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Young Lives

"A Stranger in All Places": Patterns and Experiences of Children and Young People Moving From Their Home Communities in Ethiopia

Kiros Birhanu, Alula Pankhurst, Karin Heissler and Jean Choi

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Summary

Moving away from home communities has become an increasingly common life experience for many children, adolescents and young people transitioning to adulthood in Ethiopia, to a much greater extent than among their parents’ generation. Much of the literature on migration focuses on the labour migration of young people and on international migration. This working paper explores the variety of experiences of children, adolescents and youth leaving their home communities, for social as well as economic reasons. It is based on data from the Young Lives fifth qualitative wave carried out in ten sites across five regions in 2019, as well as earlier Young Lives research. The paper considers patterns and experiences of movement and migration and the aspirations of children and young people leaving their communities for reasons relating to family, marriage, education and work.

1. Introduction

Moving away from home communities has become an increasingly common life experience for many children, adolescents and young people transitioning to adulthood in Ethiopia, to a much greater extent than among their parents' generation. Much of the literature on migration focuses on the labour migration of young people and on international migration. This working paper explores the variety of experiences of children, adolescents and youth leaving their communities, for social as well as economic reasons. The paper is based on data from the Young Lives fifth qualitative wave carried out in ten sites across five regions in 2019, as well as earlier Young Lives research, and considers patterns and experiences of children and young people leaving their communities for reasons relating to family, marriage, education and work.

Family reasons for children moving were often related to social shocks such as the divorce and death of parents, as well as poverty, while moving for marriage is largely due to the enduring norm of virilocal patterns of post-marriage residence with the husband's parents. Migration has become a more important experience shaping the transition of adolescents to adulthood, with the expansion of educational opportunities beyond primary school as well as increased youth aspirations for urban life and jobs. Migration for work has resulted from land scarcity and limited local employment, as well as the expansion of rural agricultural development, industrialisation and urbanisation and their accompanying opportunities for wage labour. International migration, particularly to the Middle East and Arab Gulf states, is attractive especially to young women since it provides better income than jobs within the country and opportunities to improve their livelihoods and those of their families.

The discourse on migration in Ethiopia is dominated by international migration, in part due to the concern of the global community resulting from media reports on harrowing experiences during journeys, human rights violations and exploitative work conditions. Studies of labour migration of young women to the Middle East and of men to South Africa have highlighted the risks migrants face (Kefale and Mohammed 2015; Jones et al. 2014; de Regt 2016). The short-term and visible economic impact among communities, notably as a result of remittances, also explain the greater interest in international migration. This has been the main focus of Ethiopian policymakers together with donor-supported programmes, leading to the development of guidelines, rules and regulations, focused on migration outside of legal and institutional frameworks. However, Schewel and Fransen (2018), suggest that internal movement exceeds international migration, even though supportive data are limited, so that internal migration is mostly left unrecorded and has not been given due attention. There have been a number of studies highlighting the potential benefits of internal migration in terms of income and well-being (Atnafu, Oucho, and Zeitlyn 2014; de Brauw, Mueller, and Woldehanna 2013; Bevan et al. 2006; Mberu 2005).

The magnitude as well as various forms of child and youth migration are less well understood since literature on migration is mostly associated with adult labour migration. Hashim and Thorsen (2011) highlighted the importance of understanding and contextualising independent child migration in Africa. Whitehead and Hashim (2005) revealed the presence of significant numbers of independent child migrants. Some studies on child migration have focused on the international dimension in the context of globalisation (Abebe and Kjorholt 2009), while others have stressed the intergenerational dimensions (Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen 2007).

Many studies show that some children migrate to live with relatives, for child marriage, to attend further education in towns, and to find work, mainly in the informal sector. Edmonds and Shrestha (2009) indicated that work is an important cause of child migration. The study by Erulkar et al. (2006) among youth in Addis Ababa slums showed that most adolescent migration was for education (45 per cent of boys and 51 per cent of girls) and for work (29 per cent of boys and 32 per cent of girls), while over a fifth of girls (22.7 per cent) migrated to escape child marriage. It further suggested that migrating adolescents were particularly vulnerable as they lacked parental schooling and social connectedness.

Ethiopian government policies, notably the National Children's Policy (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2017) give particular attention to trafficked children, with Tefera (2013) outlining the risks facing minors. There have been important critiques of the child trafficking discourses both internationally and in the Ethiopian context, notably in terms of the importance of social networks (Boyden and Howard 2013; Heissler 2013), the extended family and the politics of orphan care (Abebe and Aase 2007), and the question of child fostering (Kassa and Abebe 2014). Erulkar et al. (2006) indicated that the discourse and policy concerns are largely related to child labour exploitation, including child migrants working as domestic workers who are at risk of sexual and other forms of violence and exploitation. UNICEF research on migrant children and young people in Ethiopia (UNICEF 2020) highlighted three key issues. First, mobility is a core coping strategy for many children and young people. Second, many migrant children and young people are unable to access protection or basic services. Third, understanding needs to go beyond divisions between economic and refugee migration.

This working paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons children, adolescents and young people leave their home communities?
2. What are the migration experiences of children, adolescents and young people?
3. What are the aspirations for internal and international migration?

The following methodology section provides an overview of Young Lives research, the qualitative fifth wave and the case studies presented. The patterns of movement and migration and the aspirations of young people are then outlined, while subsequent sub-sections deal with moving for family reasons, marriage, education, and work, including internal and international migration. The conclusions summarise the major findings and policy implications.

2. The Young Lives study and methods

This paper is based on data from Young Lives, a longitudinal international study of childhood poverty that has tracked 3,000 children in Ethiopia since 2001. The study has so far collected five rounds of survey data on 2,000 Younger Cohort children born around 2000 and an Older Cohort of 1,000 children born seven years earlier. Young Lives has also carried out five

waves of qualitative longitudinal interviews between 2007 and 2019, with a sub-set of young people and their caregivers.

Study sites were selected from both urban and rural areas, with a focus on food-insecure areas; within the sites children were selected randomly. While the sample is therefore not nationally representative, it covers a diversity of social and economic circumstances and backgrounds in 20 sites across Ethiopia. The longitudinal approach allows for understanding the viewpoints of children in their transition to gendered adulthood from a life-course perspective.

2.1. The fifth wave of qualitative data

This paper discusses the experiences of children, adolescents and youth moving away from their communities or attempting or aspiring to do so, as well as a few cases of young people with family members who had migrated abroad. It is based primarily on a sub-sample of the Young Lives fifth wave of qualitative research carried out in 2019 with 141 key informants, including young people, their spouses, local officials and service providers, as well as gender and age-based focus group discussions in ten locations across five regions: Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) (Tafere and Chuta 2020a). The study sites have distinct characteristics in terms of livelihoods, urbanisation level, remoteness, resources and magnitude of migration.[1] Data on migration were gathered as part of the wider Young Lives study, with data from earlier qualitative waves used in a few cases.

The fifth wave of qualitative data comprised 122 young people, of which this paper uses 66 cases: 39 girls or young women and 27 boys or young men; 49 were from the Older Cohort (24-25 years old) and 17 from the Younger Cohort (18-19 years old). In terms of the regional distribution, 23 were from Oromia, 18 from Tigray, 11 from Addis Ababa, ten from SNNP and four from Amhara (Annex 2). Of the cases, 54 had migrated themselves, nine had family members who had migrated, and three aspired to migrate abroad.

Regarding the types of migration, six cases are presented of children moving to live with other family members, four in rural areas and two in a regional capital city. Ten cases were girls or women who moved for marriage, with all except one moving from one rural community to another and most moving fairly short distances. There were a few cases of women or girls who were abducted or eloped travelling further away until negotiations with in-laws were concluded.

Twenty adolescents had moved away from their communities for education. Only two of these moved for primary education in one Oromia site, nine moved to local towns for secondary schooling, seven to cities for tertiary education (four of whom moved to universities in other regions), and three to private colleges within their region. Three young people aspired to study abroad: a young woman for a first degree in Australia or China, another woman for a master's degree in Norway or India, and a young man for a master's degree in Germany.

1 See Annex 1 for descriptions of each site. The names of the sites have been anonymised and their specific locations within the five regions are not mentioned to protect respondents' anonymity.

Fifteen cases are discussed in relation to internal migration for work, three of which involved rural-to-rural migration for irrigation work, eight rural-to-urban migration, and four between or within urban areas. Of the 13 cases related to international migration, four were young women who migrated to Arab countries themselves, and six had spouses, siblings or mothers who have migrated abroad. Three cases who had aspired to migrate did not manage to do so; one woman married her boyfriend instead, and one young man had problems with his documents, while another gave up before crossing the sea.

Motives for migrating can be interrelated, with one leading to another, and several cases migrated for different reasons in succession. Some of those who went to live with relatives when they were children later left those communities to go to urban areas or abroad, or to get married. Several of those who migrated to urban areas for education stayed there afterwards for work. Some who went to work in urban areas subsequently migrated abroad.

3. Patterns of migration

Ethiopia's development is constrained by high population growth, youth unemployment, land scarcity, and growing urban poverty. All these factors interrelate with migration in complex ways. The population remains overwhelming rural (78 per cent), but there are increasing trends of urban migration which are likely to continue (Central Statistical Agency 2013).

3.1. Internal migration

Scarcity of land and drought are important push factors leading to many young people migrating to other rural areas and especially to towns and cities in search of work. Bundervoet (2018) found that migrants would often not have migrated if they had had access to fertile land to farm. Similarly, Gavonel (2017) concluded that children whose households own less land are more likely to move for work. For Kefale and Mohamed (2015), youth landlessness and insufficient rural jobs were major push factors for rural out-migration.

Increasing work opportunities in construction, industries and business activities have acted as pull factors leading to the greater urban migration of young people. The World Economic Forum (2017) indicated that globally migration and urbanisation are often interlinked processes. In the Ethiopian context, Tegenu (2010) found that migration-led urbanisation has increased rapidly both in terms of the number of towns and proportion of the population located in urban areas. Dom (2018) listed a number of factors that attract people towards employment in rural areas, including in gold mines, flower, agricultural and horticulture farms, and towards urban areas, including the presence of domestic work, hospitality services, cobblestone and construction work, and work in factories.

The expansion of primary education followed by increasing enrolment of students has also required young people to move to nearby towns for secondary education and to cities for tertiary education. This is because there are far fewer secondary schools compared to primary schools, hence contributing to the migration of students who are able to pursue secondary school. Bezu and Holden (2014) indicated that 70 per cent of the migrant youth in their study reported education as the primary reason for moving away from their village, either due to the absence of higher education establishments close to their village or because of quality concerns. Erulkar et al. (2006) also found that among both male and

female adolescents, educational opportunities was the most commonly cited reason for moving to Addis Ababa, followed by pursuit of work opportunities. Similarly, Eshetu and Beshir (2017) revealed that further education was among the main drivers of rural-urban migration in SNNPR.

