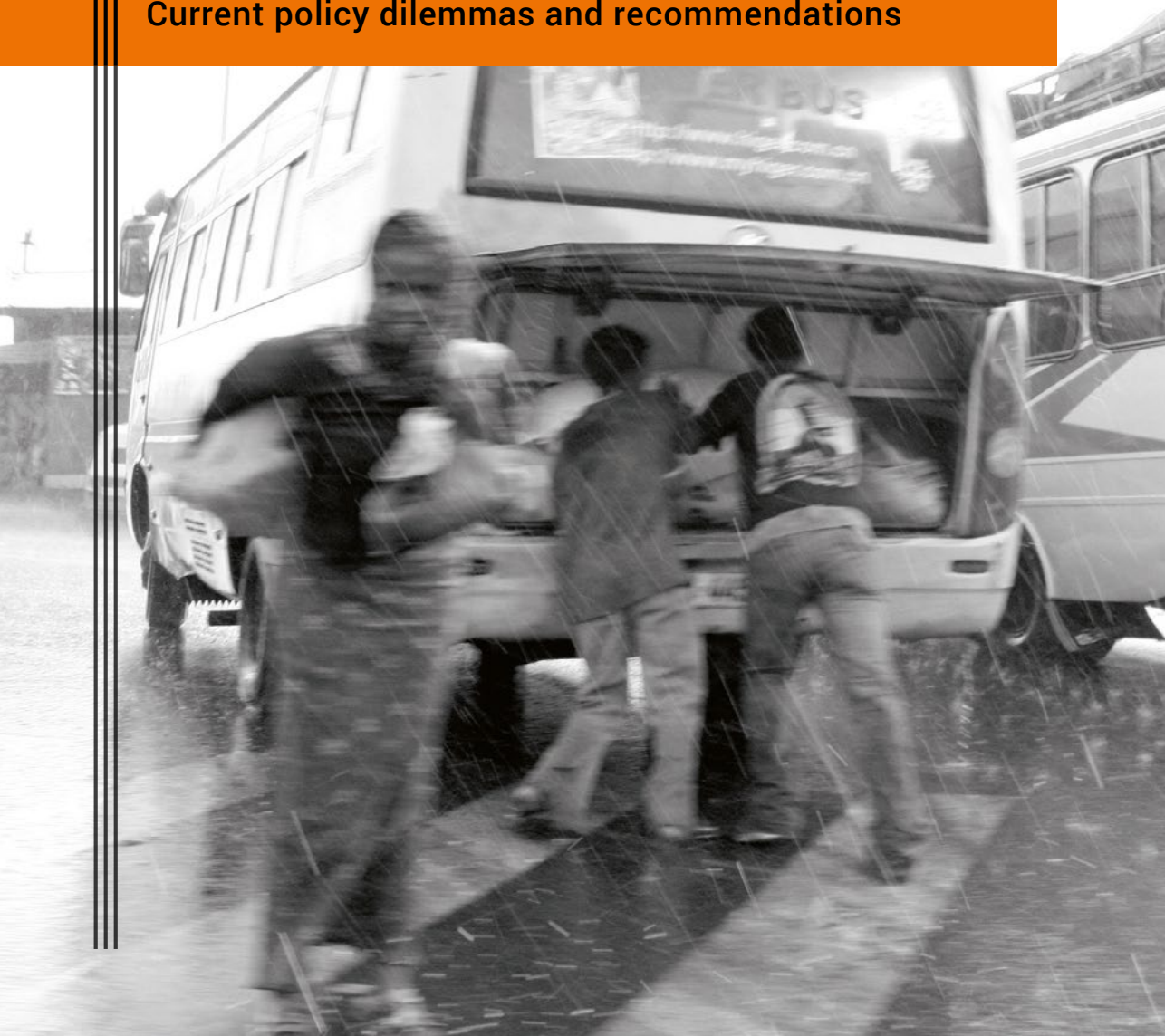


CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY AND MOBILITY AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ETHIOPIA

