WOMEN'S LABOUR MIGRATION ON THE AFRICAN-MIDDLE EAST CORRIDOR:

EXPERIENCES OF MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS FROM ETHIOPIA

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Contents

Acronyms

ANRS	Amhara Nation Regional State
CETU	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Union
CVM	Comunità Volontari per il Mondo (Community of Volunteers for the World)
DW	Domestic Worker
EEF	Ethiopian Employers Federation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IDWF	International Domestic Workers' Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MTDWA	Mulutesfa Domestic Workers Association
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PEA	Private Employment Agency
RDW	Returnee Domestic Workers
SNNP	South Nation Nationalities and People's State
WCYA	Women Children Youth Affairs
ZoLSA	Zone Labour and Social Affairs

Executive Summary

To gain a better understanding of labour migration processes and trends, and the experiences of Ethiopian women working as domestic workers in the Middle East, Comunità Volontari per il Mondo (CVM) conducted research in the Amhara and Addis regions between November 2018 and June 2019. This project was undertaken in partnership with the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW) and the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), two international organisations committed to ending the abuse and exploitation of workers at home and abroad. Our qualitative research design was grounded in the Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) framework, which encourages inclusion and social change.

Field research was led by a female CVM staff member with experience in organising and supporting domestic workers, with support from Mulutesfa Domestic Workers Association in East and West Gojjam in the Amhara region, and Addis Ababa. The findings and recommendations outlined on this report are based on interviews and focus group discussions involving 54 current and returnee migrant domestic workers and their families, as well as representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs), government ministries and departments, and recruitment agencies.

Ethiopia has a longer history of labour migration to the Middle East compared to its East African neighbours with Ethiopian women migrating to Middle Eastern and Gulf countries for at least two decades (Demissie, F., 2017). While researchers could not obtain the exact number of Ethiopian female migrant domestic workers currently working in the Gulf and Middle East states, desk research and discussions with Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs representatives suggest that the number is rising. Studies report that the number of female domestic workers from Ethiopia's three key regions of origin – Amhara, Addis Ababa and Oromia – who were legally working in the Middle East between 2008 and 2013 was 297,512. It is estimated, however, that twice that number had migrated using unofficial or irregular channels. An assumed rise in irregular migration is said to have resulted from the government's 2013 ban on labour migration to the Middle East, , itself a reaction to the expulsion of over 100,000 Ethiopians from Saudi Arabia that same year. The ban was lifted in 2018, however, and in January of the following year, a bilateral agreement on labour migration to Saudi Arabia came into full effect. At the same time, Ethiopia has been working to improve its labour migration regulatory framework, as represented by the recently promulgated Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016, which aims to more effectively regulate migration by, *inter alia*, enhancing the protection of Ethiopian migrant workers.

The main countries of destination for the women in this study were Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Kuwait. This choice was supported by the current literature that points to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon and United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the main countries of destination for Ethiopian migrant domestic workers (Demissie, F., 2017). While most of the research participants had achieved at least primary level of education, they still had limited information on safe migration processes as well as their rights under Ethiopia's labour migration laws and policies. Research participants highlighted high unemployment, underemployment, and family pressure due to poverty and extended family responsibilities as some of the key factors that pushed them to seek a job in the Middle East.

At the time they made a decision to migrate, some of the research participants did not have a preference for the country of destination and relied on private employment agents and brokers to identify job opportunities for them. For instance, nine out of the seventeen returnees stated that they relied upon recruitment agencies and brokers to inform them which countries they would be migrating to.

A small percentage of the returnee migrant domestic workers revealed that they used clandestine channels to go to the Middle East. For example, two respondents who left Ethiopia during the period of the labour migration ban travelled to Saudi Arabia by walking to Somalia, crossing over the Red Sea to Yemen by boat, and traveling to Saudi from Yemen by land. All other returnee and current migrant domestic workers travelled to the Middle East through private employment agencies. The study also found that Ethiopian migrant domestic workers in the Middle East continue to face a number of challenges during their journey, on arrival in the countries of destination and upon their return to Ethiopia. These challenges are exacerbated by the fact that while Ethiopia now has a comprehensive labour migration policy in place and is working on signing bilateral agreements with a number of Middle Eastern countries, the country's labour laws do not recognise or regulate domestic workers or even allow domestic workers to form or join trade unions. Key informants who participated in this research, including the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), agreed that unless domestic workers are officially recognised by law as workers, any interventions aiming to protect and enhance the rights of migrant domestic workers will not be effective.

Image 1: FGD with returnees in Addis Ababa

Background

Famous for being the only sub-Saharan African country that was never colonised, Ethiopia is the second most populous nation on the continent. The country has a population of almost 120 million, 39% of which is below the age of 35. Ethiopia's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) estimates that as of mid-2019 there were approximately 11 million youth job-seekers, and that every year two million more youth join the labour force.[1] As the population and school enrolment rates increase, the demand for jobs will continue to rise in the coming years. Yet, the government can only create one million jobs per year. The economy is therefore not generating enough adequate jobs to address Ethiopia's increasing demand, which partly explains the country's high unemployment rates. It is therefore not surprising that Ethiopian youth continue to leave the country in search of employment opportunities in East Africa and beyond.

Figure 2: Source - AllAfrica.com

Bordering Kenya to the south, Sudan and South Sudan to the west, Eritrea and Djibouti to the north and Somalia to the east, Ethiopia is a landlocked East African country with a federal government structure. Ethiopia is composed of nine federal regions – Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP), Harari, Oromia and Somali – and two city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa), a structure that has been criticised for being organised around ethnic lines and responsible for creating ethnic tensions over the years.[2] Each of

[1] Presentation by Zerihun Yeshitla, Illegal Labour Recruitment Prevention Team Leader at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs at a workshop organised by GAATW, CVM, Freedom Fund and Agar in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 16 July, 2019

[2] See: https://qz.com/africa/1653206/ethiopias-flawed-federal-system-fuels-oromo-amhara-tensions/ and https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia/ethiopia-ethnic-federalism-and-its-discontents

the nine regions is divided into administrative zones, and each zone into *woredas*, which are further divided into *kebeles*. The administrative division in the two cities follows a different pattern: each city is divided into sub-cities which are then subdivided into *woredas*. Oromia and Amhara, the two most populous region states are, according to MOLSA, the key migrant-producing locations. A MOLSA representative in 2019 estimated that 33.6% and 21% of Ethiopia's regular migrants originated from Oromia and Amhara respectively, while the capital Addis Ababa produced 16.3% of the country's regular migrants.