The government is seeking to address unemployment through various job creation strategies and programmes spearheaded by the Jobs Creation Commission. These include interventions giving priority to young people in the provision of land, credit services and training. However, these are not sufficient to reach all the youth due to their large and growing numbers, as well as resource constraints and increasing aspirations for migration.

3.2. International migration

International migration, including both documented, legal migration sometimes referred to as regular migration by air and the more common undocumented irregular overland routes involving brokers and smugglers, has been relatively well researched. However, there is less discussion of the migration of adolescents, since officially migrants have to be adults and minors cannot get passports without their parents' involvement. Most international labour migrants from Ethiopia are women travelling to the Middle East and especially the Arab Gulf countries. Over 110,000 migrants arrived in Yemen in 2016, 83 per cent of whom were estimated to be Ethiopians (IOM 2018). Migration of young people to South Africa is largely from southern Ethiopia, particularly among the Kembata and Hadiya zones. Kefale and Mohammed (2015) described an established tradition of migration from these areas to South Africa and identified strong social support systems among the groups as important pull factors. Migration to European countries is more common among young people from Addis Ababa and from more educated backgrounds.

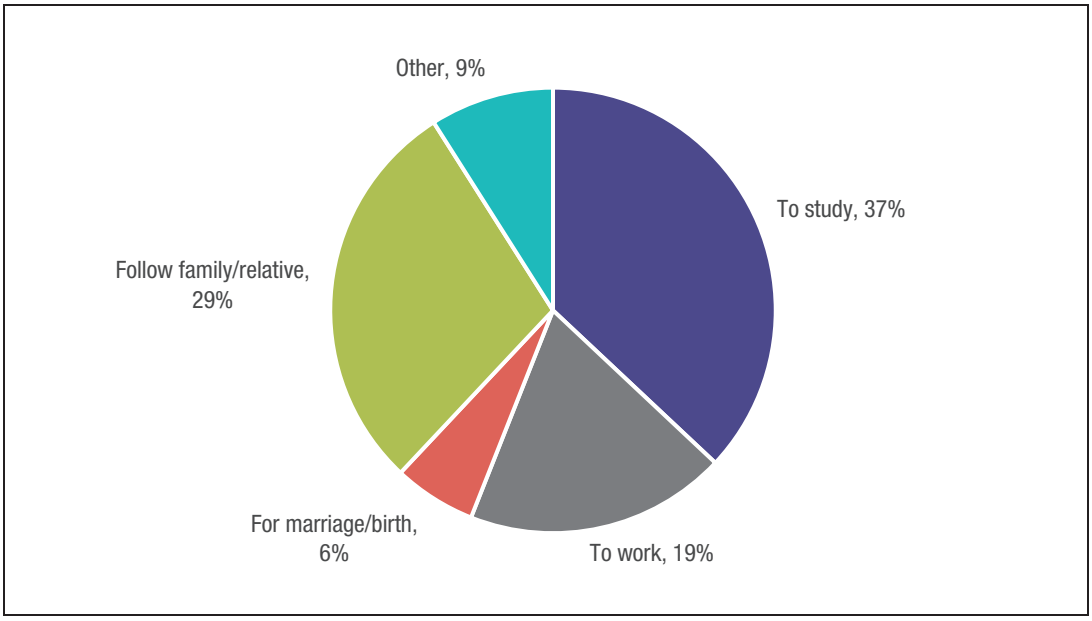
According to the IOM (2018) there are numerous push factors, including poverty, high unemployment, land scarcity, regional income disparities, environmental degradation and a well-established culture of migration in origin regions. The economic advantages of international migration in terms of the improvements migrants can bring to their families' lives are major reasons why so many migrants decide to try their luck, despite many cases of devastating experiences during travel and work. Undocumented migration of young people to Arab countries has claimed the lives of many Ethiopians and left many others with physical and psychological traumas, notably resulting from sexual violence. This gained the attention of the international and national communities and led to government measures. The massive deportation of undocumented migrants from Saudi Arabia made the situation even worse (de Regt and Tafesse 2016). Kefale and Mohammed (2015) documented the brutal crackdown against irregular migrants to Saudi Arabia after the expiry of the deadline for them to leave Saudi Arabia in 2013. Recent COVID-related returns of migrants, including those who entered countries through irregular channels, have further exacerbated the situation.

Migration policies and regulations in Ethiopia have mainly focused on curbing irregular international migration. However, there has recently been a paradigm shift with a recognition of the importance of employment opportunities and foreign currency that migrants can send through remittances. This has led to efforts by the government to regulate sending agencies, provide training to would-be migrants, and start diplomatic talks with the leaders of Arab countries.

3.3. Young Lives survey evidence on migration

Evidence from the Young Lives third and fourth round surveys, when the children were adolescents aged between 15 and 19, suggests they move for a variety of reasons that go beyond those related to economics, with family formation and family reunion also important motives for migrating.

Figure 1. *Reasons for children's and young people's migration in Young Lives sites*



In the Ethiopian sample, 37 per cent of children migrated to study, 19 per cent to work, 6 per cent for marriage or to give birth, 29 per cent to follow family, and the remaining 9 per cent for other reasons (Gavonel 2017) (Figure 1). The study indicated that only women migrated for marriage/birth. The results suggest that at this age, migration is often a household strategy. Moreover, children from families with less land, in rural areas, and having more years of education were more likely to migrate, and children from relatively poorer households were more likely to move for work. Migration of girls was correlated with lower household sizes, suggesting many migrate with their families and with household livestock ownership as important assets and indicators of wealth, whereas boys from families who had received credit were less likely to migrate, suggesting the ability to self-insure protects families against the need to migrate (Gavonel 2017).

3.4. Differential migration patterns in Young Lives sites

Young Lives fifth wave qualitative findings reveal the importance of both internal and international migration in the lives of children and young people. However, there are differences in the extent and importance of migration across the Young Lives sites. Moreover, destinations and drivers vary considerably due to differences in urbanisation and differential access to schools and colleges. Internal migration is less common from the sites in the cities and towns (two in Addis Ababa, one in SNNP and one in Amhara).

In most cases young people in rural areas migrate to the nearest towns. Girls in some communities, particularly in the Oromia and SNNP rural sites, also migrate to other rural communities for marriage. The type and direction of migration varies. Internal migration and moving for education are less common in rural areas located within close proximity to towns, like Tach-Meret in Amhara. Migration to cities beyond the existing region is usually for university, since young people are randomly assigned to universities by the government.

International migration is much less common in the sites than internal migration, in part since the Younger Cohort had only recently become adults in 2019. However, there were several cases of migration to Arab countries from rural areas, as well as the two sites in Addis Ababa. Aspirations to migrate to European countries were mentioned by several young people in the two communities in the capital. Although the numbers who have actually migrated internationally and returned are small, many more have relatives who have migrated. Furthermore, several young people had tried to migrate abroad but failed for various reasons, and some are still trying. There are also several cases of young people and their families who have benefitted from remittances from family members, while some young women have had to care for children of those who migrated. Several young people from Addis Ababa also mentioned having close friends or relatives who migrated, mainly through irregular means, to European countries.

4. Migration aspirations

Many adolescent children and young people expressed aspirations to leave their community. Internal movement and migration aspirations are often based on concrete information provided by earlier migrants. While some have taken steps towards migration, others simply mentioned vague aspirations to migrate because they heard about the advantages of living in towns or cities, or because they were attracted by city life. In some cases, moving to urban centres for education leads to further aspirations to live in such areas. For example, Nigist, from Gomen in Tigray, said:

> I got to know Mekelle [the capital city of Tigray region] while I was studying for my college education in accounting; it is a big city and I wish I could work there.

Even though many youth express a desire to leave their communities, they often face a number of barriers, the most important being the costs involved, especially to move to continue education. Unless they come from wealthy families, accommodation and related costs, and fees for private colleges if their grades are not sufficient to get into public universities, are not affordable for most families; some parents may also be unwilling to support their children or need them to work for them.

Many young people aspire to migrate abroad, mainly in the hope of finding better employment opportunities. Some take steps to prepare for migration, notably obtaining passports, raising money for the journey and contacting agencies or brokers. Some young people who have been to university, especially from better-off families, aspire to migrate abroad for further education. These young people often have ideas about where they want to go and usually plan to follow regular procedures and routes. There are also a few examples, such as Yordi from Leki in Oromia, who have already applied to migrate. She said:

> I am trying to search for scholarships in order to do a master's degree. I may get a scholarship if God wills. I am trying to search for a scholarship in Norway and India. I have already applied but I am waiting to receive my degree transcript.

There were also cases of young people from Addis Ababa who did not want to go to university in Ethiopia and instead wished to study abroad. Yerusalem, an 18-year-old girl from a wealthy family, who is in Grade 12 at a private school in Addis Ababa, said:

> I don't want to continue my university education here. If the process goes well, I will go this summer season … I want to go to Australia. I have someone who applies there and in China for me.[2]

A few young people, mostly women who have already been to Arab countries, also wish to return since they felt the money they accumulated from their previous migration was not enough to establish sustainable businesses in Ethiopia that can bring meaningful change in their lives. Several young people who aspire to migrate to Arab countries from rural areas, and young men who want to migrate to European countries from Addis Ababa, failed to migrate mostly due to financial constraints or lack of family support. Patriarchal norms also interfere with some young women's aspiration to migrate to Arab countries for work, due to arranged marriages or abductions, or young women's preferences to get married. For instance, Sefria, a young woman from Timatim who came from a poor household and had planned to go to an Arab country to help her family, did not end up going since she got to know a boyfriend and decided to marry him instead.

5. Moving for family reasons and marriage

The Ethiopian National Labour Force Survey reports that the most prevalent reason (33 per cent) for moving between 15 and 19 years old is to move with family (Central Statistical Agency 2014). In the Young Lives sample, just over a third (35 per cent) of the adolescents who moved between the ages of 15 and 19 did so for reasons to do with family and marriage, with only a small proportion (6 per cent) being for marriage, all of whom were girls (Gavonel 2017). Some children, especially adolescent girls and young women, move either because of family problems or for marriage, due to the virilocal marriage norms according to which women are expected to move to their husband's communities.

