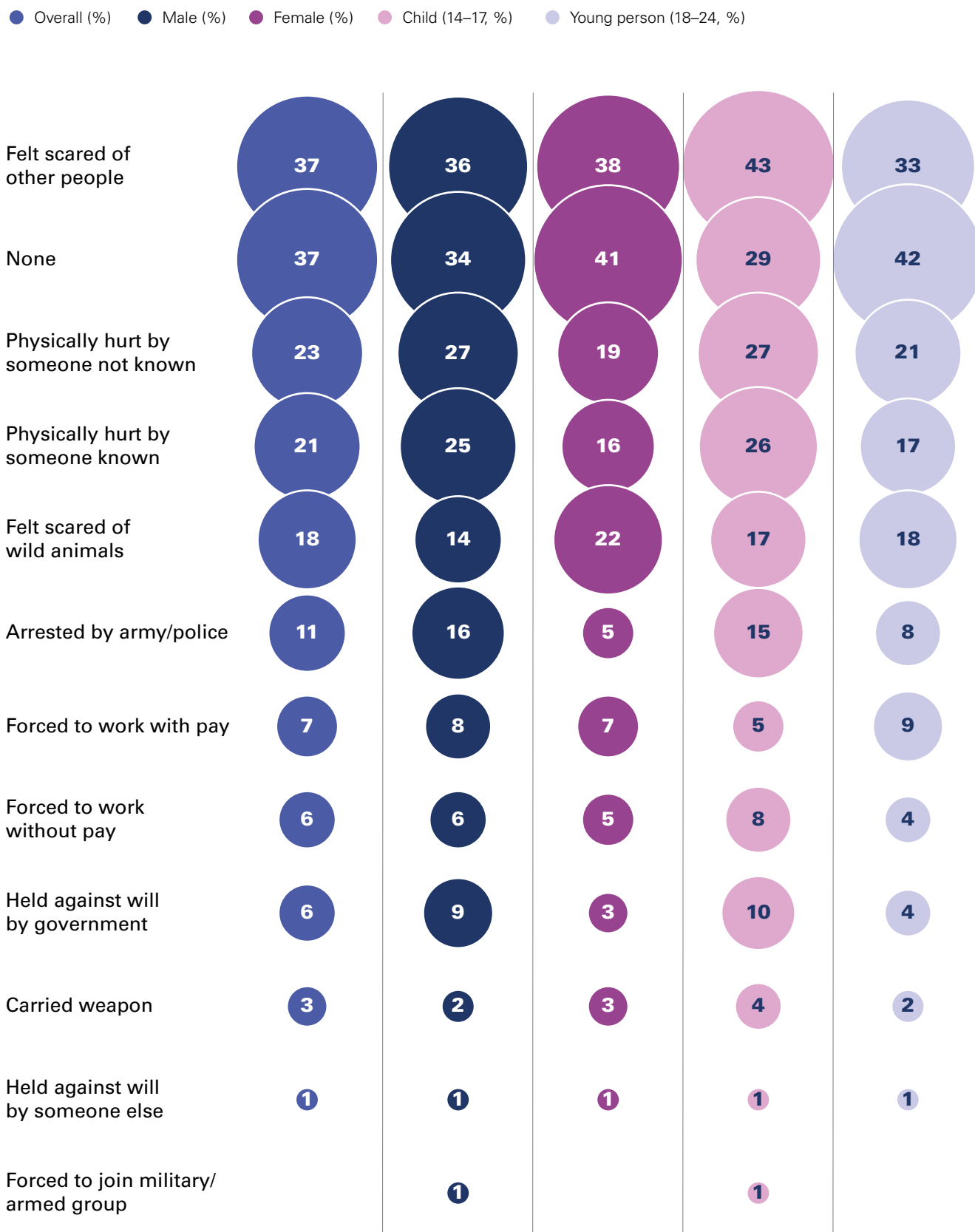


Figure 11: Incidence of harm and negative experiences in current location

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



There was also frequent reference to labour exploitation, which included other forms of violence and abuse, both in Ethiopia and in the Middle East. As one interviewee said:

“There is trafficking also within the slavery-like *Kafala* system⁵⁵ – where the formal employer sells you to another family at a higher price and benefits from this. The problem is that the formal employer forgets about you, so if you have problems or end up in prison, no-one will be able to release you.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, aged 23, Dessie, Amhara, September 2019

While national law⁵⁶ in Ethiopia has introduced strict guidelines about overseas labour migration to protect their migrant workers, this suggests that shortcomings still persist. In particular, “these shortcomings pertain to its failure in requiring the recipient countries to ensure practical measures to guarantee the rights of overseas workers. Additionally, it does not introduce institutional mechanisms to facilitate the reintegration process of returnee migrants.”⁵⁷

There were also concerns about the situation of children being held temporarily in detention-like conditions⁵⁸ – either in police offices or in make-shift detention facilities – particularly at borders, where children are ‘captured’ by officials in order to return them to their families. While officials believe that they are acting in the best interests of children in doing this, in practice there was no procedure in place to ensure a comprehensive assessment of the best interests of the child, and the process was ad hoc at best. Furthermore, many were then returned to their families without any attempt to address the issues that led them to leave in the first place.

Officials are aware that these practices are problematic, but claim that there are no resources and support provided to allow them to act differently.

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 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.⁵⁹

More were sad than happy. One in four respondents said that they were happy now (24 per cent), but two in five felt sad (42 per cent). The remainder described themselves as sometimes happy, sometimes sad (34 per cent). Overall, respondents were less positive than when they were asked the same question about their life back home, before they moved: almost as many recalled being happy as being sad (34 per cent vs. 39 per cent). The proportion of both genders who felt happy now and back home is broadly consistent, but slightly more children than young people said they felt happy back home (40 per cent vs. 31 per cent). Fewer Ethiopians than non-Ethiopians felt happy where they were now (21 per cent vs. 32 per cent).

55. The *kafala* system is a sponsorship system which allows the temporary employment of non-nationals in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Jordan and Lebanon. For more details, see: International Labour Organization, ‘Employer–migrant Worker Relationships in the Middle East: Exploring scope for internal labour market mobility and fair migration’, ILO Regional Office for Arab States, Beirut, 2017.

56. Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 923/2016, Ethiopia’s Overseas Employment Proclamation, 19 February 2016, <www.lawethiopia.com/images/federal_proclamation/proclamations_by_number/923.pdf>, accessed 18 January 2021.

57. International Labour Organization, ‘The Ethiopian Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016: A comprehensive analysis’, ILO Country Office for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, Addis Ababa, 2017.

58. Despite the difficulty in obtaining data on children in detention in general, qualitative interviews uncovered no report of children detained for a long time in formal prisons in Ethiopia due to their migration status.

59. Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban, and Max Roser, ‘Happiness and Life Satisfaction’, OurWorldInData.Org, <ourworldindata.org/happiness-and-life-satisfaction>, 2013, revised 2017, accessed 10 August 2020.

A significant minority were still on their own

The vast majority of those interviewed were currently living with other people, primarily one or both of their parents (45 per cent) and/or other adults (32 per cent). A smaller, but still significant, proportion (25 per cent) was living with other children, which likely reflects the number

of interviews with children and young people who have moved from rural to urban areas within Ethiopia and are living on the streets. This means that one respondent in eight (12 per cent) was living alone, with twice as many boys and young men (16 per cent) as girls and young women (7 per cent) living by themselves. There was little difference by age in the proportion who were living by themselves or with their parents. However,



Unaccompanied children living on a drainage site at the Tog-wechale border, between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

while more children than young people lived with other children (37 per cent vs. 17 per cent), more young people than children lived with other adults (38 per cent vs. 23 per cent). Ethiopians were much less likely than non-Ethiopians to be living with their parents (37 per cent vs. 63 per cent). Given the above findings, it is consistent that a similar proportion (13 per cent) claimed to have no friends with whom they spent time, while

the remainder said that they had either a few friends (49 per cent) or a lot of friends (38 per cent). More than twice as many girls and young women as boys and young men said that they had no friends (19 per cent vs. 7 per cent), but there were no differences by age or nationality. Lack of friendships came through specifically as an issue among returnees, many of whom were girls and young women, who felt stigmatized and marginalized within their home communities.

Documentation

Access to documentation is widely seen as having a protective function – not least if it proves eligibility to access particular services. However, documentation, particularly birth registration, remains a huge challenge in Ethiopia, and the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system was only launched in 2016.⁶⁰ From August 2016 to March 2019, 1,481,421 births (or 27.8 per cent of total births in the period) were registered.⁶¹ Most of those interviewed for this study had some form of official identification. Only 1 respondent in 10 had a birth certificate (10 per cent), but a higher proportion had other forms of ID, including a *kebele* ID⁶² card (39 per cent), student ID card/certificates (31 per cent) or proof of refugee/asylum status (27 per cent). More girls and young women than boys and young men (42 per cent vs. 31 per cent) said they had a *kebele* ID.⁶³ 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.

60. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Factsheet – Birth registration: Every Child Counts', UNICEF Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, August 2019, <www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/1651/file/Birth%20registration%20factsheet%20.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2020.

61. Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency, 'National Birth Registration Performance Report, covering the period between August 2016 to March 2019', INVEA, March 2019. 1,481,421 births out of 5.3 million births over 32 months = 27.8 per cent.

62. This includes those who said they had a national ID card.

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



CHAPTER 6

36

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.

“I want to work to earn money to support my family. If I get financial support, I would like to continue my education.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, aged 17, Tigray, August 2019

While significant efforts are being made in Ethiopia to ensure that children and young people have access to services, it is clear that these efforts are under-resourced and leave significant gaps.