Ethiopia's migration patterns have in the past been influenced by its history of environmental degradation and famine, political unrest and economic struggles, as well as its geographical location within the Horn of Africa, the continent's top refugee-sending region. In the 1960s and 1970s, Ethiopia's migratory patterns were characterised by large movements of citizens escaping civic unrest, conflict and famine (Fransen, S. and Kuschminder, K., 2009). Ethiopia's war with Eritrea lasted three decades – between 1961 and 1991 – and this, coupled with a border conflict with Somalia and long periods of drought and political unrest generated thousands of refugees. In addition to being a country of origin for refugees and asylum seekers, Ethiopia is also home to a large population of refugees, mainly from the Horn of Africa. According to a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of August 2018 Ethiopia was home to over 900,000 refugees and asylum seekers, making it a host to the second largest refugee population on the continent (UNHCR, 2019). In addition to refugees and asylum seekers, Ethiopia hosts a small percentage of highly skilled individuals working with regional and international bodies and corporations including the African Union and the United Nations.

In the last three decades as Ethiopia has experienced high levels of urbanisation, the rates of migration within the country have gone up. Pushed by the climate crisis that has often negatively impacted on agriculture and the need to escape rural poverty, rural residents continue to migrate to urban centres and other rural areas. Ethiopia is still highly reliant on subsistence farming and poverty rates remain high – more so in rural areas. Migration therefore is seen by many as a means of reducing poverty, and this is particularly the case for girls and women who bear the brunt of their families' and communities' poverty. Ethiopian girls are less likely to access and complete formal education and are more likely to get married at a younger age than their male counterparts. Seen as more dependable remitters than men, girls and young women are also more likely to experience familial pressure to migrate as a way of improving their families' livelihoods. Women are increasingly migrating outside the country through regular and irregular means in search of economic opportunities. Many of them move to the Middle East to work in the domestic sector.

MOLSA has estimated the total number of Ethiopian migrants abroad to be approximately three million.[3] Of these, between 2008 and 2014, 1.5 million migrated through irregular means. During this period, 480,480 Ethiopians migrated to the Middle East through regular means, 175,427 of whom migrated between July 2012 and July 2013 alone (Kerbage - Hariri, 2016). Research indicates, however, that most migrant workers travel abroad through unregistered agencies and irregular

[3] Presentation by Zerihun Yeshitla, *Illegal Labour Recruitment Prevention Team Leader at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs* at a workshop organised by GAATW, CVM, Freedom Fund and Agar in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 16 July, 2019

networks, indicating that the number of migrant workers is likely to be much higher (Fernandez, 2013; ILO, 2011; Kuschminder, 2014). While both Ethiopian men and women are migrating to the Middle East for work, there have been increasing reports in the media and in literature of the abuse and exploitation that female domestic workers face in the Middle East (Fernandez, 2010; ILO, 2011; Mahdavi, 2011). An ILO assessment conducted with 1,152 returnees in 2014 highlighted high levels of verbal abuse (52%), discrimination (39%), physical violence (23 %), theft (22 %), and rape (5 %) (ILO, 2014).

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

To better understand the experiences of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers, CVM, in collaboration with the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women and the International Domestic Workers Federation, carried out a qualitative research in Amhara and Addis Ababa regions between November 2018 and June 2019. This was part of a multi-country research in six locations in East and West Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania-Mainland, Tanzania-Zanzibar, Ethiopia and Ghana) that sought to better understand the processes, trends, challenges and opportunities around labour migration from select African countries to the Middle East for domestic work. This report presents the findings of the research conducted by CVM in Ethiopia.

ABOUT CVM, IDWF AND GAATW

CVM – Comunità Volontari per il Mondo (Community of Volunteers for the World) is an International Voluntary Organisation founded in 1978 and based in Italy. CVM has been operating in Ethiopia for over three decades, primarily in South Nation Nationalities and People's State (SNNPs), Addis Ababa and Amhara National Regional state. An affiliate of the International Domestic Workers Federation, CVM has been working on domestic workers' issues as well as in WASH, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and advocacy, awareness training and education for vulnerable groups, mainly women, girls, orphans and street children. IDWF is a global, membership-based organisation of domestic and household workers whose current five-year strategic goals include organising of migrant domestic workers and alliance building among migrant domestic workers' organisations, trade unions, CSOs and other stakeholders in the Middle East and North Africa region. GAATW is a global network of over 80 organisations that promote and defend the human rights of migrant and trafficked women. GAATW calls for safety standards for migrant workers in the process of migration and in the formal and informal work sectors - garment and food processing, agriculture and farming, domestic work, sex work - where slavery-like conditions and practices exist.

Context

While Ethiopia's poverty rates have fallen in the last decade – from 44% of the population living below the poverty line in 2000 to 30% in 2011 – poverty remains widespread, particularly in rural areas (World Bank Group, 2015).[4] With four out of every five Ethiopians living in rural areas and largely engaged in subsistence farming, access to quality and affordable healthcare and education as well as to economic opportunities remain some of the pressing challenges facing a large majority of the population today (World Bank Group, 2015). Research indicates that such deprivations are what leads Ethiopian families to pressure their daughters – some as young as 18 years of age and below – to migrate for work (ODI, 2014). It should, however, be noted that the drivers of migration for Ethiopian girls and women – as in other countries of origin – are often nuanced and multi-layered. Research has also found that Ethiopian girls and women use migration as a tool to escape from child marriage and oppression in their family or marital homes (ODI, 2014).

The migration of Ethiopian women outside the country is characterised by large numbers of girls and women migrating to the Middle East, primarily from Amhara and Oromia in which the capital Addis Ababa sits. According to a research by the ILO and Addis Ababa University in 2017, while both male and female Ethiopians migrate to the Middle East, the proportion of female migrants is higher (Admassie, A. et al, 2017). The average age at departure for Ethiopian migrant workers is 24 years, with some migrants being as young as 15 (Admassie, A. et al, 2017). While this migration trend dates back to the 1980s, with Lebanon initially being the main country of destination for Ethiopian migrant domestic workers, the rising demand for domestic labour in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE and other countries in the Gulf region has led to the migration of larger numbers of Ethiopian girls and women.

The migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers is also characterised by its history of irregularity – particularly during the labour migration ban between 2013 and 2018. Many Ethiopian migrants who are irregular are recruited by local brokers, some of whom are relatives, friends, neighbours and returnees. In such situations, informal brokers offer potential migrants false promises of good financial revenues that will enable the migrants and their families to escape poverty. As a result, irregular migrants do not receive relevant information before their departure nor are they given the opportunity to discuss the terms and conditions of their jobs with their employers or recruiters. According to the ILO and Addis Ababa University study, more than 30% of respondents had not received information regarding the nature of their jobs and 54% had not received any information about their employer prior to their travel to the Middle East.

In the absence of visas and other official travel documents, migrant workers from Ethiopia often use informal routes including traveling overland through Somalia and crossing the Gulf of Aden by boat to reach the Middle East. In addition, there are migrant women who travel to the Middle East on tourist visas and become irregular by overstaying their visas. Ethiopian female migrant workers – and in particular those who are irregular – are vulnerable to different forms of exploitation both during their journeys and upon arrival in the Middle East. With limited pre-departure information and

[4] World Bank Group. 2015. Ethiopia Poverty Assessment 2014. Washington, DC. © World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21323

training, labour contracts that are either oral and therefore non-binding or not fully understood by the migrant workers, lack of legal protection and assistance, and 'pervasive gender, religious and racial discrimination' in countries of destination, Ethiopian migrant girls and women in the Middle East often work in highly exploitative and abusive environments (ODI, 2014). Studies and media reports on their experiences are largely negative, and include stories of delayed or partial payment of salaries, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, long working hours with limited rest, and social isolation. They often escape from their employers' homes with the hope of finding alternative employment that offers more favourable working conditions or returning home. These negative experiences occur irrespective of the country of destination in the Middle East: there have, for instance been media reports of the abuse of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers in Lebanon as there have been in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.[5]

Due to such reports, the migration of domestic workers to the Middle East, has taken centre stage both in Ethiopia and internationally, in recent years. Additionally, the large-scale expulsion of undocumented Ethiopian migrant workers from Saudi Arabia between late 2013 and early 2014 and in 2017 placed labour migration issues further in the spotlight. During the crackdowns on undocumented migrant workers by the Saudi government, over 160,000 Ethiopian migrants went back home between November 2013 and March 2014 (Lecadet, C. and Melkamu, M., 2016) while in 2017 over 84,000 Ethiopian migrant workers were either voluntarily repatriated or forcibly deported from Saudi Arabia (Freedom Fund, 2017). In response to these challenges, the Ethiopian government has been working to introduce and strengthen systems, structures and policies to better govern labour migration, strengthen regular migration, and enhance the protection of its migrant workers. In 2013 the Ethiopian government issued a ban preventing its citizens to migrate to the Middle East for work. While the government saw this ban as a necessary temporary measure that would allow it to improve labour migration governance, it did not stop people from migrating. Over 54,000 newly-arrived Ethiopian migrants were recorded in Yemen in 2013 alone, and it is likely that they were prospective migrant workers who had travelled overland and on sea with the help of illegal brokers and smugglers, with the hope of crossing Yemen and getting to Saudi Arabia and beyond.

During the period of the ban (2013 -2018), the Ethiopian government worked on revising its labour migration laws, thereby replacing the 2009 Employment Exchange Services Proclamation (Proclamation 632/2009) with the new Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016. The Overseas Employment Proclamation was adopted in 2016 and came into force in 2018 (IOM, 2017; Nelson, P., 2018). The new Proclamation aims to address the changing nature of labour migration and recognises three ways in which citizens can be recruited for foreign employment: through public employment organs where there are government-to-government labour agreements, through private employment agencies (PEAs) that are licensed by MOLSA, and through direct employment where a jobseeker attains employment abroad on his or her own accord. Recruitment through direct employment is however prohibited for migrant domestic workers. The Proclamation also prohibits the recruitment of migrant workers who are under the age of 18, and requires prospective migrants to undergo medical examinations and relevant occupational training and receive a certificate of

[5] See for instance: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-saudiarabia-migrants/despite-abuses-expelled-ethiopians-hope-to-be-smuggled-back-to-saudi-arabia-idUSKBN1CE0SM and https://www.adhrb.org/2018/11/death-of-ethiopian-domestic-worker-in-kuwait-emphasizes-the-dangers-of-abuse-for-migrant-workers/

occupational competence. Skills training provided to migrant domestic workers includes caregiving, household management and domestic work and is offered by 86 government and over 200 accredited private technical and vocational training centres around the country.[6] Having established that 62% of migrant domestic workers in the Middle East had low levels of literacy, the government now requires the minimum educational level for prospective migrant domestic workers under the new law to be 8th grade. The law also limits the placement migrant workers to destination countries that have signed a bilateral agreement with Ethiopia. The Proclamation requires that these bilateral agreements address migrant workers' working conditions and have enforcement mechanisms. As of December 2018 the Ethiopian government had signed bilateral labour agreements with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and Kuwait. Ethiopia is also in the process of negotiating similar agreements with governments in Lebanon and Bahrain. There are Ethiopian embassies in four of these countries – Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE and Jordan – in which there are also labour attaches, who are tasked with the responsibility of providing assistance and support to migrant workers.

Under the Overseas Employment Proclamation, foreign employers are required to bear the expenses related to their migrant workers' visa application, round trip transport, residence and work permit application, insurance, and the approval of employment contracts. To ensure that Ethiopian migrant workers and particularly migrant domestic workers are well protected, the Proclamation requires each PEA that is involved in foreign employment to deposit a monetary guarantee of USD 100,000 as collateral for any abuse or damage faced by migrant workers. This guarantee fund could for instance be used to cover the repatriation of a migrant worker with a serious illness or physical injuries, the transportation of the body of a migrant worker who dies, or the transport of a migrant worker and her belongings upon the termination of her employment contract. In addition, if the contract is cancelled due to reasons not attributable to the worker, the employer or the agency are required to reimburse the migrant worker the minimum wage – which according to a MOLSA official is set at different rates depending on the provisions of the bilateral agreements signed with countries of destination.[7] For instance, the minimum wage for migrant domestic workers in Saudi Arabia is set at 1,000 riyal ($266) whereas the minimum wage in Qatar varies between $225 and $250 depending on the migrant domestic workers' level of experience.