5.1. Moving to live with relatives

A few children moved to live with relatives in childhood when the family encountered a health or social shock, notably the death or divorce of parents, or if the family was very poor. In an earlier Young Lives study of migration (Gavonel 2017), 29 per cent of those who moved did so to follow or join relatives, with slightly higher proportions of boys (31 per cent) than girls (26 per cent). Earlier Young Lives qualitative work also presented evidence of children living

2 Some wealthier families commission people in other countries to do the applications for their children.

with relatives, suggesting flexible household labour arrangements (Chuta and Crivello 2013). Another Young Lives study on child work found that death and family shocks were also important reasons for migration of both boys and girls to urban areas (Pankhurst, Crivello and Tiumelissan 2016). While some literature highlights institutional arrangements for boys from poorer households or those who are orphans to work in other peoples' houses (Kassa and Abebe 2014), the case material discussed here highlights cases of girls living with relatives, notably aunts and grandparents, helping them with domestic tasks, while going to school. The following cases from Leki in Oromia and Zeytuni in Tigray are illustrative of this.

Buzunesh from Leki lost her parents and moved to live with her grandmother for six years in Meki town until she reached Grade 4. Her grandmother had no daughters to help her at home and in the field and was not well, so Buzunesh helped her with domestic work. She eventually asked her grandmother if she could return to Leki, which she agreed to. She recalled:

> My grandmother had no female children who could help her. I went there to help her. Mother took me there. My grandmother was sick at that time. She needed a female child to help her with domestic work. Now she is in good health. I continued my education while I was there.

Similarly, Shashitu, also from Leki, recalled migrating to live with her aunt in SNNPR after the death of her parents.

> I was brought up with my aunt in Wondo Genet area. I migrated there following the death of my father and mother. I lived there for some two years and then returned here and started to live with my brothers. I helped my aunt with domestic work. I also went to the market to buy sugarcane and I sold sugarcane for her, together with her son.

Likewise, Salayish grew up with her grandmother on an island in a lake, although her mother was alive. She recalled how she is more attached to her grandmother:

> I was born in Leki. Since my childhood until some 12 years, I lived with my grandmother on the island in the nearby lake, where I went to school. I have not known the love of my mother because I was growing up with my grandmother. I had good love from my grandmother … She was my main caregiver … I am not clear with my mother and she is not clear with me either. I love my grandmother more than my mother.

However, there was one case where the girl felt she had been mistreated. Beletch's mother got divorced from her husband and was married off to a man in another community. Her grandparents decided to give Beletch to her aunt for adoption and she was told her mother had died, and she later found out that both her parents had died later. As she grew up she quarrelled with her aunt. She was going to school although she had enrolled late, and felt she was overworked as the only girl in the household and the boys not helping. Beletch was fetching firewood, water and herding livestock, as well as grinding flour and cooking at home, and later also did paid work.

> As I grew up, my responsibilities at home had been increased. This prevented me focusing on my education. I wake up early in the morning and did domestic work. Then I went to school. After I returned home, I have to [do] paid work in the irrigation works. Then I have to herd cattle. Every day, I was busy with family work and paid work … I had no rest time … [it was] only when I finished the domestic work that I had the chance to watch TV … My 'mother' did not give time for my study … She did not allow me to go to

> tutorial and catch-up classes. She wanted me to do only domestic work. I realised that she did not give due attention for my education. She priorit[ised] her domestic work rather than my education. She did not dislike me but she wanted me to help her with domestic work.

In Zeytuni, Haymanot, who lived with her poor single mother, went to live with her aunt in another area for four years and helped her with domestic work, while also going to school there. Similarly, Haftey, also from Zeytuni, was living with her mother after her father left them; when she was 7 years old her mother died and she went to live with her grandmother, and later with her aunt in a city after her father's death. She went to school throughout and did not complain about excessive household work. She recalled:

> My childhood time passed in a good way. I was attending my education that time. I was doing domestic chores with the time I had. And in my free time, I was playing with my friends. And then during raining season, I was spending [it] with my aunt here.

Likewise, Delina lived with her grandmother in rural Zeytuni until Grade 5, helping with domestic tasks while going to school, but later went back to Mekele to live with her parents who were traders and continued her education. She expressed a preference for living in the city:

> There is great difference, in the village we have to bring water to our house and it may get dark on the way home, so we face many problems for being girls, but in a city it is very good. Here water and electricity services are accessible and available, so we have no problem. In the village the market place is far away from our home but here in the city it is near.

5.1.1. Community child and social protection or child labour abuse?

Several of these girls had lost either one or both parents, or were living with single and poor mothers. Most went to live with family members, some of whom did not have children to help them or were elderly or sick, as in the case of two grandmothers. The girls were engaged in work in the households they joined, but also went to school. Some became attached to their relatives, such as Salayish but others wanted to leave and some, such as Buzunesh, requested to do so and returned to their parents. While most did not feel a sense of discrimination, Beletch felt overworked and exploited, which contributed to her not doing well at school, dropping out and deciding to get married at age 15.

5.2. Moving for marriage

Traditionally in rural Ethiopia young women tend to move to their husband's village. This is due to virilocal cultural norms according to which a woman should live with the husband's parents, upon whom the husband is usually economically dependent for housing, farming land and livestock, until they set up their own homestead nearby. Bezu and Holden (2014) suggest that the odds of young women migrating to another village is more than four times that of young men.

In the Young Lives sample 6 per cent of those who migrated did so for marriage and/or child birth (all of whom were women), representing 12 per cent of the reasons for migrating among 15-19 year olds. The gender imbalance is stark in relation to child marriage, with 15 per cent

of Older Cohort teenage girls married by 18, compared to less than 3 per cent of Older Cohort boys (Pankhurst et al. 2018)

Young women moving away from their natal community in rural areas moved mainly to other rural communities, although in a few cases the couples moved to nearby towns. After marriage some young men who did not have access to resources, notably land, and who could not find work within their community moved to other rural areas or towns for seasonal or temporary work.

A few couples met or got to know one another in towns where they were studying, which is one reason why parents are sometimes apprehensive of sending their daughters to towns for studies. Ayantu's husband heard about her through his grandmother who came from her community. He went to see her at her secondary school in a local town when she was about 16 and he was 23 and they exchanged telephone numbers; they got to know each other and he sent elders to her parents to ask for her hand in marriage.

The distances that young women travel for marriage are often not very great, sometimes within an hour or two hours' walking distance, as in the cases of Awet and Letish in Zeytuni. However, in some cases they marry further away. Beletch, who was an orphan living with her aunt with whom she did not get on, was solicited for marriage by a man whose grandmother was from her area. His aunt's daughter with whom she was friendly lobbied in his favour and persuaded her to marry him. Beletch got married at the age of 15 and moved with him to a town 35 kilometres away, and later to a rural area further away where her husband's father had land. Salayish also moved with her husband to a town several hours' drive away; she said she preferred living in the town to the rural area.

The distances that young women travel for marriage may have reduced due to land shortages and regulations that stipulate that young people can only get land in their own communities. For instance, Sessen and her husband who tried to migrated to Saudi Arabia but failed were both allocated land in Zeytuni by the local administration: they sold his share and built a house on her allocation.

Some families may also prefer their daughters not to marry too far away so that they can still come back to the house and help them. Mina from Timatim received a marriage proposal from a man who lived far away, but her family preferred a suitor who lived in the same village. The proposal came when she was age 14 and in Grade 9, and though she had hoped to continue her studies and then migrate to an Arab country or find a job, her father agreed the marriage when she was 15 and she had to accept.

> I wished to go to an Arab country or to be government employee after completing education. It was through family that this marriage is arranged … I wanted to live in town but I couldn't do anything. It is due to my fortune. My family pushed me to get engaged against my interest after he sent elders. I said I want to learn but my father said that he [the husband] will [support me] up to the level of education [I] want to continue. I agreed with their idea but once the baby comes, you don't continue your education … you will use your time for child raising.

Some young women themselves reject proposals from suitors living long distances away. For example, Meselech refused a marriage proposal brought by her uncle from a man living in Gondar, a town several hours' drive from her community, and preferred to marry a man who worked in the local factory where she was also employed.

In Oromia, marriages resulting from abduction often meant that the girl would be taken far away from her community to avoid her family trying to get her back until a reconciliation payment called *gaaddissa* could be brokered (Tafere et al. 2020). For instance, Zahara from Lomi was engaged to her cousin who her parents wanted her to marry, but was abducted when she went to collect water by a man from the same community who took her far away until *gaaddissa* was negotiated. The husband of Ayu from Leki had asked her parents for her hand in marriage when she was around 15. They agreed but she refused, offended that he had not approached her directly, and he then abducted her at a local market:

> First, he asked my family, but I refused, and he abducted me in the end. He sent elders to my family, they said ok, but I was offended, because he didn't ask me if I wanted it. Then he abducted me. For some time my brothers were searching for him, but after he sent *gaaddissa*, they stopped searching and peace was resumed between them.

Her husband took her to another town, and then migrated for work to Addis Ababa for a while. They eventually settled back in her home area and unusually started living with her family.

Young women who agree to be 'voluntarily abducted' or elope, sometimes to avoid paying bridewealth, also move with their husbands considerable distances from their communities. Yalem from Lomi had a boyfriend with whom she spent the night. She fled with him when her family found out and her sister phoned her; they went to a distant town and sent elders to start the reconciliation process. Likewise, Dechasa from Lomi ran away with his girlfriend when she came with her family to a market town. He recalled:

> I secluded her from her family … and we got on a bus and ran away to the home of my relatives … We came back after the elders [had discussions] with her parents and settled the agreement.

Similarly, Buzunesh, who had previously migrated from Leki to live with her grandmother in a town, started a relationship with her husband, but, as she recalled, when her family found out they ran away, until reconciliation could be agreed:

> My family heard the news that I was found with my husband. People spread rumours that we were in a love relationship. I feared my family and they pushed us to get married.

5.2.1. Initial social isolation and gradual adaptation of young women migrating for marriage

Young women moving away from their communities for marriage often face social isolation having left their family, relatives and friends, even if they only move close by; some go through a difficult period until they become familiar with their new physical and social environment. A study by Erulkar et al. (2006) indicated a number of social issues that migrant women in Addis Ababa faced, including more limited social connections, sources of support and sense of safety than those born in the capital.

Haymanot from Zeytuni recalled her sense of disorientation and gradual adaptation:

> It is difficult if you have never been there … It is embarrassing to go to a place you have never seen before … there is a feeling of missing them [her family] but I visited them after a month or two weeks … It was ok, I did not feel so bad. I was confused at the beginning because I did not know the place, but later I adapted over time.

Ayantu from Leki missed her parents and stated that: "migration for marriage is bad since we could not communicate with parents and relatives". Hewan from the same community mentioned missing her friends who were not married even though she had not moved far:

> It is totally changed. Now I am a married woman. Unmarried friends do not frequently come to my home. They want to enjoy somewhere. They cannot talk same language with me. They have different views now.

Although traditionally young women often return to their parents' home to give birth to their first child, in the Oromo sites even after a reconciliation payment is made the wife may not be allowed to visit her family until the full *gabbara* [bridewealth] is paid.