Current policy dilemmas and recommendations





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ABSTRACT

All over the world, people are feeling the effects of unprecedented, intensifying and in some instances irreversible climate change. Those growing up in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to these changes. This report focuses on how children and youth in Ethiopia, a country with well-established traditions of migration, experience and respond to severe climate-change impacts. The report draws attention to the complex ways in which climate change interacts with other factors driving migration. It shows that human mobility may constitute a viable adaptation strategy to slow-onset climate change, whereas extreme weather events tend to lead to significant human displacements, often with severe consequences for the ability of children and young people to establish viable futures. Based on available research and policy analysis, the report summarises existing knowledge on the relationships between vulnerability to climate change, child and youth mobility, and child- and youth-sensitive mechanisms of social protection with the aim of identifying the main policy dilemmas confronting policy-makers and practitioners.

BACKGROUND

It is widely accepted that climate change is contributing, directly and indirectly, to different forms of human mobility, including rural-urban and international migration, internal displacement and international refugee movements (Schewel and Bahir, 2019; Boas et al., 2019; Ferris, 2020; Sherbinin 2020). Most assessments of climate change's impact on human mobility, nevertheless, tackle the issue from the perspective and priorities of the general population, giving only scant attention to the relationship between climate change and child/youth mobility (Pankhurst et al., 2018; van der Gaag 2021). This report contributes to remedy this analytical bias by giving attention to how climate change affects children and youth's mobility patterns. There are several reasons for this. Children and youth constitute a growing proportion of the population in developing countries. A significant number of them grow up in areas vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change that affect their ability to survive, grow and thrive. UNICEF estimates that 50 million children currently are on the move, as migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees.¹ Yet, there are no legal frameworks targeting the specific needs of children and youth who move in response to climate change (Marcus et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2021).

Climate change is likely to exacerbate children and youth's vulnerability. Sometimes moving elsewhere provides an opportunity to overcome climate change related vulnerabilities. At other times insecure travel, transit and arrival conditions may create new vulnerabilities. For those unable to move, involuntary immobility is likely to become a major and more important problem. Global frameworks, such as the UN Conventions of the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the

Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees, and the Sustainable Development Goals, all engage with child and youth vulnerability at different levels. The protection of children and young people on the move in the Horn of Africa presents a huge challenge to child protection systems due to diversity in their mobility practices and experiences, including protracted displacement situations (UNICEF, 2017). However, while social protection has established itself as a core function of development policy and increasingly is considered an integral part of the response to child poverty and vulnerability in developing countries, existing migration policies tends to focus on preventing human mobility, including that of children and youth, particularly when traveling unaccompanied or being separated from a caregiver. This poses an additional policy dilemma.

Based on available research and policy analysis, this report summarises existing knowledge on the relationships between climate change vulnerability, child and youth mobility and child/youth sensitive social protection mechanisms with the aim to identify the main policy dilemmas confronting policymakers and practitioners.

METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in the report are based on a comprehensive desk study of available written sources and eleven key informant interviews with Danish and Ethiopian Red Cross staff in Addis Ababa and local offices in Sherka/Arisi of the Oromia Regional State and Debarq/North Gondar of the Amhara Regional State. It is further informed by the authors' extensive knowledge of Ethiopian migration patterns (Ayalew) and global migration patterns in response to poverty and conflict (Sørensen).

The desk study was carried out from late February to early August 2021 and involved the identification of 70 reports, articles and book chapters produced over the last 10-15 years. These have then been analysed for establishing the current knowledge base as well as the remaining knowledge gaps. An annotated bibliography containing the keywords, countries covered and abstracts of these publications supplements the report. The bibliography can be accessed at www.diis.dk from a link in the online version of this report.