Many do not have access to key services and support

Only one third (32 per cent) of children interviewed said that they had been to school in the last month compared with 15 per cent of young people. The qualitative interviews pointed to how important schooling was seen by many of those who currently have no access to it. A teenage boy who had left his village in search of work said:

“I feel jealous whenever I see children of my age go to school ... my life is surrounded by frustration and hopelessness. I don't have hope for the future because I am not in school at this moment and no-one is responsible for me.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 15, Hosanna, SNNPR, August 2019

In addition, many of those who were displaced said that they were not in education as they needed to prioritize earning money to supplement their humanitarian assistance.

Virtually all respondents (99 per cent) reported that the last time they had had something to eat was “today” (82 per cent) or “yesterday” (18 per cent), which is an indication that there is in practice universal access to some food, although the quantity or quality may not be adequate. Figure 12 shows the proportion of respondents who said that they had access to several key services, and even for these, access was far from universal.

Fewer than half the girls and young women interviewed had access to feminine hygiene products (47 per cent) and a similar proportion of all the respondents had somewhere they could wash themselves and their clothes (45 per cent). Internet access was only available to one in three respondents (33 per cent) and in some cases children were not aware what internet access was, and a very small minority reported having access to money for day-to-day living (15 per cent).

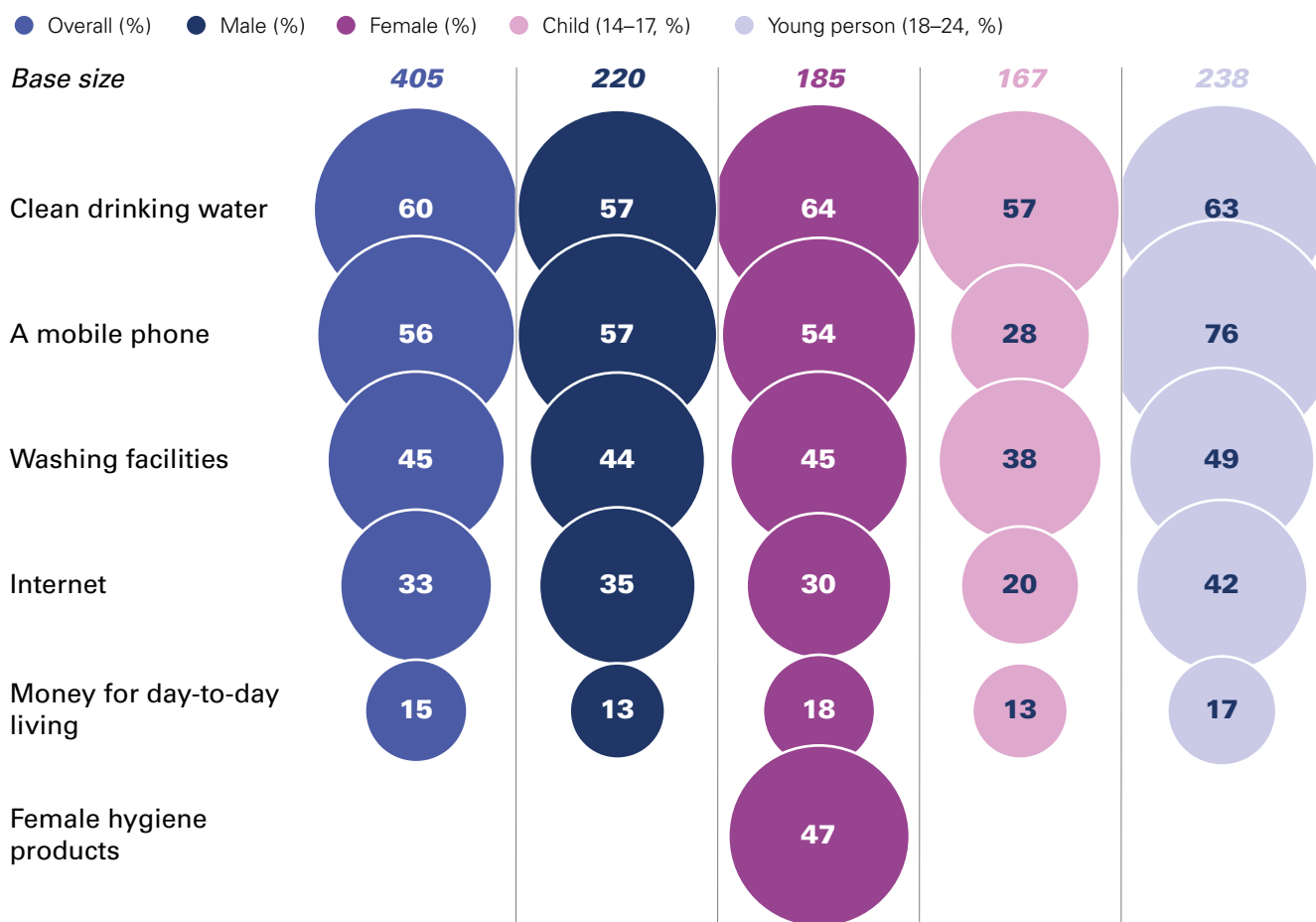
Most had accessed at least some services and support⁶⁴

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 (74 per cent). Around half of respondents had accessed a health centre/hospital (57 per cent) or shelter/temporary accommodation (47 per cent).

64. As is common with this type of research, we asked the respondents about a range of different services and support that they may or may not have received. The respondents were not provided with a detailed explanation or definition of each service, but rather they used their own experiences and understandings of the services when providing an answer.

Figure 12: Access to key services

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



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Several respondents described receiving assistance from NGOs that had been set up specifically to assist them, including a number of children who had been living on the streets but had been taken into a shelter or home. Where these services did exist, the contrast between the lives of the children and young people before receiving help and their current situation was enormous. A 10-year-old boy described what his life was like now he was living in a shelter:⁶⁵

“I enjoy living in this centre. I get everything in here. I have breakfast, lunch and dinner. I play with other children here. I also learn Afan-Oromo, Amharic and English. I have my own bed. Once I got sick and they took me to a health centre for treatment. The centre also

buys me clothes. So, I like living here very, very much.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 10, Shashamene, Oromia, September 2019

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

65. This child protection shelter in Shashamene is managed by the NGO Hope365, which provides comprehensive services for the assistance and reintegration of vulnerable boys. At the time of the study, it was the only shelter available – there were no shelters for girls or young women in need of protection.