While it remains to be seen what impact the new Proclamation will have on the rights of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers, the country's labour migration regulatory framework has received some criticism. The government has made headway in ensuring that migrant domestic workers have the relevant information, skills and documentation before leaving for the Middle East. However, some of the pre-departure requirements under the Proclamation are still not easily accessible, particularly for rural girls and women. For instance, the pre-departure and skills training provided to prospective migrant domestic workers is offered for free at government technical and vocational education and training (TVET) centres but the Proclamation allows private institutions – which are twice as many in number as the public TVETs – to charge no more than 1,800 Birr ($63)[8], an unaffordable figure that is likely to drive migrant domestic workers to irregular migration. With the Proclamation's focus on documented migrants, the question of what legal protections are available for undocumented

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migrant workers in countries of destination remains. Additionally, even where migrant workers travel through official means to countries which have signed bilateral agreements with Ethiopia there is no guarantee that their rights will be respected and protected by employers, recruitment agencies and government representatives there. In addition, while the Overseas Employment Proclamation covers migrant domestic workers, locally domestic workers are not recognised as workers under Ethiopia's national Labour Code and are therefore denied protection. Ethiopia has also not ratified a number of international conventions related to migrant labour and domestic workers' rights including the Domestic Workers Convention (ILO C189) and the Migrant Workers Convention (ILO C143).

In addition to the Overseas Employment Proclamation, the Ethiopian government also recently passed a proclamation to address human trafficking and smuggling of migrants – Proclamation 909/2015. The key institutions involved in managing labour migration include the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, whose mandate includes the overall management of labour migration. Under the Overseas Employment Proclamation regional bureaus of labour have the responsibility to manage labour migration in their regions. The Federal MOLSA has recently signed agreements with all regional Labour ministries to enable them to address labour migration and human trafficking at a regional level. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is also a key institution where the protection of Ethiopian migrant workers is concerned: its mandate includes ensuring the protection of interests and rights of Ethiopians who live abroad. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) among other things works to ensure the protection of the rights and well-being of women and children. Relevant inter-ministerial institutions include:

1. The Inter-ministerial Committee on Overseas Employment, which is headed by MOLSA, and whose duties and powers range from ensuring the Proclamation's implementation, facilitating legal action against violators of rights of migrant workers in countries of destination, and public awareness raising "on illegal employment exchange activities", and establishing and managing a data centre.
2.
3. The National Council to Combat Trafficking in Persons and its regional and local branches are made up of representatives from government, religious institutions, and civil society organisations. The role of these councils is to combat human trafficking at *woreda,* zonal, regional, federal and international levels.

Methodology

The study applied a qualitative feminist participatory action research (FPAR) methodology. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is carried out under the premise that 'when people are directly involved in an analysis of their situation, they are often stimulated to find answers to these problems'.[9] PAR therefore aims both to produce an analytical description of a complex issue and to radically change it. The researcher is involved in the social setting being studied as both observer and participant and works together with research participants not only to analyse and interpret their social reality but to transform this reality with rather than for them. The research process is made more powerful when the researchers are individuals directly affected by or working to address the social issue under study. For this research, the lead researcher in Ethiopia was a female social worker and staff member of CVM in Amhara region, and her co-researchers were other CVM staff members as well as representatives from MDWA, while the primary research participants were women migrant domestic workers. The researchers were appointed to carry out the study due to their grasp of the issue through their lived experiences and their work. Due to this experience, the researchers, following the provision of research methodology training and technical support from GAATW, were well-placed to refine research questions, mobilise research participants, undertake field research, and work with migrant domestic workers and other stakeholders to identify solutions that would bring about change.

Given CVM's long history of working with domestic workers in Amhara region, two out of the region's eleven zones were identified as the primary locations for this research: East Gojjam and West Gojjam. Within these two zones, the researchers interviewed migrant domestic workers and their families as well as relevant government officials in two *woredas* each: Debre Markos and Debre Work in East Gojjam, and Bure and Chagni in West Gojjam. The researchers also interviewed returnee domestic workers, government officials and other relevant labour migration stakeholders in Addis Ababa, as well as migrant domestic workers currently residing in Lebanon.

The field research was carried out between January and March 2019. To enhance participation of relevant stakeholders, CVM set up a research working group during the inception stage made up of CVM staff, government officials, community-based organisations (CBOs), returnees, domestic worker associations and other stakeholders in the migration and labour sectors. Two workshops were organised in East and West Gojjam to introduce the research, and co-select the research sites in the two regions. Following these workshops, the stakeholders supported the mobilisation of research participants, and CVM trained some of these stakeholders (representatives of MDWA) to participate in the research as data collectors. MDWA representatives accompanied CVM researchers and were involved in interviewing government officials. This participatory, bottoms-up approach proved to be a successful model in the research and helped in enabling stakeholders to own the research process and to minimise research participants' expectations on the psychological, social and financial support that CVM would provide. However, research and exploration on migrant domestic

[9] Boesveld, M. and Boontinand, J. 'Practicing Feminist Participatory Action Research Methodologies'. GAATW Newsletter, January 1999, pp14-17

workers' issues in Ethiopia was new to many of CVM's stakeholders, and the experience served as an opportunity for them to learn about trends and other issues affecting migrant domestic workers.