The key informant interviews in Ethiopia were carried out by Melake Mhired, PhD candidate, Department of Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University, under the supervision of Ayalew. Interviews were conducted with Danish and Ethiopian Red Cross senior programme officers, planning psychological support officers, as well as with project coordinators, livelihood officers and psychological support field officers in Addis Ababa, Arisi and North Gondar. Interviews were conducted during August 2021.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing conflict in Ethiopia, only a limited number of key informant interviews could be carried out, six in person, and five online. Semi-structured interview guides were developed and translated into local languages. Each interview was transcribed and translated into English. Key themes that reflect the experiences, practices and aims of Red Cross engagement with climate change vulnerability, children and youth's mobility responses, and protection mechanisms were then identified and organised. No interviews with children and youth were carried out. Although such interviews would have enriched the report considerably – and their absence constitutes a significant limitation – we hope that the report's findings provide helpful background information for future feasibility studies and impact assessments.

CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY AND MOBILITY

People have always responded to changes in resource availability and ecosystem services with mobility. Over the past years, a consensus that climate change will play an increasing role in future human mobility has been established. However, establishing a direct causal relationship between adverse climate change effects and mobility has proven difficult. As convincingly argued by Boas, Farbotko and Adams in their critical review of common climate migration myths, whether climate change has a multiplier, additive or synergistic effect is hard to determine due to the uneven impact of climate change and the different ways people and societies respond to that change. What has been determined with slightly higher certainty is climate change being a 'risk modifier' through interaction with other mediating factors, such as low adaptive capacity, growing inequality, population growth, weak governance, natural hazards and conflicts and violence, creating complex pathways that influence both mobility and immobility in any given location (Boas et al., 2019).

Interviews with Ethiopian Red Cross staff in Sherka/Arisi of the Oromiya Regional State and Debarq/North Gondar of the Amhara Regional State in Ethiopia confirm this view. An Ethiopian Red Cross livelihood officer in Debarq of the Amhara region connects the intersection of vulnerabilities to climate change with other migration driving factors such as poverty, low adaptation capacity, environmental degradations and shortage of agricultural lands in rural villages in Ethiopia in the following way:

...In our project sites there is deep poverty. In the lowlands people depend on small holder agriculture and raising cattle. Rainfall variabilities (sometimes flooding and other times shortage of raining season) cause drought and crop failure; many cattle die from water shortage leading to the impoverishment of communities and people get starved. In the area, land is covered with rugged mountains and is stony, which is naturally susceptible to soil erosion and land degradation particularly whenever there is a high amount of rainfall. There is food insecurity and children suffer from malnourishment... Many households depend on Safety Net programmes and food aid. However, the Safety Net programme reaches only a small number of families... Families, therefore, supplement household income by sending young members of the household, including children, to urban areas or abroad as labour migrants so as to get remittances... Many households have a large family size, as much as eight, while they have very little land.

Human mobility is one of various adaptation strategies to the adverse effects of slow onset climate change. Extreme weather events, on the other hand, are known to lead to significant displacement, and changes in their frequency are likely to amplify displacement-related challenges. But not everyone has the ability or resources needed to move, among them the most marginalised and vulnerable, for the simple fact that mobility requires both financial resources and social capital. And even those who move, among them children and youth that see no future in their local environments, remain vulnerable to climate change impacts at destinations.

At the same time, the notion that temporary migration serves as a safety valve and that climate change will affect most strongly migration rates in developing countries is difficult to sustain with empirical evidence. Research conducted in East Africa and Northern Ethiopia (Morrissey, 2012) indicates that mobility represents a strategic livelihood option that is enacted only when the social, economic and political contexts structuring other livelihood options allows. Several key informants reach a similar conclusion.

Ethiopian Red Cross staff in Arsi Zone of Oromiya Regional State find that many places in Arsi of Oromiya become migration hotspots for multiple reasons. The major drivers of migration in this region are related to a combination of economic and environmental deprivation. Staff members observe that agriculture increasingly ceases to be a viable source of living. This is because the farming land gradually loses its productivity as the lowland areas persistently are affected by environmental disasters such as drought and land degradation. These two problems are gradually jeopardising the productivity of the agricultural sector in which almost all the communities are engaged to sustain their livelihood. Reduction in agricultural and livestock production increasingly becomes the concern of the communities, particularly for those who live in lowland areas of the region. Lowland areas progressively become unsuitable places to live in and produce as they are frequently prone to environmental disasters. People in these places are often suffering from scarcity of pasture for their livestock, aridity, soil infertility, rainfall variability, pandemics that affect their livestock and drought. A Danish Red Cross livelihood officer stated: 'This year, as there was a shortage of rainfall in the autumn, they had lost the major production season. This shortage of rainfall doesn't only touch the agricultural production on the land, the local population also suffers from a shortage of pasture for their livestock.' These conditions, then, form the backdrop to why youth are leaving the area, initially for nearby towns and subsequently abroad.