Figure 13: Demand for services and support

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

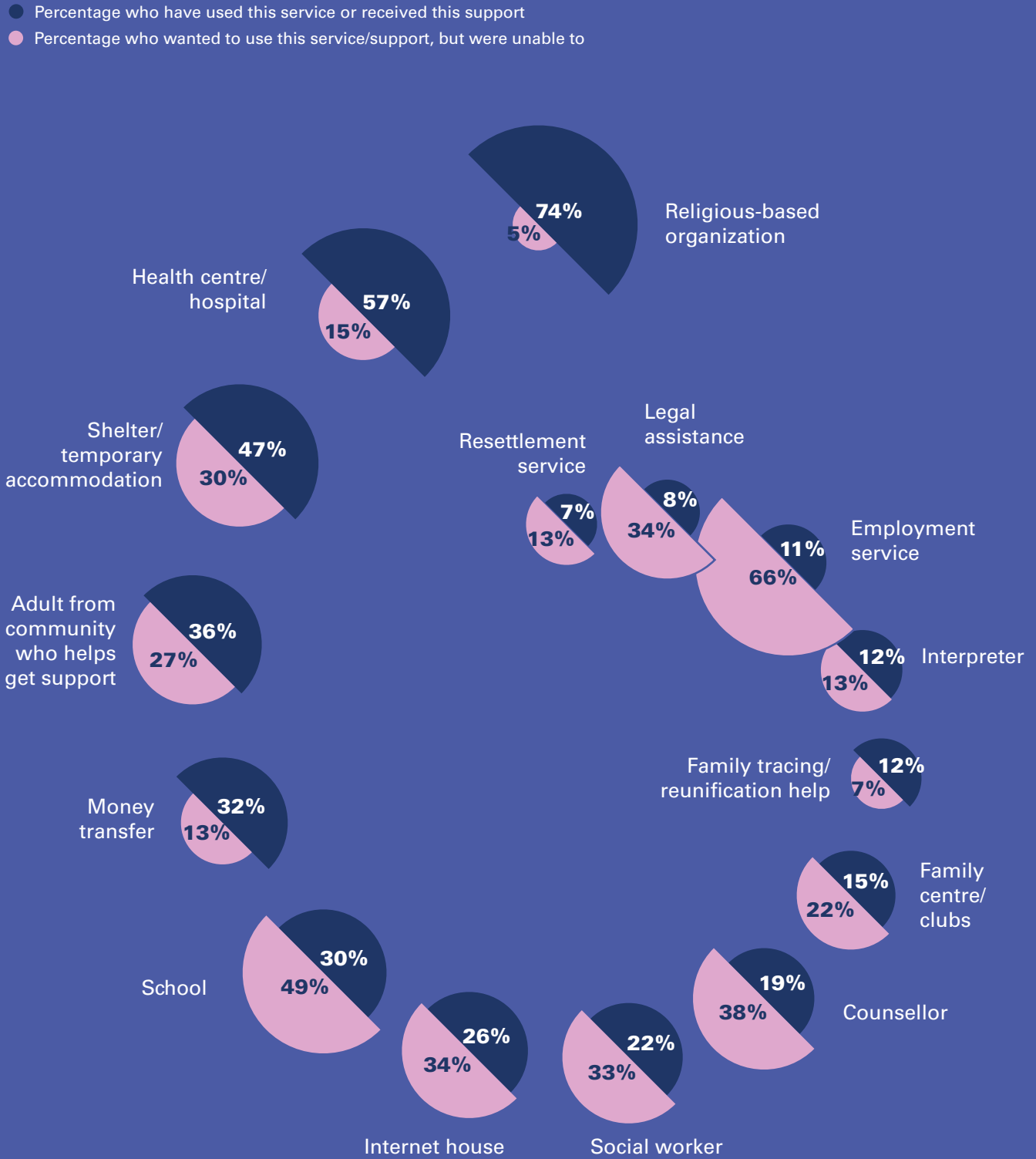
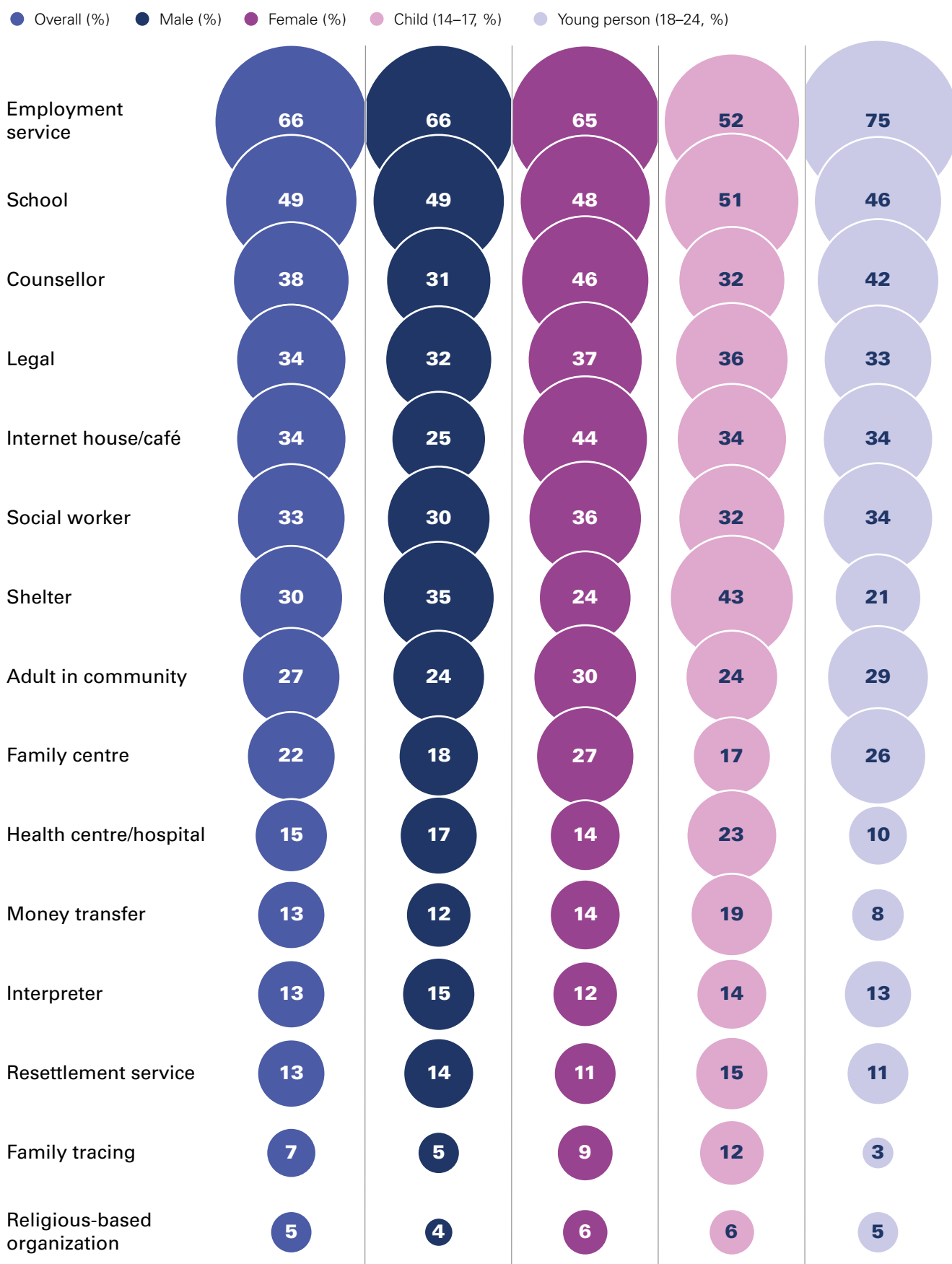


Figure 14: Unmet demand for access to services

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



to be determined for each of the services or types of support covered in the research.

Figure 13 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. There are two services that stand out in terms of the number of children and young people who wanted to but were unable to use them. These are employment services (66 per cent) and schools (49 per cent).

For five of the types of services/support, more respondents said that they had received it than had failed to do so, but generally, for most of the services/support covered, unmet demand outstrips current service provision. A further example of this is social workers – although 22 per cent said that they had used a social worker, 33 per cent had wanted to but not been able to. The situation with counsellors is even more stark, with approximately twice as many not being able to access this support as were able to (38 per cent vs. 19 per cent). This unmet demand resonates with other findings that paint a picture of children who feel unsupported and lonely, and desperately want the support of a person on whom they can rely for help.

For instance, a 10-year-old boy living on the streets at the border between Ethiopia and Somaliland asked to be referred to a hospital. When the interviewer asked if he was sick or hurt, he replied:

“No, I would like to go there because there will be someone who will care for me.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 10, Tog-wechale, Somali, September 2019

There are two services where more girls and young women than boys and young men said that they had wanted to use it, but were unable to do so. These are an internet house/café (44 per cent vs. 25 per cent) and counsellor/counselling support (46 per cent vs. 31 per cent). In contrast, more boys and young men had wanted to use a shelter but were unable to do so (11 percentage points higher). This difference is likely to be linked to the different patterns of migration outlined above, whereby more girls and young women have returned from the Middle East and have been traumatized by the experience; and more boys and young men have ended up living on the streets.

Generally, for most of these services, a lower proportion of children than young people had both used them and wanted to use them (see Figure 14). The only service that relatively more children than young people used was school (15 percentage points higher). Unmet demand for employment services was particularly high for young people, compared with children (23 percentage points higher).

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. Only 6 per cent of children and young people said “nothing”, but otherwise the most common answers are shown in Figure 15.

Girls and young women were more likely to ask for a job than their male counterparts (49 per cent vs. 36 per cent), which may reflect expectations of girls and young women to contribute to family finances or perhaps a greater difficulty among women in accessing work. Young people were also significantly more likely than children to ask for jobs (53 per cent vs. 26 per cent), whereas children were more likely to ask for school than young people (43 per cent vs. 34 per cent), which may reflect expectation of these age groups.

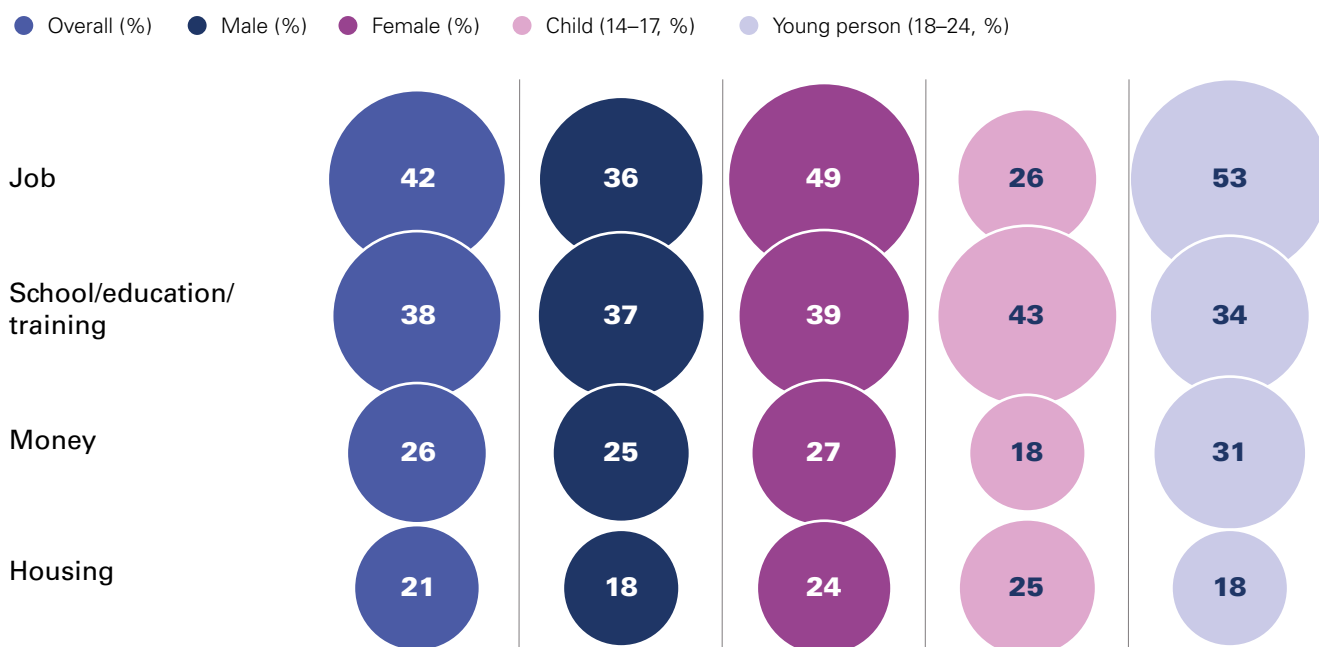
It is worth noting that the responses coded here as school/education/training encompass a range of related requests, such as for general education or for specific skills training. Much of the interest in education was related to improving respondents’ skills, so that they could access employment. There was also a strong link between money and jobs – many respondents said that they wanted money in order to support or start a business of their own. As one young man said:

“I would need a small capital to start a small business, like selling vegetables or used clothes.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 20, Amhara, August 2019

Figure 15: Other types of support that respondents would like

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



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Not surprisingly, given the drivers of migration, the overwhelming need for education and employment also came through strongly in the qualitative interviews.