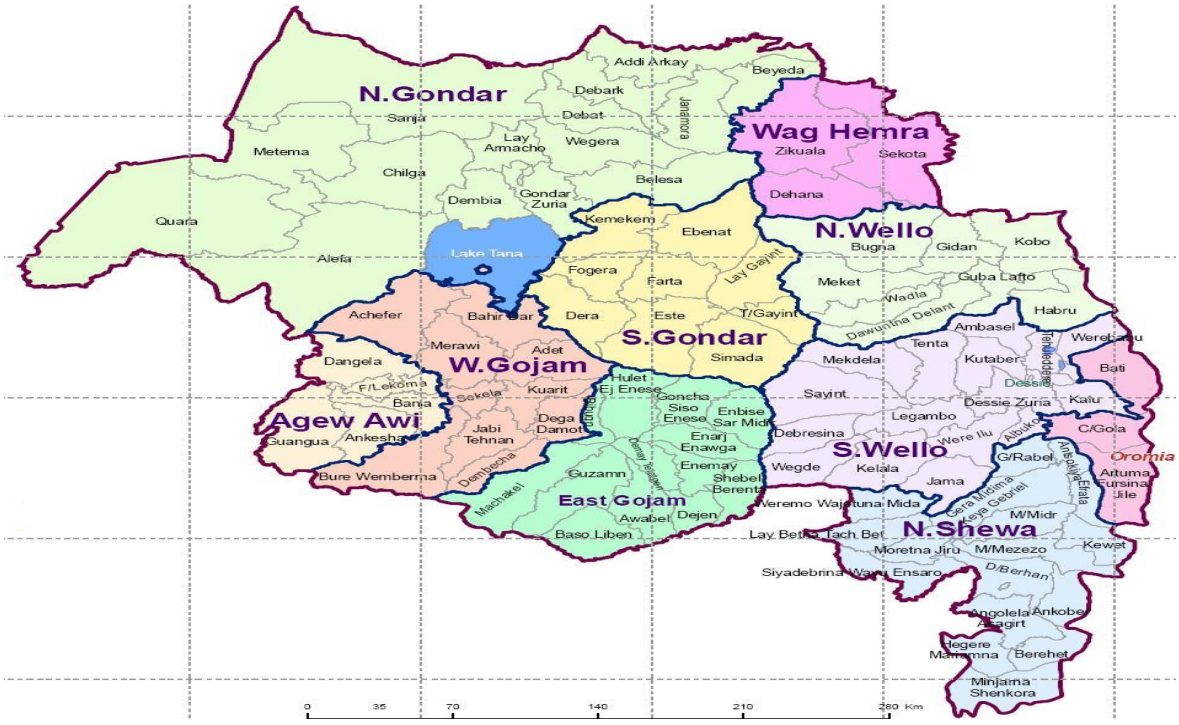

Figure 3: Map of Amhara Region, Ethiopia

Data was collected using the following qualitative research methods: observation, focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews. The field work involved in-depth interviews with 20 returnee women and 16 of their family members, focus group discussions with 17 returnee migrants, and 9 key informant interviews with government representatives in both Amhara and Addis Ababa regions, three private employment agencies in Addis Ababa, and leadership from a trade union and a domestic worker association. In addition, the lead researcher interviewed five migrant domestic workers who are currently working in Lebanon. The interviews and FGDs with migrant domestic workers brought together Ethiopian women from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, with a range of age groups, religious backgrounds, education levels and migration experiences. In Amhara region, some of the FGD participants were selected for follow-up in-depth interviews. Following the FGDs, women who had particularly strong opinions about labour migration were invited for follow-up interviews, some of which eventually contributed to case studies. CVM organised interviews with returnee migrant domestic workers and their families in locations that were most convenient to them (usually their homes), and written informed consent was obtained. All interviews and group discussions were digitally recorded and translated into English by the research team.

Findings

As noted above a total of 67 participants, including 54 migrant domestic workers, were interviewed in individual interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Discussions in these interviews and FGDs in many ways reflected the findings of similar studies which have found the experiences of migrant domestic workers from Ethiopia to the ME to be largely negative. This section outlines in detail the experiences of migrant domestic workers during the migration process, in the countries of destination, and following their return to Ethiopia as told by migrant domestic workers themselves as well as by their families and representatives.

Image 4: Research participants - returnee migrant domestic workers in Amhara region

Profile of Ethiopian Migrant Domestic Workers

The average age of the returnee and current migrant domestic workers who participated in this research was 26 years. It should be noted, however, that some of the returnees confessed to having used falsified documents to travel to the Middle East when they were under the age of 18 years.

The marital status of the returnees varied from single, separated or divorced, and married. With the exception of one returnee, most of the migrant domestic workers were not members of any domestic workers' association. Education levels varied and with the exception of one uneducated returnee in Bure, Amhara region, research participants had at the very least primary level education.

A few – including one currently working in Lebanon and four returnees – had acquired tertiary education at the time of migration.

Research respondents spoke of personal ambitions, family pressure due to poverty and extended family responsibilities, and limited economic opportunities in Ethiopia as the key factors pushing them to seek work in the Middle East. This was also confirmed by a representative from East Gojjam Zone Labour and Social Affairs Department. Recruiters – and especially local brokers – some of whom are returnees themselves also play a role in encouraging girls and women to migrate. Aside from recruiters' influence, individual women have different reasons for wanting to migrate. Some are students who see no promising prospects to continue their studies, whereas others are simply not interested in completing their education. Some complete 8th or 10th grade and decide to migrate when they have not scored enough points that allow them to pursue higher education. To many, becoming a migrant domestic worker is preferable to undergoing technical and vocational training. Still others want to alleviate their family's difficult financial circumstances through migration. The possibility of earning the equivalent of thousands of birr monthly is, therefore, the strongest pull factor, despite the general public aversion towards migration to Arab countries.

However, since domestic migrants mostly are from low-income families, paying for their migration is a daunting task. Their families either have to borrow money from relatively well-to-do relatives or sell their livestock and other assets to finance their daughters' migration. Migrants who are lucky enough to work longer than a few months and receive their salaries regularly repay the incurred debt and start sending money back home to their families. Some, particularly those whose families are not dependent on their remittances, even manage to save some money for their individual use and aspirations. However, upon their return they find that the cost of living at home has increased and they cannot do much with the cash they have. They re-migrate, thus continuing the cycle of migration without bringing considerable improvement in their lives.

In the countries of destination, research participants highlighted various challenges, including working long hours (up to 20 hours a day for many), withholding of salaries, not getting breaks or days off, verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Prior to departure a majority of the research participants - including 70% of the returnees in Addis Ababa - stated that while they had received written employment contracts, they did not fully understand their terms and conditions. The current domestic workers in Lebanon – all of whom travelled through private employment agencies and received contracts – highlighted the need for the government to provide short-term training to all prospective migrant domestic workers, and for the government to work closely with recruitment agencies to ensure that migrant domestic workers receive the right information. Even with these challenges, they highlighted that by working in the Middle East, they were able to save money and that the living situation for themselves and their families is better than before.

"[Through my work] I have supported my family and they have built a house."

- Ethiopian Domestic Worker in Lebanon

Experiences of Ethiopian Migrant Domestic Workers in the Middle East

Migration Process

Research participants revealed that that their travel to the Middle East was facilitated primarily by brokers and in a few cases by recruitment agencies, some of which were unregistered or otherwise operating illegally and required the migrant domestic workers to pay exorbitant fees in order to facilitate their travel. Brokers are both male and female and typically make promises that are far from reality. The fact that some of these brokers were themselves previously migrant domestic works also made it easier for prospective migrants to fall for their enticing tales. Even those migrant workers whose travel was facilitated by legal PEAs spoke of paying high fees, in contravention to the Overseas Employment Proclamation. For instance, all the five current migrant domestic workers in Lebanon noted that they paid the PEA a fee to facilitate their migration – this ranged from $143 to $529. Interviews with MOLSA representatives in Amhara region revealed that the presence of illegal brokers was one of the major challenges that the government was facing while governing labour migration.