Women also often mentioned the strain of living in close proximity to their mothers-in-law, sometimes at least initially living in the same house. For instance, Sefria from Timatim lived in a separate room in the same house as her in-laws, and Mina from the same community lived with her husband in a separate house in the same compound. Beletch from Leki mentioned that her mother-in-law lived with them for a year and she was not allowed to leave the compound. Though she became used to married life she recalled how difficult it was at first:

> I was not allowed to leave the home for a year. His mother was responsible for managing the domestic work. I was kept at home.

Likewise, Ayantu from Leki stayed at home and did not visit her relatives for several months.

> I lived with my husband and his mother for some five months. His mother gave me good care at that moment. I did not go to the market for a year. I did not go to other places to visit friends and relatives.

However, some women were happy to start independent lives and to be further from relatives, especially if they did not get along with them, and did not want to their husbands to complain to their family. Beletch explained that:

> It is good to marry into another community because no one sees the bad aspects of your life. If you are within your original community, you are exposed to all kinds of criticisms. However, I see that most of the women married within the community. One of the major problems in my original community is that people drink alcohol. When the husband beats the wife, her parents might intervene and enter into conflict with the husband. This is not good for the future relationship of the wife and the husband and among the family members of the couple. Now I am free from these kinds of things. I do not want my husband to insult my relatives.

6. Moving for education

With increasing numbers of children going to school and reaching higher grades, and given the limited schools beyond the primary level in many communities, moving to local towns for secondary education and often to cities in different regions for tertiary education, is becoming a major reason for young men and women to leave their communities. There are important gender and wealth implications of this mobility, which results in changes in young peoples' values and aspirations and often promotes further migration since educated young people seek jobs in towns, and may not find work opportunities or no longer wish to live in rural

areas. Education is therefore a major driver of migration, as other studies have noted (Schewel and Fransen 2018).

In the Young Lives sample 37 per cent of those who migrated at the age of 19 did so for education, with the proportion higher for girls (42 per cent) than for boys (37 per cent), more of whom migrated for work (Gavonel 2017). By 19 years of age, about 60 per cent of the Older Cohort were still in some form of education, with more girls (64 per cent) than boys (56 per cent). However, by age 22, only one third were in education, with somewhat more young men (38 per cent) than young women (34 per cent), no doubt largely due to young women getting married. Of those still in education, 41 per cent were at university, 22 per cent in vocational school, 15 per cent in preparatory, 12 per cent in lower secondary school and 11 per cent in primary school.

6.1. Primary and secondary education

Primary education until Grade 8 is available in most rural communities, though in the two rural sites in Oromia young people had to move to town for schooling from Grade 5, whereas in other rural sites young people moved to town for secondary education from Grade 9. Young people who moved to towns often considered that the schooling there was of better quality. Biftu from Lomi was in Grade 10 and had moved to a school in a local town in Grade 9. She explained that the education was better even though she liked living at home:

> Education provision is better in the town. But regarding life conditions, it is better here. Living with family is better for life fulfilments.

Given the distances and difficulties walking and lack of commuting options, most young people have to live in the town where they go to school. An exceptional case was Esu from Zeytuni, who walked over an hour each way daily for one year from his community to the town where he attended secondary school. However, this was very tiring and the following year he started living in the town. Unfortunately he did not pass his Grade 10 exam and instead started working in the town as an assistant driver, hoping to become a driver and eventually own his own truck.

In some cases, young people have relatives in town with whom they can stay, reducing costs. Makeda from Leki lived with her relatives in a nearby town from Grade 9 for a year and therefore did not have to pay for accommodation. Likewise, Masho from Lomi moved to the district capital and lived with her uncle during the first semester until he moved to another area and she then had to live by herself. Most young men and women rent houses, often with friends, paying between 50 and 250 birr per month. Negasa from Leki went to primary school in the district town from Grade 5. His family paid 150 birr per month in rent. Similarly, Biya from Lomi went to school in Grades 9 and 10 in a nearby town, and was renting a room with his cousin for 250 birr. Likewise, Ibsa a young man from Lomi said:

> I live in a rented house, my parents cover the costs. I live with my friend and we pay 50 birr each.

Most of the young people went home at the weekends. Ibsa added:

> I visit my family weekly; I come every Saturday in the morning and go back to the district town on Sunday afternoon.

The young people often brought back food from home when they return to town. However, they all needed to do some cooking and this resulted in temporary gender norm changes since many young men had never cooked before. Chala, a young man who moved from Lomi to the district town and lived in a rental house from Grade 5, recalled:

> I attended school there. I would take *injera* [bread] and occasionally ground grain from home. Then, I would cook stew and consume it.

Likewise, Negasa a young man from Leki said:

> We prepare food by ourselves. Sometimes we prepare porridge and other times we bake bread.

Biya mentioned how in town he cooked whereas when he returned home the women did the cooking, revealing how gender roles were reasserted and norms are resistant to change.

> My parents give me food and I can prepare the sauce and do some cooking such as baking bread. My friend and I prepared food in turn. We were active in preparing food ... There is a difference between living with family and living alone. In town, we had to prepare food for ourselves. Here we have no responsibility to prepare food because my mother and sisters are responsible in preparing food for the family.

6.1.1. Challenges adapting, but preferences for town life

Some young people mentioned finding town life difficult at first. Etegenet, a young woman from Zeytuni, recalled her gradual adaption after moving to a local town:

> Initially, it was difficult to adapt to urban life having moved from a rural area for the first time. It was [even] difficult to get along with people in the town … You will be stranger in all places because you are newcomer to the society ... But I became familiar and able to cope through time and finally it became easier for me.

Mesih, a young man from Zeytuni, said:

> I was lonely because I didn't have any friends there. I had to go to the library alone or stay at home.

However, many young people enjoyed life in town as there were better entertainment opportunities. Mesih added:

> In Mekelle I could spend my time looking at Facebook and watching TV. The positive thing was that I was able to watch TV without paying fees, unlike in our village.

Among those who migrated to study between the ages of 15 and 19, 73 per cent were only studying and only 18 per cent were combining studying and working. Many young people said they enjoyed the privilege of not having to do domestic or farm work and the ability to study full time. Ibsa from Lomi recalled:

> Our town is very convenient; it is more favourable to study. There is no work to do. We focus just on studying. I used to look after oxen after returning from school … but [here] I just focus on my study after returning home in town.

Young women also enjoyed the urban lifestyle due to the better sanitation and hygiene. Kibra from Zeytuni, who lived in the nearest town first for education then while searching for a job, said:

> It is better than living here in rural area and I liked it. I keep my overall cleanliness since I started living in the urban area.

Likewise, Sirnay, from the same site, recalled:

> Here we do not wash our clothes frequently, wearing them several days. But when we went there, the hygiene was better.

Some young women also appreciated what they considered the urban values of dressing up, using cosmetics and styling their hair. For example, Fanus from Zeytuni recalled:

> In the urban area, you have to keep your beauty every day, using soap, lotion and cosmetics. But here you may not regularly do that.

Similarly, Sirnay added:

> Here [in the rural area] we used to straighten our hair with a hot iron only sometimes but when we went [and lived in the town] we did it often.

6.2. Tertiary education

Considerable investment has been made by the Ethiopian government to establish universities in all the country's regions and many young people are benefitting from the opportunity for free tertiary education. For young people this involves moving to cities outside of their home region since students are allocated to universities randomly by the Ministry of Education. In the Young Lives sample in 2016, at age 22 only 2 per cent had left university with a degree (Woldehanna, Araya, and Pankhurst 2018). Among the Older Cohort, students had been to universities in many towns and cities in the Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions, including Adigrat, Ambo, Axum, Debremarkos, Dilla, Dire Dawa, Mekelle and Sodo.

6.2.1. Completing university, costs of private colleges and challenges finding jobs

Most of the 19 young people out of the 122 in the qualitative sub-sample who had gone for tertiary education had successfully graduated by 2019. For example, Biritu from Leki in Oromia joined Dilla University in SNNP from where she graduated in statistics. Likewise, Adesech from Addis Ababa joined Mekelle University in Tigray and graduated in economics. However, a few exceptional cases had interrupted their studies. For instance, Afework from Addis Ababa was studying mechanical engineering at Ambo University in Oromia but had to abandon his studies when there was political unrest and students from other regions were attacked.

Students who did not score high enough marks at the national examination to enter the public universities may go to private colleges if their families can afford the fees. However, there were only a few cases of young people from better-off families who were supported by their families to attend college. Nigisti from Gomen in Tigray graduated in accounting from a private college in Mekelle with help from her elder sister, who was sending remittances from Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Damtew from Kok moved to Desse and is in his first year at a private technical and vocational education training (TVET) college doing pharmaceutical studies. He is living with his elder sister who had migrated there previously, and his expenses are covered by his parents and sister.

University graduates are usually expected to return to their home areas after completing their studies. However, it is also assumed that they will obtain jobs which are often not available in rural areas, and many have to move to towns to be successful (Pankhurst and Tafere 2020). Moreover, many may no longer aspire to rural livelihoods and aim to find white collar or office jobs (Tafere and Tiumelissan 2020).

Finding jobs related to their education is especially problematic for young women. For instance, Seida from Timatim is a biology graduate from Dire Dawa University. She is currently working in Butajira, the closest town to her community, in a private dental clinic as a registration clerk because she did not want to migrate far away and couldn't find a job close to her community that was related to her studies. Moreover, young women who go back to rural areas are expected to get married and come under community pressure, as Biritu, the statistics graduate, remarked:

> The community attitude sometimes pressures one to change one's life … they say that it is enough to for me to get married since I have completed education. They wonder why I stay unmarried. They may say even worse things. But, we need to tolerate this and stand firm … every time they come across me, they may say, 'Are you still here? Have not you gone?'

Biritu wanted to find work in her area rather than get married:

> I want to get some employment with the education I studied. It may be a job with a low amount of pay. I do not want to depend on my husband at least for fulfilment of household needs. I want to have at least some minor job. This is what I propose although I do not know what God has in store for me.

Although she keeps applying for jobs Biritu has not managed to find work, and believes this is in part since there is often nepotism involved.

> I go and try my best when the employment notices are released. I register and sit for the examinations. Currently, from the beginning, you need to commit corruption to get employed, mainly nepotism. It is going this way. You require relatives who work in the office and need to give them some benefits. It is difficult to get the job even with bribery unless the person is a relative.

7. Migration for work

Young people have increasingly been moving from their natal communities for work due to a range of interconnected reasons. Secondary and tertiary education requires young people to move from rural communities to urban areas and also raises their expectations and aspirations for types of employment which are not readily available in rural areas. Young people who fail the Grade 10 secondary leaving exams, or do not get high enough grades to go to university often look for work in urban areas or seek to migrate abroad. Limited access to resources, with increasing poverty and dwindling availability of land, along with limited employment and livelihood opportunities in rural areas are further reasons for young people to migrate. In Leki in Oromia, both older and younger women's groups emphasised that access to land was crucial for young people to establish independent livelihoods and that land shortage was a major driver of migration.