Barriers to accessing services and support:

“It’s everyone’s responsibility but no-one’s responsibility [to protect migrant children].”

– Interview with government official, Tog-wechale, Ethiopia, September 2019

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.

There was no single dominant barrier to access across all of these services. Lack of availability was seen as the prime barrier for counsellors (49 per cent) and employment services (48 per cent), but even in these cases more than half of the respondents cited other barriers.

Cost is the most significant barrier for those who felt unable to access a hospital/health centre (48 per cent), a school (45 per cent) or shelter/temporary accommodation (47 per cent). For social workers, not knowing how to access them (49 per cent) and lack of availability (39 per cent) are the two key barriers, while not knowing how to access support (37 per cent) is the most important obstacle to legal assistance. For most services, only a small proportion of respondents said that they were told they were not allowed to use the service.

The qualitative research reveals 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.

Coordination gaps

Multiple key informants among government officials, CSOs and United Nations agencies spoke of the gaps created by inadequate coordination. In part, this is due to the fact that Ethiopia does not have a ministry/institution specifically mandated to cover migration issues, and does not yet have

a national migration policy establishing clear roles and responsibilities, particularly in cross-cutting issues (currently under development). As a result, there have been multiple ministries involved in the protection of migrant children and young people. This creates a significant challenge to the coordination of services and protection mechanisms, with no single ministry accountable for governing migration in general and holding accountable the various ministries involved in protecting migrant children and young people in particular. Recently, revisions have been made to the anti-human trafficking proclamation,⁶⁶ and one of the key clauses in the proclamation creates the National Referral Mechanism for trafficking and migration-related issues. Furthermore, positive developments on the drafting of a migration policy are taking place.

Resource gaps

Service providers pointed out that, while there are numerous reasons for the lack of availability of services, a key issue was inadequate funding due to low government budget allocations and over-reliance on United Nations and NGO funding. The funding that is available is typically short term and priorities are constantly changing. In a context in which resources are spread incredibly thin, the findings show that the different stakeholders involved (government, service providers and implementing actors) constantly have to make difficult choices. A review of the resources available and budget allocations and use is a crucial step towards an efficient child protection system. At the same time, children and young people also pointed to inadequate resources as a barrier:

“I now go to school, but I don’t have the materials I need for school, which is impacting me negatively.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female, aged 14, Amhara, August 2019

“I need health services but I do not have money.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 15, Somali, September 2019

Others described how they have to prioritize some services over others, with food and shelter being seen as more important than education. As a 17-year-old refugee boy said:

“I live with my mother, my sisters and their kids living in a very small and poorly constructed house. We do not have a bed. When I see my family like this without food to eat, when I find myself helpless and hopeless, I sometimes think of ending my life. I am always worrying about my family. So, while there is a school, I never think of going there. Because what should come first is survival.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 17, Freweyni town, Tigray, August 2019

Lack of availability and sustainability

Linked to resource gaps was concern about the nature of funding. Several service providers pointed out that funding is often short term (less than three years in duration), project driven, and based on shifting priorities. Indeed, resources are often not included in the government budget, and therefore many services have sustainability challenges or are not available (for example, shelter and safe houses for children). One government official described how she often took children in need of protection into her own home, as there was nowhere else for them to go.⁶⁷

Lack of commitment

Lack of prioritization by government of social welfare generally, and child protection specifically, including on issues related to child trafficking, was mentioned by many stakeholders and service providers interviewed. As one interviewee said:

“The government has many urgent priorities, so we have been told that the social welfare sector should rely as much as possible on the support and funding of UN/NGOs.”

– Interview with government officials, Addis Ababa, September 2019

66. Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 1178/2020, Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, February 2020.
67. Interview with Child Process Unit, Head of Shashamene Women, Children and Youth, Oromia, August 2019.

A young man who migrated to Addis Ababa, in search of new opportunities.



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Another interviewee explained the lack of attention on the work of the Anti-trafficking Task Force:

“Some higher officials don’t show up even during crucial planning or evaluation moments or are not even aware they have technical staff coming but with high turnover. It is not clear why they don’t want to tackle the issue seriously.”

– Interview with a government official, Amhara, September 2019

Lack of trust

The extent to which children and young people do not trust those in a position to help them, as outlined above, was another serious barrier. For instance, government child protection and social welfare workers reported that they had experienced problems in accessing vulnerable groups because they are accused of just assessing needs and then being unable to deliver any support. Likewise, lack of trust in police prevented many migrant children and young people from going to them when they were in danger. In addition, many children – particularly those who live on the streets – complained that



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they are not believed if they report abuses, due to negative perceptions of them. Finally, lack of trust in the justice system was reported by a number of stakeholders, who indicated that the systems were ineffective because of procedural weaknesses⁶⁸ and corruption (especially in cases of smuggling and trafficking). Lack of trust, therefore, creates something of a vicious cycle: the less the authorities are trusted, the less services are accessed and the less the authorities are in a position to help migrants – which, in turn, increases the lack of trust.

Barriers for returnees created by shame and stigma

A key barrier to accessing services and support for returnees was the level of shame and stigma they felt. In general, services for returnees were described as ad hoc and temporary. In the case of education, many were ashamed that migration had interrupted their education, which prevented them from going back into formal education, particularly for those in the older age bracket. There was also mention of the need for a significant increase in psychosocial support for those who have not only suffered terrible abuse, but are now living with the shame and stigma associated with their migration. One interviewee who had returned from Libya said:

“I need to take pills to sleep, but what hurts me is that I miss the love of my father – he didn’t accept me back at home because he cannot provide for me and I don’t have resources to provide for myself, let alone my family.”

– Interview with Ethiopian male, aged 24, Bahir Dar, Amhara, September 2019

Religious beliefs and practices

Key informants among CSOs providing services highlighted how religious beliefs and practices represented a barrier in accessing some services, including proper medical treatment for mental health and psychological well-being. Linked to this was the stigma attached to rape and other forms of sexual abuse, not only for girls and young women but also for boys and young men. This prevents many individuals from receiving help and reporting abuses.

In a context of limited resources, the findings create a picture of a context in which difficult choices constantly have to be made. Often the question is not so much whether or not there are gaps in services, but what the relative consequences are of certain services being prioritized over others. Furthermore, understanding the needs and priorities of children and young people themselves is crucial in making these complex decisions.

68. Interview with police officer, Amhara, September 2019.

CHAPTER 7

46

**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 (49 per cent) or was somewhere they could get help (48 per cent). They were less evenly split on whether the authorities cared about their needs or not (19 per cent vs. 71 per cent).

The prevalence of loneliness came through strongly in the qualitative data. A young Eritrean man said:

“You feel lonely ... You leave your country and you move leaving your mother behind.”

– Interview with Eritrean male, aged 24, Addis Ababa, September 2019

Many returnees also expressed feelings of loneliness as a result of stigma attached to returning, which is seen to represent failure not only in their ability to provide support for their families but also in having contributed to their family’s impoverishment and loss of assets to support their journey, particularly when their journey included the payment of ransom.

The authorities have minimal interaction with children and young people

Perhaps one reason why so many children and young people felt that the authorities did not care about their needs was that only 25 per cent recalled having had any contact with a government official within the past month. This may also explain why only two in five respondents (41 per cent) believed that government officials would help someone like them (see Figure 16).

Government officials received a similar rating to the police⁶⁹ in terms of how many felt they would be helpful (40 per cent), but considerably more children and young people felt that the police would harm them than said the same about government officials (21 per cent vs. 4 per cent).

In fact, police are the only group (out of the nine asked about in the survey) that a significant proportion of respondents felt would harm them. In contrast, around four in five children and young people felt that their family (84 per cent), religious leaders (82 per cent) and friends (78 per cent) would help them.

These mixed views of authorities are likely to be linked to the fact that, although there has been a strong security response by government to the criminality that migration attracts – in the form of targeting smugglers and traffickers, it is perceived that there has been less investment in protection for those moving. This security investment is particularly evident in cross-border coordination: security forces (including police, military and immigration officials) talked of coordinating with their counterparts in neighbouring countries, but there was little evidence of similar coordination between key child protection actors and mechanisms. Where these actors were brought into play, it was generally with a view to helping to send children back to their families, regardless of any best interests assessments taking place.

The emphasis on migration as primarily a security concern was also evident in the language used in relation to migrants, with many officials seeing it as their responsibility primarily to ‘capture’ and return children. While there may be good motivations lying behind this – namely to protect children and young people from further exploitation – it was evident that this was not being balanced by a full understanding of either their immediate protection needs or the broader drivers and motivations behind their movement.