None of the migrant domestic workers received pre-departure training, and most noted that they had limited information about the destination countries as well as their employment terms and conditions or indeed how and where to access refuge and redress in countries of destination if needed. However, a majority said they had signed employment contracts, although some indicated that these contracts were not clear. Others (including four returnees in Amhara region) mentioned that they either were unaware of the existence of employment contracts or that their contracts were verbal. The research participants shared that prior to their departure to the Middle East, their expectation was that they would carry out work and get their monthly wages without any challenge or restriction and ultimately improve their lives and those of their families. Many noted that they had not thought about the culture, working conditions, or language barriers in the countries of destination prior to their departure.

> *"If you want to go to Arab countries [for work], please have prior knowledge about employers and the employment situation in Arab countries."*
>
> - Returnee Domestic Worker

A small number of the returnees revealed that they used clandestine channels to get to the Middle East. For example, two respondents who left Ethiopia during the period of the labour migration ban travelled to Saudi Arabia by walking to Somalia, crossing over the Red Sea to Yemen by boat, and traveling to Saudi from Yemen on land. The rest travelled to the Middle East by plane, confirming that they had obtained official travel documents and visas prior to their travel. It was not clear, however, if these visas were short-term tourist visas or the work and resident permits that migrant domestic workers in the Middle East are required to obtain.

Working and Living Conditions

Recurring descriptions of inhumane treatment, cultural isolation, undermining of cultural identity, and disappointed expectations dominated the discussions with the Ethiopian migrant domestic workers. Interviewees talked about exploitative day-to-day living and working conditions, which they perceived as a threat to their physical and psychological integrity. The women showed various levels of distress and ability to adopt copying strategies, depending on the nature of the abuses and the community resources on which they could rely.

All the women worked as live-in domestic workers, whose daily duties were heavy and included child and elderly care, laundry, dusting and cleaning and food preparation. Four of the returnees stated that in addition to their employers' households, they also worked in other households, including the employers' extended family members' homes. Working hours were long, often more than 12 hours, with at least two returnees indicating that they got less than five hours of sleep each day. Only three indicated that they were allowed to take a day off, although these entitlements varied depending on the employer: two of these returnees were allowed to take a day off each week whereas the other one was only entitled to two days off each month.

Only two of the returnees had access to their passports during their period of employment. Besides passport confiscation, research participants outlined the following as the main challenges they experienced in the Middle East: loneliness and social isolation brought about by limited freedom of movement and cultural barriers, language and cultural limitations including challenges with understanding Arabic and getting used to the local food, high work-load, and verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Food was a recurring issue that was brought up, and complaints around food ranged from inadequate food (one returnee took to eating fresh tomatoes in order to deal with hunger pangs) to not being used to the food and the culture of eating. One returnee talked about the challenge she had in understanding how to use the different household appliances, highlighting the importance of having comprehensive pre-departure training. It was not surprising therefore that over 60% of the returnees indicated that they did not have a positive experience in the Middle East.

Almost all of the domestic worker respondents had their own sleeping quarters. Most were paid a monthly salary of an average of $150 a month, and while they acknowledged the high levels of abuse and exploitation, they highlighted the positive impact earning a salary had on their lives and those of their families. For instance, 14 out of 17 returnees in Amhara region confirmed that they saved money, primarily with the hope of starting businesses upon their return to Ethiopia, although one of these returnees who had saved ETH 80,000 had all her savings stolen prior to her return. That said, research participants highlighted that Ethiopian migrant domestic workers in the Middle East earn less than their South Asian counterparts.

Not surprisingly, some of the returnees were not financially literate: they did not know about saving, and a majority did not have a personal bank account. As a result, their monthly salaries were transferred to the bank accounts of their family members in Ethiopia, and for some, this money was misused by their family members. In such cases, domestic workers faced challenges upon their return

as they had little or no savings left. While in the Middle East, they did not have the negotiation skills to convince their employers to increase their salaries, particularly in cases where domestic workers had their workload increased. Besides their monthly salaries, none of the migrant domestic workers was entitled to pension or medical benefits, although a small percentage had their employers pay for their health expenses whenever they got ill.

Return and Reintegration

Returnee migrant domestic workers all agreed that besides the opportunity to earn a regular salary and save, one of the key benefits of their migration was how it enhanced their resilience and confidence to overcome personal and work-related challenges. According to the domestic workers, there is no job that they can now not do in Ethiopia.

When asked if they were willing to go back to the Middle East, many of the returnees said that they would not. They returned after breaking or completing their two-year employment contracts, or were deported by governments in countries of destination. Upon their return, some of them started creating awareness in their communities, and primarily discussed their experiences with prospective migrant domestic workers.

Interviews further revealed that Ethiopian migrant domestic workers face different challenges upon their return. However, various stakeholders are now involved in supporting the migrant workers' return and reintegration process, and it appears that a lot of support is being made available to returnee migrant domestic workers compared to those who aspire to migrate to and who are currently working in the Middle East. Different government agencies are involved in return and reintegration measures. Government agencies facilitate the return of migrants (mainly in cases of deportation) from the countries of destination and in delivery of post-arrival assistance, including provision of economic support to returnees. The role of regional and local government authorities is pivotal in the implementation of reintegration support measures. Ethiopia's anti-trafficking framework for collaboration and action is one of the vehicles through which the Government implements its reintegration response, as it is in the general mandate of the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force.

Local and international NGOs working with migrant domestic workers – including CVM, AGAR, Freedom Fund, Caritas Migrants and the Afro-Asian Migrant Centre - also offer their help in terms of legal assistance, social support, shelter and medical aid to newly returned migrant domestic workers, and assistance to migrant domestic workers who have fled their employers' homes or who are detained to retrieve passports from employers and repatriate. These NGOs help distribute information on migrant workers' rights and where to seek redress in countries of destination; they organise activities and events, usually with local domestic workers associations and other migrant workers' communities; and provide training and capacity building to domestic workers' associations.

The Ethiopian Employer Federation (EEF) and the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) also contribute to the reintegration of migrants, and have worked as ILO partners in an ongoing

project to support reintegration. Part of the EEF's mandate and corporate social responsibility programmes is to provide training to employers regarding labour standards and workers' rights, including trafficking. Thus, they work to reinforce the protection of workers' rights through the sensitisation of employers. On the side of returnees and job seekers in general, their role in reintegration is mainly to facilitate skills and job matching and to foster linkages between job seekers and employers by building on their wide network of employers. The EEF may also provide support to future employers, such as returnees who will set up a small enterprise. The CETU is involved in reintegration mostly through supporting returnees to mobilise themselves, but also in raising awareness about the risks associated with irregular migration, informing returnees about workers' rights, and encouraging them to join trade unions. Also, CETU has recently signed a bilateral agreement with the Lebanese National Federation of Workers and Employees Trade Unions (FENASOL), with the support of the ILO, which promises to develop further avenues for protecting Ethiopian overseas workers.