At the age of 19, in the Young Lives sample among those who had migrated 19 per cent went to work, with more than twice as many of these being boys (26 per cent) than girls (12 per cent) (Gavonel 2017). The types of migration for work that young people are involved in differ in direction, distance and duration. Young people in rural areas migrate to other rural areas, to towns and cities or abroad, with significant differences between young men and women.

7.1. Rural migration

Rural-rural migration is undertaken mainly by young men to work in agriculture, especially on investors' irrigated farms. At the age of 19 over a third of the Young Lives migrant children had moved between rural areas (Gavonel 2017). Such migration is often temporary or seasonal during off-peak agricultural periods, and for some who are still in school during the school break such as Mitiku from Leki. Some young men migrate to other rural areas for longer periods, sometimes for several consecutive years, often taking on any available work, usually on irrigation farms. Gemechu, a young man from Leki who migrated for several months in successive years, recalled:

> I migrated to Koka and Adama and worked there for four months. At Koka I was employed in a tomato farm and the work involved watering and weeding.

7.1.1. Risky conditions, savings and skills

Some young men, hoping to make money, decided to leave home against their families' wishes or without informing them. They often faced initial hardships and some reported incidents of theft, especially until they could find work. For example, Gemechu from Leki recalled sleeping rough and being robbed at night when he first migrated:

> I ran away. I did not discuss it with my parents. I just ran away to seek a job ... The first time I slept on the street at night. Hooligans came up and robbed my clothes after midnight. At my destination, I came across a person who was in need of a labourer … and he hired me ... We ploughed the farmland and prepared it in beds until the seeds grew.

Young men sometimes also faced problems with employers, including in some cases not being paid what they were due. One year, Gemechu worked for six months for an employer in an irrigation scheme and was only paid for three months, but he did not think he would succeed if he tried to take the man to court. Similarly, Hassen had a difficult experience and his employers did not pay him his salary on time:

> Life there was difficult since it is outside my locality … Sometimes the employer may not pay you on time for what you worked … So it was harsh there … we were expected to work long hours without rest. We were working in the sun and cold; we could not request anything related to our safety.

Despite his experience Gemechu was able to save some money, and bought chickens, food and household goods for his family. Like several others he also learnt irrigation skills which he now uses to find better-paid work locally and this had led to his family becoming better off, and able to afford household goods and even a TV.

7.2. Urban migration

About a quarter of the 19-year-old young migrants had moved from rural areas to urban areas (Gavonel 2017). Young men from rural areas often migrated to urban areas to earn money when they have fewer opportunities in their own communities or come from poor backgrounds. Young men tended to migrate to local towns for wage labouring jobs, commonly in the construction sector, often seasonally during slack periods. For instance, Dechassa from Lomi recalled going to a town in the same region for wage labour after getting married. He worked in construction during the rainy season when there was not much agricultural work:

> After getting married, I began to think about how I can earn money. Then, I found out that I should engage in wage work instead of sitting idle. I also considered the money shortage that I faced in the year I got married. I decided that such deprivation should not happen to me again. Finally, I began to engage in wage work instead of staying idle … I moved there for work and returned when the cultivation season arrived. It was the rainy season and there was no agricultural activity.

Some young women also moved to work in urban centres in the service sector or in factories. For example, Etsegenet from Zeytuni, who completed Grade 10 but did not pass the national exam, went to a town in her region to work in a textile factory. Likewise, Bezach from Tach-Meret, who had been working in a factory near her community where conditions were poor, moved and followed her sister to another factory in a regional city that had better conditions.

> In my opinion there is no good work in my area. Haricot bean picking in my community is a bad job because it is very dangerous for our health. Last year, I was very sick for two months with a heart case because of the bad working conditions. I quitted the job after I recovered and decided to move to Kombolcha.

7.2.1. Arduous, risky and intermittent work, and difficult conditions in urban areas

Young people going to work in towns often faced many challenges to their physical safety, and in finding a place to stay, finding work, covering their expenses and trying to save money. Bundervoet (2018) outlined the social challenges for migrants in adapting to urban life, suggesting that youth are initially unable to fit into social environments common to urban areas. Likewise, Atnafu, Oucho, and Zeitlyn (2014) indicated that young migrants face challenges in establishing a life in urban areas, although many felt that they experienced better well-being.

The most common problems mentioned by Young Lives respondents were the absence of regular work and high living costs in towns. Girma from Addis Ababa had migrated to Harar where his girlfriend's family lived, but could not find regular work despite having skills as an electrician. When he found work the pay was similar to wages in Addis Ababa but the cost of living was lower. However, employment was intermittent so he began trading shoes from Harar to Addis Ababa. In the end he returned to Addis Ababa since unrest in the country made this work less profitable and riskier.

7.2.2. Difficulties surviving in urban areas, and returning to rural areas

Casual daily labour in towns was often unpredictable, intermittent and hard work, such that many gave up and returned to their communities. Assefa, a young man from Tach-Meret, moved to a local town after dropping out of school to work as a day labourer on a construction site. Even though it was run by his relatives, the work was hard and he gave it up and went back home.

> We used to stir cement and sand with water and provide it to the mason. We were required to perform that quickly. There was no empathy for us despite us being relatives with the contractor. We were expected to work very hard. It was not a type of work in which money is made easily. It is extremely difficult.

The unpredictability of work in urban areas meant migrants faced difficulties surviving. Wende from Lomi was not successful in securing sustainable work after migrating to the regional capital. Moreover, his parents needed his help so he returned and settled in his home community.

> I went to Adama town to look for work after I was disappointed with my examination results. Life has ups and downs. It may be good sometimes and bad other times. Urban areas are not favourable for people from the countryside. I worked as a wage worker, as an assistant for masons and carpenters, but did not find the work satisfactory. Besides, my parents were alone, without any one to support them and they asked me to return, so I came back and got married.

Most of the work opportunities available in towns are labour-intensive, requiring migrants to be physically fit and not get ill. Meskel from Gomen had gone to Edaga-Hamus town for work and was willing to do any type of work. However, employers in the construction sector told him that the work required hard labour and that he was too weak. He spent a month living with his aunt without finding work, after which she told him to go back and live with his parents even though he wanted to start his own life.

There were also cases of young men who abandoned their migration efforts due to incidents or shocks. Tenkir from Timatim migrated to a town in the same region to work in his brothers' teashop. However, his brother got into trouble as he was the guarantor of a friend who absconded. He recalled how his brother escaped, leaving him in the lurch, and how he resorted to transporting goods to survive.

> My brother took me to Hageremariam town, where I worked in his teashop; gradually we opened a second branch. He had joined an *iqqub* credit association but his friend took 40,000 birr and absconded and my brother was in trouble since he was his guarantor. When he found out that he was going to be imprisoned he escaped at night leaving the teashop to me and my sister. But we did not have enough food and so closed the business, and to survive I began to transport goods with a hand cart which I rented for ten birr per day until I got my own.

7.2.3. Gender risks faced by young women

Young women often faced additional gender-related risks, particularly those who sought work as domestic workers. The risks and isolation faced by domestic workers have been well documented by Erulkar and Mekbib (2017). Among the Young Lives adolescent girls, Meaza from Bertukan quarrelled with her mother and left home; she found work as a domestic

worker but ended up being raped by her employer while his wife was away. She tried to return home, but her mother blamed her for becoming pregnant and refused to take her in, so she resorted to commercial sex work to survive.

7.2.4. Discrimination against migrants from other regions

In some cases, young people faced problems working in regions from which they did not come from due to the politics of prioritising people from the region to the exclusion of in-migrants. For instance, Seifu from Leku in SNNP found a job as a football player in Woliso in Oromia but after a month came under pressure to leave.

> After I signed up for the town's football club, the young people in the area and the coaches were putting pressure on by saying that players that came from other places were taking their chances.

Seifu joined a club in another town in his home region but the salary was low and he returned to the city where he grew up, at first working night shifts in an industrial park which meant he was too tired to train in the day. He then joined his father's business and later became a *bajaj* three-wheeler taxi driver using a vehicle his father bought.

7.2.5. Some success stories, with networks and family support

Despite all the difficulties with urban migration and young people disliking wage labour, some were able to save and invest the money. For instance, Assefa, who found the work on a construction site very hard, mentioned that he able to buy livestock.

> I worked as a daily labourer for one year and earned good money although the payment was only 50 birr a day. I bought sheep, goats and cattle on my return home. I still have these livestock.

A few young men did much better. Tufa from Leki migrated to Wolayta and then to Addis Ababa and worked for his uncle, looking after his fertiliser shop. He earned 19,000 birr in five years, which enabled him to take back the land his parents had rented out to other farmers, and to buy land to build a house in the centre of his village. He also sponsored his sister's migration to an Arab country and on her instructions loaned money to his parents to build a house.

There were also a few cases of exceptionally successful entrepreneurs who learnt skills during their migration and were able to save and then start businesses in their home areas (see also Crivello, Tiumelissan and Heissler 2020; Pankhurst and Tafere 2020). Worku from Timatim migrated to Addis Ababa where he worked in a bakery, starting from scratch and learning the trade until he eventually started his own bakery in a local town near his community, employing 19 people and establishing two branches. He recalled:

> My employer was from our area, and my father knew him ... I began to carry bread in a basket and my back was scratched ... Gradually, he gave me easier jobs like selling bread in the shop, and then after seeing my behaviour he gave me a management role … he also let me drive his pickup truck … and allowed me to do business with it after distributing the bread … I worked for him for five years and saved my salary and returned to Butajira.

7.3. International migration

Among the 122 young people in the fifth qualitative wave, only four young women had migrated to Arab countries, though relatives of six other young people – mothers, siblings and spouses – had also migrated, and a few other young people had tried to migrate but not succeeded. International migration is motivated in part due to limited job opportunities in their communities and the attraction of much higher salaries in destination countries. International migrants were mainly young women from rural areas going to Arab countries, although some from towns and cities also migrated, while some young men aspired to migrate to western countries to further their education or in the hope of better lives. Failure to pass Grade 10 exams or low scores often prompted young people to envisage migration, a finding supported by those of Jones et al. (2014). For example, Kasech from Menderin went to Beirut after failing the Grade 10 exam in the hope of earning money to help her ill mother. Some young women were influenced or helped by relatives or friends who had migrated previously. Haftey from Zeytuni had failed her Grade 10 exams and first worked as a painter in a garage for a year, before meeting relatives who had migrated to Arab countries who helped her to arrange going to Oman.