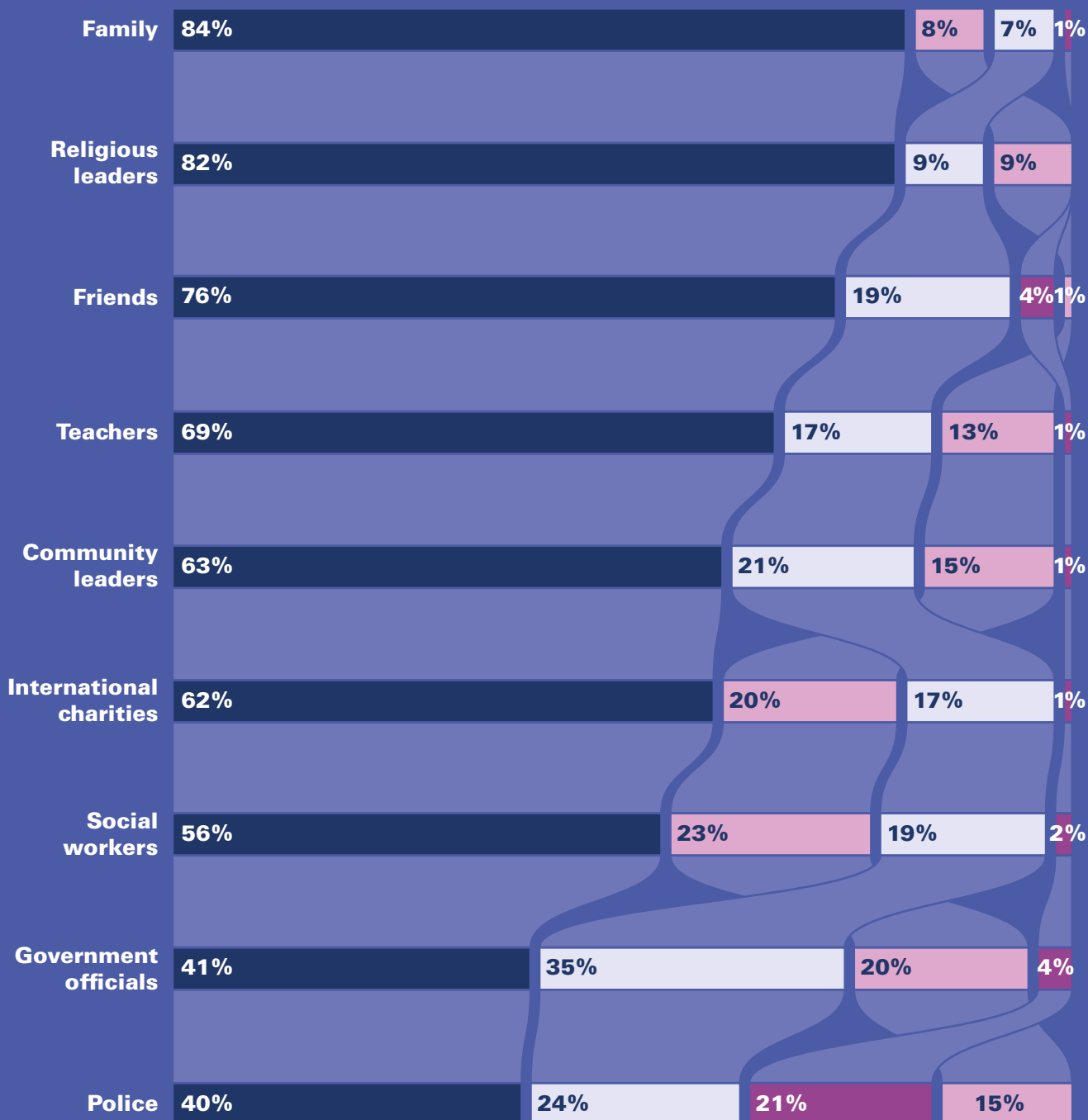
69. Although police are government officials, in this research the indicator referring to police was assessed separately.

Figure 16: Whom do children and young people perceive would help them?⁷⁰

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

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



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

The role of social workers was identified as one way of increasing protection in this context. As one interviewee said:

“The focus on social workers is key, because if there is one in each *kebele* they can identify vulnerable children and mitigate their issues. They are very crucial. They are also trained to provide psychosocial support which is essential. They will not be able to stop children and young people from moving but can mitigate some root causes.”

– Interview with Child Rights and Welfare Director, BOWCA, Bahir Dar, Amhara, September 2019

However, as several interviewees noted, an increase in social workers will remain palliative if the structures around them are not strengthened. During the qualitative interviews, many social workers and other frontline workers expressed their fatigue and feelings of hopelessness. As one interviewee said:

“The victims cry and we cry with them.”

– Interview with Child Unit Head, Police, Adama, Oromia, September 2019

It is worth noting that girls and young women were generally slightly more likely to think that nearly all the groups asked about would help them. They were, however, significantly more likely to think that social workers, police and community leaders would help them, perhaps because they are socially and culturally more likely to be seen as unthreatening and in need of help.

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

Alongside stories of abuse that children and young people had suffered, there were also numerous stories of communities creating protective mechanisms for them. Significant support from communities along the route was reported by a number of returnees from Libya and Sudan. As one interviewee said:

“My child is now blind due to the beating he received in Libyan prison, but now Somali people are taking care of him there while we find out how to bring him back home.”

– Interview with family member (also police official), Jijiga, Somali, September 2019

There were also stories of how individuals had helped children by complementing or replacing services when these did not have sufficient capacity or were simply not in existence. One government official described how she had witnessed neighbours taking care of a five-year-old child in the hospital, who had been badly burned by his aunt.⁷¹ Another woman had set up an association to help children living on the streets and works with communities to encourage a less negative attitude towards these children.

However, these small grassroots initiatives were often overwhelmed. While there is significant potential in harnessing local communities, there needs to be a structure in which that happens; there needs to be coordination; and there needs to be resources.

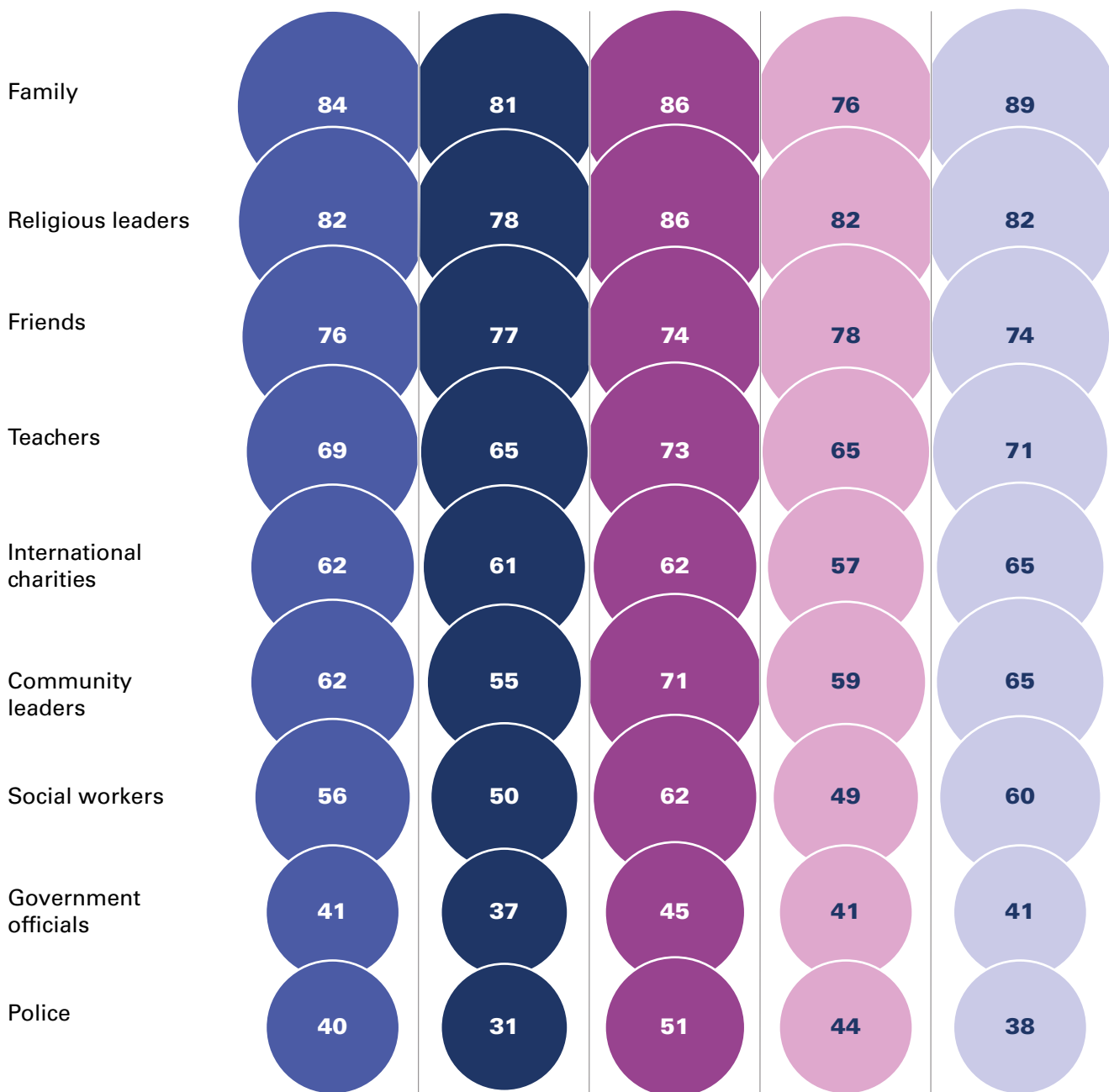
71. Interview with Child Process Unit, Head of Shashamene Women, Children and Youth Affairs, Oromia, August 2019.

Figure 17: Whom do children and young people trust to help them?

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

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

50





A young migrant uses the shower at the transit centre dedicated to reuniting underage migrants with their families.

CHAPTER 8

52

**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 Ethiopia. The highlighted text underscores the main differences 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 experiences that differ between girls and young women and boys and young men. More boys and young men left home without parental support. This can, to some extent, be correlated with general patterns of migration in Africa, which tend to see more men attempting to reach Europe taking the risky Mediterranean route, passing through Sudan and Libya. For example, one 2016 report noted that only 11 per cent of migrants identified in Libya were women.⁷² According to Eurostat data in 2017 the 67 per cent of Ethiopian asylum seekers in Europe were male.⁷³

On the other hand, and particularly valid for Ethiopian migrants, evidence shows a high feminization of internal migration, and of international migration to the Middle East,⁷⁴ as confirmed by the fact that this research encountered a higher percentage of female than male returnees (32 per cent vs. 15 per cent). This is related to long-established cultural practices, which place greater pressure on girls and young women to seek jobs in Arab countries – where there is a high demand for domestic workers – with the

Profile

- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to have a national passport (26 per cent vs. 9 per cent) or a *kebele* ID (42 per cent vs. 31 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to be single (94 per cent vs. 81 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to have a child or children of their own (22 per cent vs. 7 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to have returned (32 per cent vs. 15 per cent), whereas boys and young men were more likely to still be on the move (85 per cent vs. 68 per cent).