The PEAs, domestic workers' representatives, and government officials who participated in this research agreed that the government needs to do more to protect both local and migrant domestic workers. The PEAs underlined that the law should allow them to recruit both local and migrant Ethiopian domestic workers, thereby allowing Ethiopians to access more local job opportunities. Labour migration stakeholders also agreed that domestic workers should be incorporated into the labour law and that the government should develop a policy and strategy that is specific to domestic workers. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of community awareness creation and training, both prior to migration and upon return. One of the challenges experienced by returnee domestic workers was the stigma from their own families and communities, who view domestic workers as second and third-class citizens. According to these stakeholders, domestic workers are a marginalised group and need special and serious attention from government at local, regional and national levels.

Case studies

Rukiya, West Gojjam, Amhara Region

Rukiya is a single, 22-year-old woman living in Chagni town in Amhara Region. She is a member of a domestic workers' association, which she joined in 2018 after her return to Ethiopia from Kuwait.

Following her parents' divorce and her father's relocation to Sudan, Rukiya dropped out of Grade 11 when she was 17 years, and using the services of an illegal broker, she flew to Kuwait in 2012. She paid 10,000 Ethiopian birr ($347) to the broker. As she did not go through the legal process, Rukiya did not sign an employment contract with the broker or employer, and instead, she made a verbal agreement about her employment terms and conditions through the broker. When she started work, her monthly salary was only 3,000 Ethiopian Birr ($104). Rukiya had never previously worked as a domestic worker and initially her responsibilities – which included child care, laundry, house cleaning and cooking – were overwhelming. After serving her first employer for two years, she quit and started working at another home, thinking that she would get better working conditions and pay.

The broker in Kuwait facilitated her new employment, although she was required the equivalent of 150 Kuwaiti Dinar per month to the broker for this service. “I paid the broker 150 Dinar for nothing. It is really heart-breaking. I worked day and night and gave my money for the broker” stated Rukiya during our interview with her.

In addition to this exploitation by the brokers in Ethiopia and Kuwait, Rukiya was over-worked (she worked more than 18 hours a day with no rest time), and experienced psychological distress, verbal assault and physical abuse. Although Rukiya was a Muslim like her employers, they did not allow her to carry out her religious rites. She felt that even though she went over and above her responsibilities, the employers were neither satisfied nor grateful. They did not allow her to use the household telephone to communicate with her family in Ethiopia or pay her a salary that was reflective of her duties. The worst thing was the verbal and psychological abuse that Rukiya experienced from her employers. She knew domestic workers from other countries including India, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, and in her observation, the rights of migrant domestic workers from these Asian countries do not get as violated as those of Ethiopian domestic workers. For instance, these Asian nationals earned more than their Ethiopian counterparts for the same daily labour, according to Rukiya. The main reason for this, she said, is that Asian governments provide professional training and create awareness about labour migration to the Middle East countries for domestic workers, and as a result, they know their rights and responsibilities. On the other hand, few migrant Ethiopian domestic workers receive pre-departure training.

As a result of the difficult experiences in Kuwait, Rukiya decided to return to Ethiopia and she arrived home after five years away, in September 2017. Her employers facilitated her travel back to Ethiopia. Rukiya admits that while life in Kuwait did not go as expected, she is glad that she migrated and worked to support her family. Her family has had their livelihood improved and with her support, her younger brother is able to go to school. She also built a house for the family. At the time of her return to Ethiopia, she had only saved up 11,000 Ethiopian Birr from what was left after sending money to her family and paying the broker in Kuwait. As she did not have a bank account in Ethiopia, the 11,000.00 birr was cash in hand. At the time of the interview, Rukiya was working on establishing her own small business. She had no plans to go back to the Middle East.

She recommends that the government of Ethiopia should put in place proper measures that protect the rights of migrant domestic workers, including creating awareness on safe migration and conducting professional, language and cultural training as part of the pre-departure training. Ethiopian recruitment agencies should monitor migrant domestic workers as part of their regular work, and in situations of abuse and exploitation, these agencies should provide assistance.

Tena, East Gojjam, Amhara Region

Tena lives in Debre Markos, a town in East Gojjam zone in Amhara Region. She is 25 years old and has two siblings - a sister and a brother. She lost her father at the age of one. Her mother has been a small-scale trader for many years, selling vegetables by the roadside and in market places. As a result of her family’s poverty, Tena started to work as a domestic worker for her aunt at the age of

11. She was not paid a salary but her aunt supported her to continue with her education. Tena speaks Amharic and Arabic fluently and some English.

Once she completed her education, Tena started working for the government as a secretary and office administrator. Following a spell of illness, Tena went back to the office to find that she had lost her job. This was her motivation to seek employment in the Middle East, and eventually got an opportunity to work for a family in Beirut, Lebanon as a domestic worker.

Life in Lebanon was not good for Tena. Among other difficulties, she did not receive appropriate food. Her employers only allowed her to eat once a day during the night, and the food portions were often inadequate. In order to survive, Tena often ate raw tomatoes during the day. The work hours were long and often, her employer made her work for their relatives and neighbours. There were limitations on her rest time, and she, an Orthodox Christian, could not attend church or otherwise practise her religion. After working for her employer for a year, Tena fell down while cleaning the roof and injured her back. When the pain became unbearable, she went to a hospital for treatment and was forced to cover the medical expenses herself. However, she did not fully recover and as a result was forced to return to Ethiopia. Because her employer had not paid her for six months, Tena returned home empty-handed. Because of the health complications and lack of funds, life became more difficult upon her return. She was as isolated at home as she was abroad: nobody gave her financial support to cover her medical treatment and daily needs. She explained during our interview: "I was angry and sick. I hurt psychologically. I lost all hope. I preferred dying to living." After some time, Tena reached out to a local government official for help. While she did not receive help from the government, her village leaders selected her to participate in a CVM skills training and livelihoods project. Together with nine other girls and women, Tena received vocational training and 45,000 Birr ($1,552) as start-up capital for a group-based small-scale enterprise.