Focus group participants from the sites in Addis Ababa mentioned limited job opportunities, hopelessness, alcohol and drug addictions, and peer pressure as factors contributing to the desire of young people to migrate abroad. In one of these sites parts of the inner city were demolished for development and residents were forced to relocate to the outskirts of the city, aggravating youth unemployment. Young people who used to have access to work in the inner city could not get work in their new locations. For example, Zeleke from Menderin could not find work after the relocation even though he had a license to drive public transport. He tried to migrate abroad, and obtained a passport and started the process. However, his first attempt failed due to a spelling discrepancy between his identification papers and his exam transcripts. He had resolved this and was hoping to go abroad soon.

7.3.1. Costs, risks, hard work and deportations

International migrants face many challenges from financing and arranging migration, during the journey and while living abroad, including being deported or swindled by brokers or not being paid what they were promised by employers, and facing harsh and dangerous working conditions. Women faced additional gender-related risks of mistreatment, abuse, and rape (Demissie 2018). These risks and cases of abuse have received considerable media attention and some young people recounted bad experiences or knew of others who had suffered. For example, the husband of Sessen tried to migrate to Saudi Arabia by sea but was turned back. The brother of Etsegenet from Zetuni also migrated to Saudi Arabia and his parents had paid 2,000 birr, but he was immediately deported before starting work. Similarly, the brother of Mihretu from Zeytuni was deported before starting work; fortunately, he did not face any other problems and returned safely, for which the family were grateful, despite the wasted investment.

The first hurdle for those wishing to work abroad is the paperwork and bureaucracy. Some gave up or could not or did not want to pay large sums to brokers or in bribes. As noted earlier, Zeleke from Addis Ababa had restarted the process after failing in his previous migration attempt.

> I have tried to go abroad but couldn't. I have a passport and every other document but have been unable to get the chance. [My first application] failed because of a spelling difference between my identification card and my Grade 10 educational documents. My friends have already completed the process and are waiting for a response. Now I have completed the legal process to address the error. My friends have already paid 20,000 birr in advance and are waiting to get the last call. Initially they will go to Romania with a contract for 70,000 birr per year.

Kebede from Menderin found an opportunity to study for a master's degree in Germany but he ended the process because he was asked to pay a bribe to obtain a visa. He said:

> When they asked me for so much money I stopped, it was about 200,000 birr. If I had this much money, I would open a business.

However, not all respondents blamed the brokers. Birhane from Addis Ababa has a sister who successfully migrated to the United Kingdom, traveling through Libya, and was able to obtain residence relatively quickly. He recalled:

> They were taking rest as they are women and taking longer so as not to get tired. The challenge described in media is false. My sister said the person who took them was giving them care and they were receiving enough food. She was asking our mother to send her money for food but later on she told us that it was for other migrants who lacked financial support from their families to avoid delays. She struggled a lot travelling from Belgium to the United Kingdom but afterwards things worked out for her.

While working in Arab countries many young women experienced heavy workloads and low payment. Some decided it was just not worth it. Haftey from Zeytuni had gone to Oman, but returned after completing her contract even though her employers begged her to stay and offered to increase her salary. She recalled:

> There was too much work and many family members and children. Looking after all of these on my own was not easy.

Kasech from Addis Ababa went to Beirut immediately after completing Grade 10 when she was only 17 years old, pretending to be older in order to get a passport. However, her salary was low and she faced a heavy workload, including looking after a paralysed child.

> I had a lot of work to do and there was a sick girl in the house who was paralysed and could not do anything by herself and was not able to talk. She was 18 and I had to take care of her; there were also other little children so the work was very hard for me but I had to complete my contract.

The risk of not being paid or having savings taken from them was another issue some faced. Kasech deposited one year's worth of salary with a woman in Beirut she trusted, but who later refused to give her the money.

Given the risks, some young people were clear that they did not want to migrate. Fitsum from Gomen who is in Grade 9 does not want to migrate as he considers it to be risky, even though his siblings were successful migrants. He hopes to go to university in Ethiopia and become an engineer or a broker as these are lucrative professions, and said:

> I have never thought of migration because it is very risky and many youths have died while they are crossing the border. Therefore, I prefer to live and work in my country.

7.3.2. The incentive of remittances

However, in spite of all the risks, given the potential for earning far more than they can in their home communities, many young people are prepared to take their chances and face the consequences, as several other studies show (Pankhurst and Dom 2019; Kefale and Mohammed 2015). Remittances and improvements that migrants can bring to their lives and those of their families remain important factors motivating young people to consider migration. Fitsum described how his siblings were able to invest money from migration.

> Four years ago, one of my brothers migrated to Saudi Arabia. He bought a house two years ago. Then, after one year my sisters went to Saudi Arabia and budgeted around 300,000 birr [US$7,500] to buy a house.

Several young women who had been abroad wanted to go again to earn more money, since they felt they could not "change their lives" in the own communities and needed to raise money to set up businesses. For example, Birikti from Gomen dropped out of Grade 8 to help her mother and then migrated to Saudi Arabia twice, but was deported both times even though the first time she travelled legally. Since she had to pay back brokers she could not save much. She came back with 10,000 birr and set up a small café, paying 700 birr a month in rent. She said that she was thinking of migrating again:

> This business is not profitable; I am working because it is better than being idle. From what I earn, I have to pay for house rent. I haven't had any change in my life, even after I worked for a year, so if it continues like this, I will stop and go away … If possible, I want to work in my homeland, if not I will go to Saudi again. I don't want to waste my time working in a small café which can't change my life.

7.3.3. Marriage, investments and family priorities

The anticipation of remittances from their daughters that can bring about improvements in their lives is one reason why some families want them to migrate rather than get married. The father of Meselech from Tach-Meret wanted her to migrate abroad and she had initially agreed, but she then fell ill so continued working in a local factory and ended up married the controller. Similarly, the brother of Sefria from Timatim was preparing to sponsor her migration and was upset when she decided instead to marry a man from their community. Similarly, Muna from the same site was thinking of migrating abroad to support her family, but changed her mind after she had been living with her boyfriend for over a year and decided to marry him instead.

Young women who decide to avoid or postpone marriage and migrate instead often have greater say in who they marry and when. For example, Amarda migrated from Timatim to the Middle East for two years, and after returning lived with a man of her choice for a year and then married him. Her parents wanted her to marry a rich man but she said she preferred to marry an educated man and used money she had saved to build a house in a local town and buy cattle for her family. Samir, from the same site, agreed with his girlfriend that they would get married when she returned after two years in Saudi Arabia, despite his family wanting him to become more established before getting married.

Shitaye from Gomen had migrated to Saudi Arabia after failing her Grade 10 exam and stayed there two years. She was planning to migrate again to raise money to build a house but got pregnant and decided to marry her boyfriend instead. She was hoping to establish a

business but prioritised helping her brother get a driving licence and helping her mother with her brewing business.

> I was planning to open a cosmetics shop, but my little brother argued that he needed to get a driving license and I gave him 10,000 birr. I didn't have enough money [to start a business] and abandoned my plans and was helping my mother selling *siwa* [beer].

Shitaye was considering migrating again despite the risks, but her family disagreed and her daughter is still very young; she said that if she were able to find a satisfactory job she would prefer not to leave:

> It is hard to leave my husband and daughter behind, I wish I could go abroad, but my husband and my parents don't agree with my plan. It is because now I am married and have to keep my family … I am hesitating until my daughter is 2 years old, she is 1 year old now and I will wait until she becomes two, then I will decide … if I get good job related to my education level, I want to stay here; I don't want to go abroad. I have seen it before, it is not good.

Remittances sometimes enabled siblings to set up businesses or pursue their education. Nigisti, from Gomen, opened a clothes boutique with the help of her migrant siblings, her sister in Saudi Arabia and her brother in Sweden, who invested around 170,000 birr between them. She had graduated with a diploma in accounting from a private college in the regional capital but could not find work. She said her revenue was about 2,000 birr a week, and after taxes, she makes about 3,000 birr profit per month.

In some cases, migrant women leave their children behind to be looked after by their families. For instance, Rahina from Bertukan stopped working in a shop to look after the 3-year-old daughter of her sister, who migrated to an Arab country, got married and was living with her husband. The mother of Hanan migrated twice, once to Beirut and the second time to Qatar, and although she set up a shop she was not able to save enough to make significant improvements to their lives.

8. Concluding summary

This working paper has considered children, adolescents and youth moving out of their communities for family reasons, education, and work. Young people are increasingly moving away from their communities to a much greater extent than their parents, especially for education and work, through internal migration to rural and urban areas and international migration, mainly to the Middle East. Between the ages of 15 and 19 around one-third of 905 Older Cohort adolescents had migrated for various reasons, including family and marriage, education and work (Gavonel 2017). In the fifth wave qualitative survey carried out in 2019 when the Younger Cohort were 18-19 years old and the Older Cohort were 24-25, out of the 122 young people sampled, 54 (44 per cent) had migrated. Six had moved to live with other family members, ten for marriage, 20 for education, 15 for work in another part of the country, and four had migrated abroad.

These trends are partly due to reduced livelihood opportunities in rural areas with increasing land shortages, but also result from agricultural and industrial development, urbanisation and globalisation. Greater education opportunities have also led to young people moving to towns

and cities for their studies, which in turn has created expectations of urban jobs and aspirations for urban livelihoods.

The patterns and experiences of movement and migration by children, adolescents and youth are shaped by location, with urban/rural and regional differences, family circumstances, notably poverty and shocks, and age and gender. These interrelated factors have important implications for the agency of young women and men, and consequences both for their livelihoods and those of their families.

8.1. Moving for family reasons

The cases of family reasons for moving presented in this paper involve girls leaving rural communities to join family members in other rural communities or towns due to family problems resulting from poverty, death or divorce of parents, or from families deciding to send their daughters to help weaker relatives, especially grandmothers. While other studies, including some based on Young Lives data, have considered migration of both boys and girls, this working paper focused on girls who went to live with aunts and grandmothers who were involved in domestic and care work but also went to school. They had mixed experiences, some growing attached to their relatives and others wanting to return home or leave. One girl who was helping a sick grandmother missed her family and asked to return when her grandmother got better. Another grew more attached to her grandmother than her mother with whom she had a difficult relationship. A third girl whose mother was divorced from her father and whose aunt adopted her felt she was overworked and was relieved to get married early, against her aunt's wishes.

8.2. Moving for marriage

Moving away from their home community for marriage was a common experience of many young women in the rural communities, especially in Oromia and Tigray. While they often did not move very far, young women often experienced isolation from their families and friends and disorientation until they adapted to a new physical and social environment, and some found living with their in-laws challenging. However, one young woman appreciated being away from her relatives and establishing her own life. In the Oromia sites there were a few young women who got married through abduction, with their husbands taking them away until negotiations over marriage payments were arranged, and some young couples decided to elope and stayed away until the reconciliation could be brokered or moved to towns, while the husbands sometimes migrated for work.