Why do children and young people move?

- Girls/young women were more likely to live with siblings (70 per cent vs. 59 per cent) or other adults (28 per cent vs. 15 per cent) before they left.
- Girls/young women were more likely to be part of a religious group back home (74 per cent vs. 52 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to be part of a sports group (24 per cent vs. 44 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely to have left without telling their parents (25 per cent vs. 15 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to get help from family (58 per cent vs. 48 per cent) or a smuggler (23 per cent vs. 13 per cent) to plan the journey, whereas boys and young men were more likely to rely on friends (40 per cent vs. 29 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely to have been physically hurt (30 per cent vs. 17 per cent) by someone they knew, or arrested by army or police (20 per cent vs. 9 per cent) back home.

What risks do children and young people face in transit?

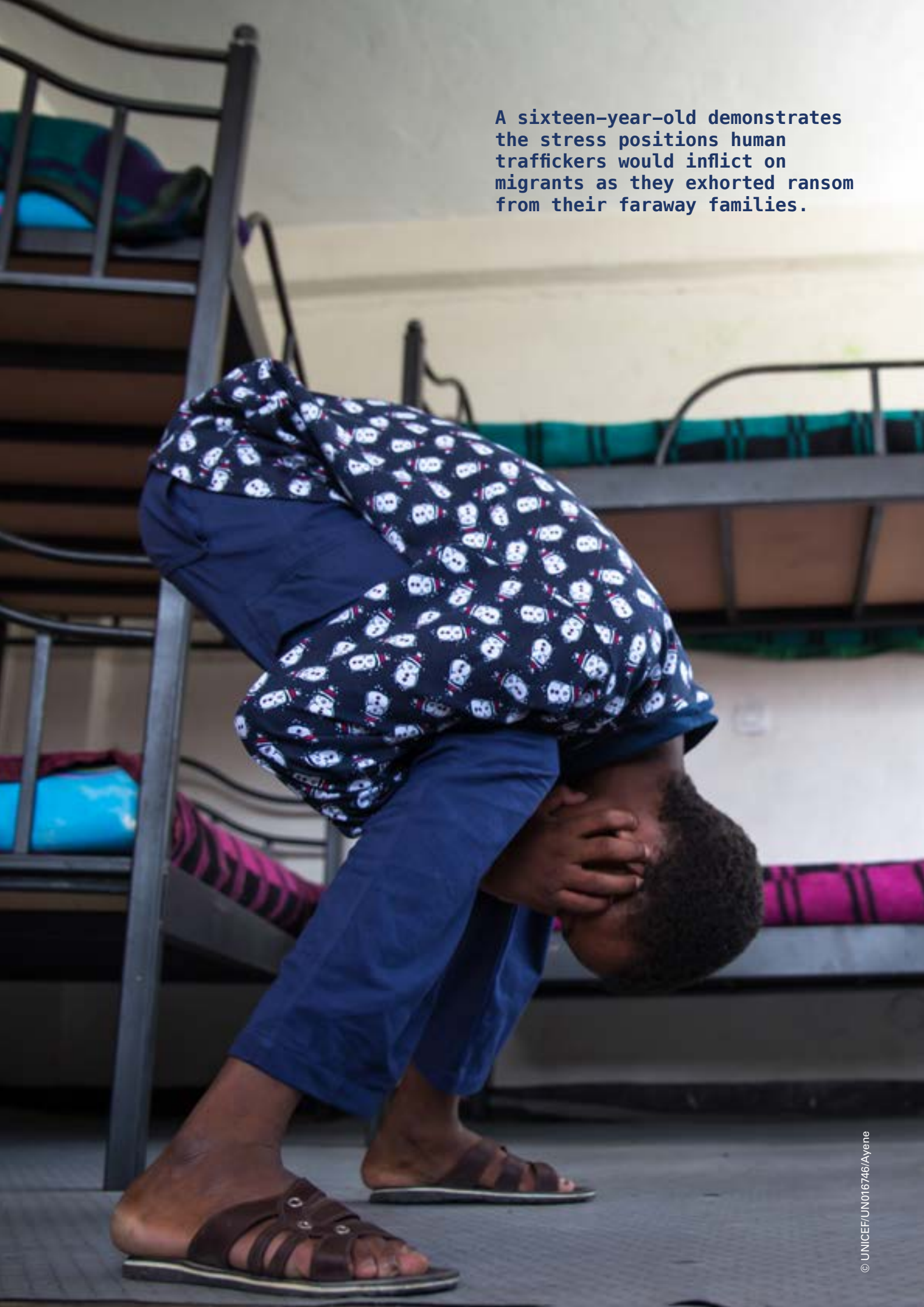
- Boys/young men were more likely to have walked (46 per cent vs. 33 per cent) or used a lorry or truck (26 per cent vs. 15 per cent), whereas girls/young women were more likely to have used an aeroplane (28 per cent vs. 7 per cent), as part of their journey.
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been deported from a country (19 per cent vs. 9 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been physically hurt by someone they did not know in transit (31 per cent vs. 18 per cent).

72. United Nations Children's Fund, *A Deadly Journey for Children: The Central Mediterranean Migration Route*, UNICEF, New York, February 2017.

73. Eurostat, 'Asylum Statistics', 2017 <ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics> accessed 12 August 2020.

74. Kuschminder, Katherine, and Melissa Siegel, *Migration & Development: A World in Motion. Ethiopia Country Report*, UNU-MERIT, Maastricht, 2014, <migration.unu.edu/publications/reports/migration-development-a-world-in-motion-ethiopia-country-report.html>, accessed 7 January 2021.

A sixteen-year-old demonstrates the stress positions human traffickers would inflict on migrants as they exhorted ransom from their faraway families.



aim of supporting their families.⁷⁵ This is confirmed by the fact that, in our sample, girls and young women are more likely to have parental support to move, and to rely on parents for planning the journey – both through regular and irregular means. The increased risk faced by boys and young men (around 30 per cent reported having been physically hurt both at home and during the journey) may relate to a number of factors. First, as boys and young men are more likely to travel on their own, and without the support of their families, it stands to reason that they are more vulnerable. It could well be that girls and young women would be equally (or more) vulnerable in the same circumstances (i.e., on their own, without family support). Second, our quantitative research did not assess sexual violence (for ethical reasons). Previous research involving migrant adults in Libya found that women were as likely to cite sexual abuse as physical abuse (19 per cent apiece), which indicates that this is a significant risk for girls and young women.⁷⁶ While less is known about the sexual abuse of men and boys who undertake the journey, emerging evidence shows that different forms of sexual violence and torture have an impact on boys and young men as well, including how “sexual violence is used for extortion, subjugation, punishment, and frequently involves elements of profound cruelty and psychological torture.”⁷⁷

75. Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat and Danish Refugee Council, ‘Ethiopia Country Profile’, May 2016, <<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EthiopiaCountryProfileMay2016.pdf>>, accessed 12 August 2020.

76. Mixed Migration Centre, ‘MMC North Africa 4Mi Snapshot: Protection within and along routes to Libya – a focus on sexual abuse’, October 2019, <www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/075_snapshot_na.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2020.

77. Women’s Refugee Commission, ‘“More Than One Million Pains”: Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys on the Central Mediterranean Route to Italy’, March 2019, <reliefweb.int/report/italy/more-one-million-pains-sexual-violence-against-men-and-boys-central-mediterranean-route>, accessed 12 August 2020.

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

- Girls/young women were more likely than boys/young men to live with other adults (41 per cent vs. 24 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to have no friends (19 per cent vs. 7 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to have a lot of friends (46 per cent vs. 28 per cent).
- Boys/young men were more likely than girls/young women to have been arrested by the army/police while living in their current location (16 per cent vs. 5 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to be part of a religious organization where they live now (70 per cent vs. 46 per cent), whereas boys/young men were more likely to be part of a sports group (25 per cent vs. 3 per cent) or none of the organizations asked about (31 per cent vs. 21 per cent).

Can migrant children and young people access services and support?

- More boys/young men than girls/young women used an internet café (30 per cent vs. 20 per cent).
- More girls/young women than boys/young men had wanted, but been unable, to use a counsellor (46 per cent vs. 31 per cent) or an internet café (44 per cent vs. 25 per cent), whereas more boys/young men than girls/young women were unable to use a shelter (35 per cent vs. 24 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to ask for help in the form of jobs (49 per cent vs. 36 per cent).
- Girls/young women were more likely to think that social workers (62 per cent vs. 51 per cent), police (51 per cent vs. 31 per cent) and community leaders (71 per cent vs. 55 per cent) would help people like them.

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

- A higher proportion of girls/young women than boys/young men said they planned to stay where they were for the next six months (59 per cent vs. 50 per cent).

CHAPTER 9

56

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

Our findings from the quantitative research show some differences in the experiences and attitudes of migrant children (14–17 years) and young people (18–24 years) in Ethiopia. The highlighted text underscores the main differences 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.

The complex picture emerging from the age comparison reflects the multiple profiles of children and young people moving into, within and from Ethiopia. Economic reasons were the primary ones cited for leaving home, especially for young people, while a higher proportion of children than young people (19 per cent vs. 12 per cent) cited family problems as a reason for moving. Children were also less likely to trust people, either community members or friends, about the dangers involved in the journey. Indeed, 22 per cent of children said that no-one helped them, compared with 10 per cent of young people. More young people than children relied on their friends or, more significantly, a smuggler/'travel agent'/'*delala*.

It is worth noting that young people were more likely to report having faced some particular types of harm and negative experiences in transit, such as having been physically hurt, having felt scared of other people, having been arrested by the police or detained at the border. This probably reflects the fact that more young people than children crossed an international border (63 per cent vs. 47 per cent), thus were more exposed to specific types of harm during the journey.