Tena eventually recovered and found a professional job as a data encoder in the town of Debre Markos in Amhara region, which paid her a salary of 2,500 Birr ($86) per month. In addition, she started her own laundry business, which she ran after office hours. Tena is now leading a satisfying life, and is actively involved in her community. As a member of the Domestic Workers Associations since 2018, Tena creates awareness in her community by sharing her experiences as a migrant domestic worker in Lebanon. At the time of the interview, she had started pursuing her first degree in Management Science.

Selamawit, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Twenty-eight-year-old Selamawit lives in Addis Ababa. An Orthodox Christian, she dropped out of school in Grade 10 due to economic reasons. In addition to fluent Amharic and Arabic, Selamawit speaks some English.

In 2010, when she was 19 years old, Selamawit followed her younger sister's footsteps and migrated to Qatar to work as a domestic worker with the hope of bettering her family's life. Her employment placement and flight to Qatar was facilitated by a private employment agency. In order to pay the fee charged by the agency, Selamawit's mother sold her gold jewellery.

Like many other Ethiopian migrant domestic workers in Qatar, Selamawit's living and working conditions were difficult: her employers assaulted her verbally, physically and sexually. At some point her employer even attempted to kill her. Her workload was quite heavy, and her day to day responsibilities included cleaning, food preparation and elderly care work. Selamawit did not receive her monthly salary on a regular basis, and on top of this, her employer deducted some amount from her salary to cover for the cost of her flight to and from Qatar.

After two years in Qatar, Selamawit got a similar job in Egypt where she worked for a family for three years until 2015 when she was placed in detention together with other undocumented Ethiopian migrants. While her working conditions in Egypt were not as difficult as Qatar, detention proved traumatic for her and other detainees, some of whom developed mental disorders as a result of this experience.

Upon her return to Ethiopia Selamawit trained as a hair dresser. While she would not be willing to return to Qatar to work as a domestic worker, she said she is willing to return to Egypt for work if an opportunity presented itself.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

As the stories of the research informants show, the everyday reality for a majority of Ethiopian female domestic migrants in the Middle East is mired with violence, abuse and exploitation. At the pre-migration stage, migrant girls and women face unnecessary difficulties starting from gathering funds to pay exorbitant migration-related expenses and the bureaucracies of obtaining passports and other travel documents. In countries of destination, migrant domestic workers' fate is more or less in the hands of their employers and overseas agents. In situations where domestic migrants find their living conditions to be intolerable, they take drastic measures such as escaping from their employers and joining prostitution rings or even committing suicide. The Ethiopian government has recently taken a number of measures to alleviate the difficulties migrant domestic workers face in the Middle East, and to assist the reintegration process for returnees. It however remains to be seen what impact these measures will have on the rights of Ethiopian girls and women who travel to the Middle East as domestic workers.

Key policy and programme recommendations

1. **Better data collection, reporting and tracking**
   - Migrants need to be counted and data need to be disaggregated by age, gender, religion and geographical location at origin and destination. The efforts of schools and other local programmes to keep track of how many adolescents are migrating, where and under what conditions need to be strengthened.
   - Data on migration need to be shared with all levels of government and provided in an accessible format so programming can become more evidence-based and outcomes can be effectively monitored and evaluated.
   - In order to strengthen the evidence base and improve the policy recommendations that grow out of it, international funding agencies would be advised to better fund in-depth qualitative fieldwork. The vast majority of research is based on a small handful of case studies that do not lend themselves easily to generalization.

2. **Promote safe, legal migration, in communities in which migration is already the norm as well as those in which it is rapidly expanding**
   - Ensure all parties – including in-school adolescents, out-of-school young people and parents – know how the legal migration system works, and how inexpensive it can be if used correctly. This must involve teaching people how to differentiate between the legitimate agents of legal PEAs and the illegal brokers that are increasingly used to recruit for them.
   - Involve religious leaders as well as women's and youth association leaders in awareness raising activities on migration.
   - Ensure the information presented to school children is part of the curriculum rather than being provided only where anti-trafficking clubs are active, so all school children are reached.

- Target the exam years (Grades 8, 10 and 12) when adolescents are more likely to be tempted to migrate, so girls have current information about the risks, as well as information on safe migration.
- Institute fair recruitment practices that eliminate discriminatory restrictions on the mobility of workers with a view to limiting the power of informal recruiters and ensuring the accountability of labour recruiters across the supply chain through proper regulation and effective monitoring and enforcement systems.

3. **Make sure families know about the risks and realities of migration, and how to maximize their daughters' safety.**
   - Awareness-raising activities need to be directed at communities where the rate of migration is rapidly increasing, not just at those communities in which migration is already endemic.
   - Girls and their parents need to know the reality of work conditions, including not just stories of terrible abuse (which appear to be widely known) but also the cultural differences, likely work hours etc. Parents could be reached through adult education classes, the development army and religious services, among others.
   - Potential migrants and their families need a training course to help them realistically evaluate the economic risks and benefits by comparing the costs of migration with salaries at destination.
   - Girls need to understand contract terms and their rights as workers in order to know when those rights have been violated. Make sure girls get access to practical and affordable training
   - Given the expanding ties between Ethiopia and the Middle East, Arabic should be integrated into school curricula, at least through basic literacy.
   - Girls need support to develop skills in problem solving and dispute resolution, with training that includes role plays on the specific issues they are likely to encounter.
   - Girls need basic financial literacy skills and advice on how to set up their own bank accounts so they can maintain control over their wages.

4. **Promote better safety-nets at destination**
   - Ensure regular monitoring of migrant girls while they are on assignment. While this could be done via a phone call, rather than an in-person visit, it is critical that monitors speak Amharic.
   - Middle Eastern families working with employment agencies to locate and hire migrant workers need training on basic human rights, as well as clarification about contract terms. This is an area where IOM and other human rights agencies could play an important role, as could local religious institutions.
   - Work towards ensuring migrants in destination countries has the time to develop their own social networks that can provide them with the emotional support they need in order to stay healthy and safe. Allowing girls one day off each week, rather than keeping them isolated for the duration of the contract period, could substantially improve their mental health, as well as give them yet another option to escape the worse abuses.
   - Promote social dialogue on labour migration between countries of origin, transit and destination.

- Strengthen the capacity of trade unions in and between countries of origin, transit and destination to extend maximum protection to workers across their migration journey.

5. Promote better return and reintegration

- Promote efforts to strengthen the financial and human capacity of local organizations and relevant government agencies that facilitate return and reintegration; also, of micro financing schemes to help deliver comprehensive legal, social, medical and employments services to returnees.

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