8.3. Moving for education

Adolescents leaving their communities to pursue education included both boys and girls moving mainly from rural sites to nearby district towns for secondary education, and young people moving to cities to go to university, often outside their region given the policy of allocating students randomly to universities.

Unless they had relatives living in the towns, families in rural communities had to cover the accommodation and living costs of those moving for secondary school; some students came home regularly and took food back, and most paired up with other students to share the rent. Some boys recall learning to cook, but this did not lead to lasting change in gender roles since once they returned the women in their families resumed cooking for them. Some

families were concerned that their daughters living in towns for further education might form relationships with men, and in one case a young woman did get to know her future husband while at secondary school in a local town.

Students moving to towns often appreciated being relieved from domestic and agricultural work for their families. Boys enjoyed the recreation options, including better television access in towns, and girls appreciated better hygiene, the use of cosmetics and hairdressing. Living in towns and pursuing further education also raised young people's expectations of obtaining white collar or office jobs and their aspirations for urban lifestyles, such that there is an increasing mismatch between aspirations and job opportunities (Tafere and Chuta 2020b).

Unless young people obtained good enough results in their Grade 10 exams to be accepted into universities, they could pursue tertiary education only in private colleges and only if their families could afford the fees, and accommodation and living costs. Very few rural households were able to support their sons or daughters to study further (Tafere and Tiumelissan 2020).

Young people with poor grades often felt frustrated at not being able to get the kind of work they believed they deserved in urban areas and many do not want to return to rural livelihoods. This was a major reason for young women who did not do well in their studies to seek to migrate abroad. Among those who went to universities some completed their studies and found jobs, but there were also those who abandoned their studies due to tensions within universities resulting in students from other regions being made to feel unwelcome and afraid to continue with their studies. Educated young women in particular found it difficult to find jobs close to their home communities and came under pressure to get married.

8.4. Internal labour migration

Internal migration for work was mainly carried out by boys and young men. Migration within rural areas was undertaken usually for short periods in off-peak agricultural seasons by adolescent boys or during the school holidays to work, especially on irrigation farms in the Rift Valley. Some boys decided to migrate without their parents' knowledge or consent, and a few faced difficulties especially until they found work, experiencing theft or not being paid for all the work they did. However, some young men were able to save money to invest mainly in livestock and purchases for their families, and learnt irrigation skills which were useful in finding better paid work locally.

Migration from rural areas to towns was undertaken mainly by young men seeking wage labour in the construction sector and a few girls mainly working in factories. Migrants who had relatives or connections in the urban areas to which they moved fared best, some being able to reduce costs by staying with relatives and others being employed by them. Young men often had difficulty finding regular work and found daily wage labour arduous and poorly paid. Likewise, young women found work in the factories demanding and lowly paid. Many migrants gave up and returned home, including some who were made to feel unwelcome due to political mobilisations against in-migrants.

However, there were some successful young men who saved money and invested it in land or irrigation in their home communities, or learnt skills and were able to set up businesses, such as a young man who worked for five years in Addis Ababa and returned to establish a bakery in a town near his home community in SNNPR. Most of those who were successful had relatives who helped them in the urban areas, or had family support to establish businesses, notably remittances from relatives living abroad, especially sisters working in Arab countries.

8.5. International labour migration

International migration was mainly carried out by young women above the age of 18 since they could only migrate legally if they were adults. However, a few who were younger managed to migrate through irregular overland journeys organised by brokers or by claiming they were older. Young women from both rural and urban sites, especially in Oromia and Tigray, and Addis Ababa, migrated mainly to Arab countries usually in the Gulf States. Often this was a family decision since would-be migrants had to raise the costs of travel and payments to agencies or brokers. Migrants mentioned risks during the journey including mistreatment from brokers and deportation. Others spoke of the risks while working, notably abuse by employers and harsh working conditions; there were instances of workers not paid what they were due, or depositing earnings with persons who abused their trust. Nonetheless, some of the respondents or their siblings were able to send remittances and save money to help their families, improve their livelihoods and start businesses.

Aspirations for international migration are related to young people's family backgrounds, educational experiences, information about available opportunities, experiences of earlier migrants, notably relatives, and peer pressure. However, a few young women decided not to migrate despite the wishes of male relatives and preferred to work or get married instead. One young woman agreed with her boyfriend that they would get married after she returned. In some urban young men, especially those who had benefitted from education, hoped to travel to Europe for further education and to improve their livelihoods. A few who had tried but failed were determined to try again and were still hopeful of succeeding.

International migration sometimes improved young women's decision making over the use of savings and about whom to marry and when, and some women made their own decisions against their families' wishes, in one case deciding to marry her educated boyfriend rather than a richer man her family favoured. While some migrant women were able to set up businesses, others prioritised using their remittances and savings to assist their families with improving their houses and livelihoods: one sponsored her brother to obtain a driving license and helped her mother with her brewing business rather than opening her own shop.

8.6. Moving and migration pathways and interconnections

Moving and migration for family reasons, marriage, education and work within Ethiopia and internationally are very much interrelated, with in some cases certain forms or experiences of migration leading to others or representing alternative trajectories. The more education young people had, the less likely they were to find the kinds of jobs they wanted in their communities and the greater their aspirations to find jobs in urban areas. Education was also linked with internal and international migration for work, as the inability to continue with studies after Grade 10 was a major factor for those who no longer aspire to live in rural areas and who did not score high enough marks to continue with state-sponsored university education or whose parents cannot afford to pay private college fees.

The relations between education, work and marriage are highly gendered, and sometimes present alternative pathways. For women who are not successful in their studies and cannot find work, given family and community expectations, marriage is often the only option, and is sometimes what they prefer, especially if they were working in arduous wage labour. Once married, few young women managed to continue with education and many stopped working outside the household and focused on domestic work, although some do continue or

establish their own businesses. Education and migration also raised young women's marital aspirations in terms of when and who they want to marry and also often improved their agency and decision making.

9. Policy implications

In a context where Ethiopia is moving towards lower middle-income status, greater industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation are changing the structure of the economy. Migration from rural areas where more than two-thirds of the population still live to urban areas is bound to increase considerably in the next decade. Policies need to be developed and implemented in inclusive ways that take into account the age and gender of children and young people. Consideration should be given to the following aspects.

Promoting a dual approach to improve conditions in both the areas from which migrants come and areas they move to

Recognition of likely increased migration requires promoting a dual focus on both the rural areas from which migrants come and the urban areas to which they move, as well as learning from experiences of males and females of different ages when they embarked on their migration journeys. Within rural areas from which migrants come, there is a need for greater attention to promoting available opportunities for employment, investment and especially non-farm livelihood options. There is also a need to facilitate conditions for migrants in urban areas, including better and safer access to housing and services, as well as improving working conditions and protection in the workplace and urban environment, including from violence and discrimination based on gender and area of origin.

Preventing trafficking and child labour while ensuring standards are in place that promote children's best interests in all approaches to alternative care, including kinship care and adoption

Efforts at protecting migrant children from abuse, including from the risks of child trafficking and child labour, need to be strengthened, focusing on girls at risk, especially those from very poor households and from families that have faced death or divorce. At the same time approaches to alternative care for orphans and vulnerable children need standards, directives, and guidelines that the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth is revising to align with global standards and good practice to ensure children's best interests, appropriate and adequate safeguards and case management are in place. These need to include guidelines regarding when such children are in kinship care (either temporary, such as fostering, or more formal arrangements such as adoption by relatives) and considerations of reunification where appropriate.

Preventing child marriage and abduction and promoting increasing girl's agency and supportive inter-generation transfers

Current approaches to prevent child marriage and especially abduction, notably the government's National Costed Roadmap to End Child Marriage and FGM/C (2020-2024)[3] (Ministry of Women, Children and Youth 2019), should be given even greater support at a local level, along with promoting greater agency of young women and men over marriage decisions, preventing parental imposition of marriages, and where possible enabling young people to obtain land and access resources in their own communities. Customs and increasing trends of providing resources to young couples instead of marriage payments to their families should be encouraged.

Promoting secondary education access locally and protection of migrant students

The current education policy and sector development programme aims to increase the number of secondary schools, which can play an important role in reducing the need for adolescents to leave their communities for schooling. However, there remains a need for greater support and protection for students from poor families in line with the government's social protection policy and strategy, especially for girls moving to towns and cities. Ensuring their safety is particularly important where they study outside their own regions.

Promoting better safety, working conditions and pay for agricultural and industrial migrants

Migration for work within rural areas and to towns and cities is increasing, with many migrants working in investors' farms and factories, in the construction sector, and in the informal economy. More emphasis is required to follow up on initiatives by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to improve protection, safety and working conditions, and well as negotiating better pay, including in the informal economy.

Promoting legal migration, enhancing migrants' skills, ensuring their protection and facilitating productive investment of remittances

The current efforts at promoting legal documented migration by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs should be reinforced through better training for aspiring migrants and further agreements with destination countries, in line with the initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably to avoid deportations and enhance protection in their work and life abroad in accordance with the United Nations International Convention on the Protection and Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Advice, training and facilitation of legal remittances and the investment of income generated through migration for productive ventures should be enhanced, with a special focus on empowering women returnees, who can play a key role as investors and entrepreneurs in their home communities. Improved skills development, financial advice and access to credit could enhance the role of returnee migrants in stimulating development in their home communities.

3 This includes five outcomes, including one that relates to investment for girls' empowerment.

Improving research with young and internal migrants

Most policy focus has been on adult and international migration, so more emphasis is needed on the experience and aspirations of migrant children and young men and women to better inform policy and programmes.