Profile

- More children interviewed were male (60 per cent of children vs. 50 per cent of young people), whereas more young people were female (50 per cent vs. 40 per cent).
- More children than young people had no documentation (39 per cent vs. 12 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to have a national passport (26 per cent vs. 4 per cent), other travel documents (12 per cent vs. 1 per cent), proof of refugee status (31 per cent vs. 21 per cent), or a *kebele* ID (52 per cent vs. 13 per cent).
- More children than young people cited primary school as their highest level of education (72 per cent vs. 31 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to cite secondary school (46 per cent vs. 20 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to be single (98 per cent vs. 80 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have a child/children of their own (22 per cent vs. 2 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to identify as returnees (34 per cent vs. 7 per cent), whereas children were more likely to be still on the move (93 per cent vs. 66 per cent).

Why do children and young people move?

- Children were more likely than young people to have been in school/studying before they started travelling (85 per cent vs. 62 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to have been working (34 per cent vs. 13 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to cite economics as their primary reason for leaving (34 per cent vs. 17 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people not to have been part of any of the groups asked about when they lived at home (31 per cent vs. 16 per cent), whereas young people were more likely than children to be members of a religious body (69 per cent vs. 53 per cent) or a youth group (31 per cent vs. 10 per cent).

On the contrary, more children than young people reported facing these types of harm and negative experiences in the areas where they currently lived. Children also reported having less access than young people to services and support, such as shelter, health care, a place to wash themselves, clothing, a phone, the internet and money – with the exception of school. This gap in access was greater among Ethiopians than non-Ethiopians, which likely reflects the fact that there are more services set up in the refugee camps. It also reflects the younger age of the children interviewed among the ones moving within Ethiopia, from rural to urban areas, who often end up victims of exploitation,⁷⁸ or trafficking, or living on the street, as shown by the significant minority (26 per cent) of children currently living with other children.

Children were also less likely to have had any contact with government officials in the past month, confirmed by other findings that showed children feeling unsupported and lonely, and seeking the support of a person to whom they could look to for help. This points to the crucial need to ensure that the vulnerabilities and needs of Ethiopian children moving internally are not neglected within a wider context in which international migration has received more attention and resources than internal migration.⁷⁹

What risks do children and young people face in transit?

- Young people were more likely than children to have trusted community members (26 per cent vs. 14 per cent) or friends (40 per cent vs. 26 per cent) to provide information about the dangers of the journey.
- Young people were more likely than children to have walked (45 per cent vs. 34 per cent) or used an aeroplane (25 per cent vs. 4 per cent) as part of the journey.
- Young people were more likely than children to have relied on friends (39 per cent vs. 29 per cent) or smugglers (27 per cent vs. 4 per cent) to help plan their journey.
- Young people were more likely to have paid for the journey (41 per cent vs. 19 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people not to have faced any of the types of harm and negative experiences asked about during the journey (55 per cent vs. 37 per cent), whereas young people were more likely than children to have been physically hurt by someone they did not know (31 per cent vs. 18 per cent) or forced to work without being paid (16 per cent vs. 4 per cent), to have felt scared of other people (52 per cent vs. 30 per cent), been arrested by army/police (29 per cent vs. 11 per cent) or been detained by the government (21 per cent vs. 9 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have crossed an international border (63 per cent vs. 47 per cent).

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

- Young people were more likely than children to live with other adults (38 per cent vs. 23 per cent), whereas children were more likely to live with other children (37 per cent vs. 17 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children not to have faced any of the types of harm or negative experiences asked about while living in their current area (43 per cent vs. 29 per cent), whereas children were more likely to have felt scared of other people (43 per cent vs. 33 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to feel safe where they slept at night (75 per cent vs. 55 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people not to be members of any of the organizations asked about (38 per cent vs. 18 per cent), whereas young people were more likely than children to be members of a religious group (63 per cent vs. 49 per cent), a youth group (20 per cent vs. 8 per cent) or a savings association (16 per cent vs. 5 per cent).

78. Erulkar, Medhin and Negeri, *The Journey of Out-of-school Girls in Ethiopia*.

79. United States Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, Washington, DC, June 2018, <www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/282798.pdf>, accessed 1 June 2019.

Rutel, 22, is currently settled in a camp for the displaced with her three kids. She never attended any class.

Can migrant children and young people access services and support?

- Children were more likely than young people to have been to school in the last month (32 per cent vs. 15 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have used a health centre (69 per cent vs. 39 per cent), social worker (29 per cent vs. 11 per cent), shelter (56 per cent vs. 34 per cent) or money transfer service (45 per cent vs. 14 per cent), whereas children were more likely to have used a school (39 per cent vs. 25 per cent).
- Young people were more likely to have had contact with a government official in the last month (30 per cent vs. 19 per cent), or have used an internet café (33 per cent vs. 15 per cent) or a religious-based organization (80 per cent vs. 65 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to have wanted, but been unable, to use a health centre (23 per cent vs. 10 per cent), money transfer service (19 per cent vs. 8 per cent) or shelter (43 per cent vs. 21 per cent), whereas young people were more likely than children to have wanted, but been unable, to use an employment service (76 per cent vs. 52 per cent).
- Children were more likely than young people to cite clothes as other types of support they needed (19 per cent vs. 2 per cent), whereas young people were more likely to cite jobs (53 per cent vs. 26 per cent) and money (31 per cent vs. 18 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to have access to a place to wash (49 per cent vs. 39 per cent), a mobile phone (76 per cent vs. 28 per cent) and the internet (42 per cent vs. 21 per cent).
- Young people were more likely than children to view social workers as helpful (60 per cent vs. 49 per cent), whereas children were more likely to say they didn't know (32 per cent vs. 17 per cent).

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

- Young people were more likely than children to plan to stay for the next six months (61 per cent vs. 45 per cent).
- If they had not left home, children were more likely than young people to say that they would now be studying (54 per cent vs. 37 per cent), whereas young people were more likely than children to say that they would be working (43 per cent vs. 26 per cent).



CHAPTER 10

60

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

“I migrated many times ... to Lebanon, Oman, Sudan for economic reasons ... and I regret it all because instead of helping, my child suffered. I left him with my mum, but he felt abandoned and was having problems with my mum’s husband. He escaped and went to live on the street. Even if I am trying to recover the relationship with my son, I would like to bring him home, but I can’t because I don’t have any savings – my family here wasted everything I was sending. I’m devastated. I cannot afford to rent a room and save my child from life on the streets.”

– Interview with Ethiopian female returnee and mother of a child living on the streets, Adama, Oromia, August 2019

The research findings point to the dual reality that migration is both seen by many children and young people as an opportunity to improve their situation and that of their families, and also may be fraught with risks, unanticipated consequences and challenges on many fronts. It is an action that carries the risk of exploitation and abuse, of detention and exclusion from social services, especially for children and young people. The relative weights of these risks and rewards vary, depending on a number of factors, including the reasons for moving, whether children and young people move on their own or within family structures, and the journey they make. The experience of migration – whether forced, voluntary or a combination of both – is unique for each child and young person who moves away from home.

Children and young people are also diverse in their plans for the future. Around two respondents in five (43 per cent) planned to move somewhere else in the next six months. A higher proportion of girls and young women than boys and young men planned to stay where they were in the next six months (59 per cent vs. 50 per cent).

Barriers children and young people face preventing them from responding to their needs and mitigating risks are likewise diverse. Child protection systems

overall, particularly along the routes and in the areas where children and young people move, are weak, and availability may be limited even for children who have not migrated. There may also be a variety of obstacles to access that are specific to migrant children and young people, according to their gender or age, as a result of language or cultural barriers to access, or from a lack of information on available services. Migrant children and young people may also be disproportionately affected by other factors, such as poverty and physical distance from services. Recommendations for strengthening the protection of migrant children and young people, therefore, need to address both the broader approaches required to fulfil their rights, as well as more specific gaps and challenges in existing systems for all children.

Towards a rights-based approach

Ensure safe and legal pathways for migration for children, so that they do not experience deprivation or violence in the course of their journeys or on arrival at their destination. This global commitment has been underscored by numerous international declarations and the UNICEF statement in support of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).⁸⁰

Responses and services aimed at children and young people need to work *with* movement rather than *against* it. Where migration is seen as a significant benefit and opportunity, children and young people will be willing to take significant risks to pursue it. And given that family problems were the second most mentioned reason for moving, determining the best interests of the child must involve considering alternatives to return, in situations where other solutions are needed.

At the same time, long-term, sustainable solutions (including (re)integration) need to be found for children and young people who do not want to move onward (but who may feel ‘forced’ to do so by a lack of alternatives and support). This implies expanding the narrative on drivers and expanding options for integration and assistance in country.

80. United Nations Children’s Fund, Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on the end of the negotiations of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, UNICEF, New York/Geneva, 13 July 2018, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-executive-director-henrietta-fore-end-negotiations-global-compact>, accessed 19 August 2020.

The majority of migrant children and young people will stay in the Horn of Africa region and need to be supported in order to do that. This means ensuring access to both legal status and appropriate services. This research also provides evidence to understand the extent to which those migrants face harm and risk, and the services they most feel they need. Programmes can be tailored to provide maximum impact given the available resources.

Services and support systems need to be inclusive and made available on the basis of need.

The findings of this research challenge the prevailing assumption that those who migrate for reasons of security are more vulnerable than those who move for economic reasons. Although these assumptions are based on objective factors, such as the length of time available to prepare journeys and the degree of choice that is exercised, the findings show that, at least in the case of children and young people, they are often counterbalanced by factors such as family support and accompaniment. This suggests that there needs to be greater attention paid to more detailed assessments of the specific points of vulnerability for migrant children and young people, in order to meet their needs.

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Specific recommendations for Ethiopia

Strengthening a child protection system that can overcome these diverse obstacles and effectively offer protection to migrant children and young people requires a nuanced understanding of their lived experiences, as well as a better understanding of what constitutes a functioning child protection system. As was suggested in a 2018 UNICEF global evaluation,⁸¹ 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. Minimum standards and oversight (information, monitoring and accountability mechanisms)
4. A continuum of services (spanning prevention and response)
5. Human, financial and infrastructure resources
6. Social participation, including respect for children's own views, and an aware and supportive public

These components provide a framework for considering specific recommendations arising from the research for strengthening Ethiopia's response to the current challenges faced by migrant children and young people, alongside global and national policy commitments. The recommendations have been developed to address some of the challenges expressed by children and young people migrating under challenging circumstances, in consultation with national partners and UNICEF Ethiopia.

1. Ensuring a robust legal system and regulatory framework

Ethiopia has made progress towards enacting a legal and regulatory system more sensitive to the needs of children through various laws relevant to child rights and protection,⁸² and through the adoption of the 2017 National Children's Policy.⁸³ However, Ethiopia lacks a comprehensive children's code, and a number of continuing gaps in the national legal system undermine the protection of children, particularly migrant children. The ongoing reform process provides an opportunity to address these gaps. Specifically, the Government of Ethiopia should:

- ratify the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954) and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961), to tackle the issue of statelessness;
- consider incorporating the provisions of the ratified Kampala Convention (African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa) into the national regulatory system and ensure implementation;

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

82. FDRE Constitution 1995, Revised Family Code 2000, Criminal Code 2004. For a full list see: www.africanchildforum.org/clr/Pages_EN/Ethiopia.html.

83. Ethiopia, National Children's Policy, 2017

- consider the finalization and adoption of a comprehensive **national migration policy**, grounded in the national and regional legal framework, formally appoint a minister in charge, and ensure a child rights lens is adopted in the development of the policy;
- where national commitments may contradict regional laws and policies, initiate consultation and dialogue with governments in the region to agree common frameworks;
- ensure that legislation and policies facilitate access to documentation, including birth registration (access to which should be universal particularly for single mothers and displaced children), *kebele* IDs, and temporary residence permits, to ensure that migrant children and young people are able to access services;
- ensure that a child protection lens is adopted in the Anti-trafficking Task Force strategy document under development to guide the implementation of Proclamation No. 1178/2020, with the support of UNICEF at the federal and regional levels; and
- ensure that all human trafficking and exploitation cases involving children are dealt with as the highest priority, by setting speedy trial dates and specific time limits.

2. Ensuring effective governance, minimum standards, coordination and oversight

In the Ethiopian context, effective governance and coordination could be improved by:

- ensuring that the minister appointed to oversee the national migration policy (as recommended above) facilitates the coordination of all actors involved in migration and displacement, and ensures the implementation of the national migration policy, as well as of the GCM and the Global Compact on Refugees and the CRRF processes;
- prioritizing the rollout of the Anti-trafficking Task Force to all regions, to ensure implementation of Proclamation No. 1178/2020; and

- creating a coordination platform on migrant children, or ensuring that they are on the agenda for discussion within existing coordination platforms to avoid duplication and enhance sustainability by improving coordination among government ministries, United Nations agencies and CSOs.

3. Minimum standards and oversight (information, monitoring and accountability mechanisms)

A functioning child protection system must be accountable, and advocacy work and interventions should be based on evidence. In the Ethiopian context, that means:

- strengthening a child protection information management system that supports child protection case management, coupled with effective monitoring, to address the data gap and enable development and adaptation of responses that are adequate and proportionate to the need – the research showed that there was a lack of reliable data and information on migrant children (including how many are in a particular location, how many children moved from certain locations or received assistance), and on all children affected by violence, exploitation and abuse; where that information exists, it is currently fragmented as it is collected by various agencies on different formats;
- strengthening the capacities of the social service workforce for child protection⁸⁴ (including social workers), the police and border authorities through developing and delivering training curricula and programmes on children's rights and protections in line with global commitments and standards; and
- aligning training with revised job descriptions and more effective supervision and accountability mechanisms to assist in performance management and ensure that the social service workforce is better equipped and incentivized to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation against children.

84. United Nations Children's Fund, 'Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection', UNICEF, New York, 2019, <www.unicef.org/media/53851/file/Guidelines%20to%20strengthen%20social%20service%20for%20child%20protection%202019.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2020.

4. Ensuring a continuum of inclusive, resilient and responsive services

The research highlights significant gaps and differences in access by migrant children and young people to services and protection; from access to social workers, to employment, education services and clean water. One reason for this is that assistance is often based on legal and/or policy categories ascribed to them, based primarily on drivers of movement. The findings, however, show that many children move for multiple reasons, and many do not fit within these categories. Others move between different 'categories' at different points in their journeys. Therefore, services need to respond first and foremost to migrants as children and young people, regardless of category, through the adoption of a rights-based approach. In practice, this means:

- promoting resilient child protection systems⁸⁵ that are accessible to all children, including migrant children, by linking humanitarian and development programming – while recognizing the need to respond to children's immediate needs during emergencies, all efforts should be made to invest in sustainable/long-term solutions by strengthening national and local child protection systems and services, including referrals/linkages to social welfare, health, justice, education and more effective prevention and protection services, and avoiding the creation of parallel systems/structures;
- ensuring that sufficient outreach is provided to migrant children who may not know about – or feel sufficient trust in authority figures to use – these services, by diversifying service providers to include actors who are best positioned to reach out to those children (for example, CSOs and CBOs) and invest in their capacity development;
- addressing significant gaps in access to basic services, including clean water, washing facilities, money, communications, employment services and education, by adopting a multi-sectoral approach, linking child protection efforts with interventions in other allied sectors, such as education, social protection and health; and

- facilitating access to education/training – the research showed that 49 per cent of the migrant children and young people interviewed were not able to access education and/or they had expressed a desire to access different types of education from those on offer; in order to improve access to education, partners should:
 - support school reintegration for returnee children;
 - support alternative education (mobile/informal), aligned with government standards and policies, including for children living on the streets and other migrants;
 - facilitate timely access to vocational training/jobs and support for businesses for young people by simplified procedures; and
 - evaluate the possibility of replacing the grade 8 certificate requirement of the Overseas Employment Proclamation for adults/young people above a certain age.

This underlines the need to support a diverse range of services. **Making services responsive to needs, therefore, means ensuring that different populations have access to services and that services match demand.**

5. Ensuring adequate human, financial and infrastructure resources

Effective child protection systems require appropriate human, financial and infrastructure resources. In the Ethiopian context, these resources need to be reinforced in key ways:

- **Respond to demand for social work services and counsellors:** The current efforts to map the capacity of the social service workforce can be built upon support strategies to ensure appropriate levels of presence and outreach, and to address the gaps identified by the research and ongoing assessments.
- **Increase protection in border areas:** Considering the level of danger reported in border areas, UNICEF should advocate for increasing the presence, capacity and coordination of child protection actors at, and to work across, borders. All border security

85. The ability of a system to predict, adapt and operate during unexpected events or a major disruption/crisis (i.e., displacement or COVID-19) and recover/return to normal operation after that.

authorities, including immigration and police, should be trained to identify unaccompanied and separated children, both foreigners and Ethiopians, and to refer them to child protection actors immediately, with the purpose of carrying out proper best interests assessments and case management. In addition, adequately trained police child units⁸⁶ should be supported.

- **Ensure that intercultural and linguistic mediation is made available to service providers by developing appropriate human resources:** In Ethiopia, considering the lack of professional interpreters, this could be done by training and recruiting university students coming from different regions (i.e., for Somali and Tigrigna languages).
- **Create capacity to conduct additional outreach activities:** For example, mobile teams can be established, which may include social workers and interpreters, targeting urban migration hubs, bus stations and immigration offices to ensure that migrant children in need are able to access immediate support (such as counselling, legal support, protection services, health assistance, shelter, etc.) through appropriate referrals.
- **Put in place alternative care arrangements:** This should be in line with international guidelines,⁸⁷ by establishing high-quality, small, family-like, safe accommodation and by increasing awareness within the community of the need to participate in guardianship and alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children, and making sure that individuals are trained and supported to fulfil this function.
- **Support those working in child protection:** The research found that feelings of hopelessness, powerlessness and compassion fatigue are having a negative impact on committed social workers and other child protection actors. Many are overwhelmed by children's needs and unable to provide support due to the absence of basic services. More action is needed to identify the needs of the workforce and sustain support for them.

Increasing government buy-in for the social service workforce could contribute to providing these resources.

6. Social participation, including respect for children's own views, and an aware and supportive public

In order to effectively offer protection to children and young people, systems need to be reinforced to better engage with children, young people and their communities. In particular, this could be done in the following ways:

- Support needs to be offered to parents of missing children, including to help them deal with the trauma related to abuse and violence they may have experienced. This should include allowing parents to report their missing child to child protection services. Families are among the few actors who are trusted and who maintain contact with children and young people throughout the journey. Not only would engaging them provide support for families, but it could also provide important data on the numbers of children moving from each location, and help to inform a proportionate response.
- Community awareness raising and dialogue are needed to overcome social and religious resistance to addressing mental health and psychosocial resources.
- It is important to raise awareness not only of the dangers of migration but also of the challenges faced in destination countries, safe migration and alternative opportunities for young people.
- Informal support groups could be set up – for example, for returnees – through which mentorship and support could be extended.

86. Specific units within the police force established in Ethiopia to engage with children.

87. United Nations General Assembly, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, A/RES/64/142, 24 February 2010, <www.refworld.org/docid/4c3acd162.html>, accessed 12 August 2020; United Nations General Assembly, Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Report of the Third Committee, A/74/395, 27 November 2019, <undocs.org/A/74/395>, accessed 12 August 2020.

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