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Annex 1. Brief site descriptions

- **Bertukan** is located in the centre of Addis Ababa. Many residents' livelihoods are based on the informal economy, mainly street sales of fruit and vegetable trading. This provided many young people in the area with access to paid work, including as day labourers.
- **Menderin** is located in a different part of Addis Ababa. Most dwellers earn their living from petty trade and casual work. Services such as roads, electricity, and piped water are inadequate. Part of the area has been redeveloped, so residents have been relocated to the outskirts, with limited work opportunities, leading many to have to commute to areas they worked in previously, incurring high transport costs and taking away productive time.
- **Kok** is a semi-urban community in Amhara region known for its tourist attractions. Surrounded by poor rural communities, residents earn a living from small-scale trade and other income-generating activities. Young men are also involved as tour guides.
- **Tach-Meret** is a rural community in Amhara, which predominately grows crops but is vulnerable to seasonal food shortages. Many poor households depend on the state-run productive safety net programme (PSNP). The community is close to a town, where many households and young people access services such as schooling, healthcare, tap water, electricity, market, and wage labour.
- **Leki** is in the Rift Valley in Arsi Zone of Oromia close to a lake, where some young men engage in fishing, and 8 kilometres from a major town with market opportunities where some young people are involved in transporting goods via horse cart. Some households have access to small-scale irrigation, and private investors employ young men and women in agricultural wage labour, mainly vegetable production.
- **Lomi** in Arsi Zone is more remote, without irrigation, limited investment, and lacking electricity. Most people are farmers and there are far fewer opportunities for young people to find non-farm work. However, there is some agricultural wage labour and the government has organised young people into MSE cooperatives, mainly around agricultural activities on communal grazing land.
- **Timatim** is a densely populated, rural community in Gurage Zone of SNNPR. The main livelihood is agriculture, including the staple *enset*, coffee and *khat* as cash crops, complemented by earnings from small trade and other income-generating activities. A large town is 6 kilometres away, where some young people are involved in motorbike transport and a few found work or set up businesses.
- **Leku** is located at the centre of Hawassa, the capital city of SNNPR. The majority of the households live in poor economic conditions. They earn a living through petty trade, daily labour, street vending and self-employment, and there is a lot of in-migration from within the region.
- **Zeytuni** is a rural site in Tigray. Residents depend on farming for their livelihoods, and as the area is food insecure it receives PSNP support. However, in recent years, young people are generating additional income through small-scale irrigation activities and wage labour in the fast-growing construction sector in nearby towns.
- **Gomen** is a small semi-urban site in Tigray. A road crosses the town giving the opportunity for fast urbanisation, and offering opportunities for wage labour in the construction sector and for small businesses and other income-generating activities.

Annex 2. List of cases by type of migration, pseudonym, sex, site, and region

No	Type of migration	Pseudonym	Sex	Cohort	Site pseudonym	Region	Details
1	**Family, living with relatives**	Shashitu	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Other rural area, other region:** after death of her parents went to live with aunt and worked for her.
2		Salayish	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Other rural area, same region:** remote on island, lived with grandmother, married away in a town in the same region.
3		Haymanot	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Other rural area, same region:** since her single mother was poor she went to live with aunt and helped her while going to school; later married away in another community.
4		Buzunesh	F	YC	Leki	Oromia	**Local town, same region:** went to live with grandmother, ran away to live with husband until reconciliation.
5		Delina	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Capital city, same region:** lived in rural area with grandmother, helping her, then went to city to live with parents and study in technical college.
6		Haftey	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Capital city, same region:** after parents died lived with grandmother, then moved to Mekelle to live with aunt; went to school and worked for her, migrated to Oman for domestic work.
7	**Marriage**	Beletch	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Other rural community**: same region, several hours' drive away, living with in-laws.
8		Awet	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Other rural community**: same region, 2 hours' walk, isolated; lonely.
9		Letish	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Other rural community:** same region, 2 hours' walk away.
10		Ayantu	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Other rural community**: same region, married in a local town after leaving school, isolated from parents and friends.
11		Hewan	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Other rural community:** same region, nearby, but felt isolated from family and friends.
12		Ayu	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Other rural community**: same region, 35 kilometres away, then town in the same region; husband migrated to work, they moved back to their natal community, living with her parents.
13		Mina	F	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Married local:** two suitors, one further away but father agreed to closer one. Had hoped to migrate to an Arab country.
14		Meselech	F	OC	Tach-Meret	Amhara	**Married locally:** husband in same factory, father wanted her to migrate.
15		Sefria	F	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Married locally:** brother was going to sponsor her migration abroad.
16		Zahara	F	OC	Lomi	Oromia	**Married locally:** abducted and taken some distance away until reconciliation brokered.
17		Yalem	F	YC	Lomi	Oromia	**Married locally:** eloped with boyfriend, went to local town until reconciliation brokered.

No	Type of migration	Pseudonym	Sex	Cohort	Site pseudonym	Region	Details
18	**Education**	Negasa	M	YC	Leki	Oromia	**Primary and secondary**: local town.
19		Chala	M	OC	Lomi	Oromia	**Primary and secondary**: local town.
20		Makeda	F	YC	Leki	Oromia	**Secondary**: local town.
21		Biftu	F	YC	Lomi	Oromia	**Secondary:** local town.
22		Masho	F	YC	Lomi	Oromia	**Secondary**: local town.
23		Ibsa	M	YC	Lomi	Oromia	**Secondary**: local town.
24		Biya	M	OC	Lomi	Oromia	**Secondary**: local town.
25		Fanus	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Secondary**: local town.
26		Esu	M	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Secondary**: local town.
27		Mesih	M	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Secondary**: local town.
28		Sirnay	M	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Secondary**: local town.
29		Nigisti	F	OC	Gomen	Tigray	**Tertiary**: regional town, private college: sister migrated to Saudi, brother to Sweden, helped her set up boutique.
30		Kibra	F	YC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Tertiary:** regional city, private college, worked for a while in a textile factory.
31		Damtew	M	YC	Kok	Amhara	**Tertiary**: regional town, private TVET college.
32		Adesech	F	OC	Menderin	Addis Ababa	**Tertiary**: university, city in another region, graduated in economics.
33		Biritu	F	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Tertiary**: university; town in another region, graduated in statistics.
34		Seida	F	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Tertiary**: university, town in another region, graduated in biology.
35		Afework	M	OC	Bertukan	Addis Ababa	**Tertiary**: university, town in another region, abandoned studies due to unrest.
36		Yerusalem	F	YC	Bertukan	Addis Ababa	**Tertiary aspiration**: Grade 12 student in private school, hopes to study abroad in Australia or China.
37		Kebede	M	OC	Menderin	Addis Ababa	**Tertiary aspiration:** started process for master's degree in Germany, stopped as too costly.
38		Yordi	F	OC	Leku	SNNP	**Tertiary aspiration**: hopes to study for master's degree in India or Norway.
39	**Work (internal)**	Gemechu	M	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Rural-rural**: agriculture; same region, irrigation wage work.
40		Hassen	M	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Rural-rural**: agriculture; same region, irrigation wage work.
41		Mitiku	M	YC	Leki	Oromia	**Rural-rural**: agriculture; same region, irrigation wage work.
42		Dechasa	M	OC	Lomi	Oromia	**Rural-urban**: local town, same region, construction daily labour, ran away with girlfriend until marriage negotiations settled, went to wage labour in town after marriage.
43		Assefa	M	OC	Tach-Meret	Amhara	**Rural-urban**: local town, same region, construction daily labour.
44		Bezach	F	OC	Tach-Meret	Amhara	**Rural-urban**: local town, same region, factory wage labour.
45		Tufa	M	OC	Leki	Oromia	**Rural-urban**: regional town in another region and capital city, working for uncle's trading business.
46		Etsegenet	F	YC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Rural-urban**: local town, same region; textile factory, wage labour.
47		Wende	M	OC	Lomi	Oromia	**Rural-urban**: regional capital, same region, construction, daily labour.
48		Tenkir	M	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Rural-urban**: local town, same region, service work; teashop with brother.
49		Worku	M	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Rural-urban**: capital city, bakery; employer from home area.
50		Seifu	M	OC	Leku	SNNP	**Urban-urban**: town, different region, football club.
51		Merawi	M	YC	Gomen	Tigray	**Urban-urban:** moved from his town to another town for construction work.
52		Girma	M	OC	Menderin	Addis Ababa	**Urban-urban**: regional town from capital; electrician and trade.
53		Meaza	F	OC	Bertukan	Addis Ababa	**Urban-urban:** left home and found employment as a domestic worker but was raped by her employer.

No	Type of migration	Pseudonym	Sex	Cohort	Site pseudonym	Region	Details
54	**Work (international)**	Kasech	F	OC	Menderin	Addis Ababa	**Arab country, domestic work**: Beirut, Lebanon.
55		Birikti	F	OC	Gomen	Tigray	**Arab country, domestic work:** Saudi Arabia, migrated twice.
56		Amarda	F	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Arab country, domestic work:** for two years, returned built house, own choice in marriage.
57		Shitaye	F	OC	Gomen	Tigray	**Arab country, domestic work:** Saudi Arabia for three years, planned to go again but got pregnant and married.
58		Samir	M	OC	Timatim	SNNP	**Wife migrated to Jeddah**, **Saudi Arabia:** they got married when she returned.
59		Hanan	F	YC	Bertukan	Addis Ababa	**Mother migrated** to Arab country.
60		Birhane	M	YC	Bertukan	Addis Ababa	**Sister migrated** to UK, was able to obtain residence.
61		Rahina	F	OC	Bertukan	Addis Ababa	**Sister migrated to Arab country:** she stopped work to look after sister's child.
62		Fitsum	M	YC	Gomen	Tigray	**Brother and sister migrated to Saudi Arabia:** both successful, sent remittances.
63		Mihretu	M	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Brother migrated to Saudi Arabia**: deported immediately.
64		Sessen	F	OC	Zeytuni	Tigray	**Husband tried to migrate to Saudi Arabia**, but failed on route.
65		Muna	F	YC	Timatim	SNNP	**Aspiration to migrate:** married boyfriend instead.
66		Zeleke	M	OC	Menderin	Addis Ababa	**Aspiration to go abroad**: tried but problems with documents.

“A Stranger in All Places”: Patterns and Experiences of Children and Young People Moving From Their Home Communities in Ethiopia

Moving away from home communities has become an increasingly common life experience for many children, adolescents and young people transitioning to adulthood in Ethiopia, to a much greater extent than among their parents’ generation. Much of the literature on migration focuses on the labour migration of young people and on international migration. This working paper explores the variety of experiences of children, adolescents and youth leaving their home communities, for social as well as economic reasons. It is based on data from the Young Lives fifth qualitative wave carried out in ten sites across five regions in 2019, as well as earlier Young Lives research. The paper considers patterns and experiences of movement and migration and the aspirations of children and young people leaving their communities for reasons relating to family, marriage, education and work.

Young Lives

An International Study of Childhood Poverty

About Young Lives

Young Lives is an international study of childhood poverty and transitions to adulthood, following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam). Young Lives is a collaborative research programme led by a team in the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford in association with research and policy partners in the four study countries.

Through researching different aspects of children’s lives across time, we seek to improve policies and programmes for children and young people.

Young Lives Research and Policy Partners

Ethiopia

- *Policy Studies Institute*
- *Pankhurst Development Research and Consulting plc*

India (Andhra Pradesh and Telangana)

- *Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad (CESS)*
- *Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalam (Women’s University), Tirupati (SPMVV)*

Peru

- *Grupo de Análisis para el Desarollo (GRADE)*
- *Instituto de Investigación Nutricional (IIN)*

Vietnam

- *Centre for Analysis and Forecast, Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences (CAF-VASS)*
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