Households may actively encourage young members of the family to migrate to compensate for livelihood loss via remittances. This practice may be most prevalent among families with many children and the difficulties associated with feeding them all. Encouraging their children to migrate may be the only available option. Even if not encouraged, children and youth may themselves find that migration holds better future prospects. The same livelihood officer further explained: 'Apart from this, the area also lacks basic services such as quality education, health facilities, pure drinking water and so on and there is high rate of school dropout by children and youth aspiring to migrate to towns in Ethiopia or outside the country. The other driver of migration is peer pressure. Those people who have experienced the good sides of migration often encourage others to migrate.'

This points to the complex conditions of mobility and the importance of including historical data for understanding the context-specific nature of contemporary climate change-mobility relationships. It also indicates that mobility may be a social response to environmental stress because of the socioeconomic and political context in which this stress occurs, rather than being a direct response to climate change only.

Mobility responses to climate change are manifold and must be approached as such. They include: temporary or more permanent movements from rural to other rural or urban areas; internal displacement; state-governed relocation schemes; and short- and long-term international migration (to neighbouring countries or further afield), which may be followed by voluntary, assisted or forced return – in the latter case often leading to remigration, particularly among young migrants.

Understanding the relationship between current and future climate change and human mobility requires greater attention to the different dimensions of vulnerability that children and youth face in rural and urban areas.

CLIMATE AND MOBILITY JUSTICE

A better understanding of climate change impacts and the inequitable vulnerabilities experienced by children and youth can be reached by applying the concept of climate justice. Defining the environment as where people live, grow and develop aspirations for future lives directs attention to the ways in which climate change, together with other drivers, threatens and disproportionately affects vulnerable children and youth.

Child and youth mobilities and displacements are not separable from climate change, but are simultaneously, as suggested by Mimi Sheller (2018), intertwined with the uneven distribution of access to vital resources such as water, food and shelter; a life free of violence (including intra-familial violence); and uneven access to mobility. The concept of mobility justice offers a new way to imagine more sustainable livelihoods and socially just mobility that positions climate change transitions in the wider context of macro level uneven mobility regimes, meso level social protection schemes, and micro level mobility at the bio-political scale, inflicted by age, gender, race, ethnicity and class.





CHILD AND YOUTH MOBILITY IN ETHIOPIA: PROTECTION CHALLENGES

Ethiopia's 'unusual combination of displacement causes, types, magnitudes and outcomes' has reconstituted the social fabric of communities throughout the country (Cernea, 2009:xxv). Mobility experiences include those historically related to pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihood strategies and those occasioned by conflict, disasters and development, the latter due to persistent high poverty levels as well as the extraordinary role the state has assumed in displacement and relocation processes (Hammond, 2011). Mobility patterns are commonly approached as either internal or international. These are further divided into so-called 'forced' and 'voluntary' movements, although the level of force behind each may be difficult to establish. A comprehensive description of forms of Ethiopian mobility is beyond this report. In the following only the main trends of relevance to child and youth mobility are described.

INTERNAL MOBILITY


Internal mobility includes rural-urban migration, to a lesser extent urban-rural migration and internal displacement. Rural-rural mobility has historically been the most common form of internal mobility in Ethiopia, whether for access to land, work or marriage. Only recently has rural-urban migration replaced mobility between rural areas as the most common internal mobility trajectory. Among the four forms of internal migration (rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural, and urban to urban), the most frequent mobility form is currently from rural to urban areas (32.2 percent), while the least frequent form is urban to rural (13.7 percent). Women tend to be overrepresented in rural to urban migration, while the opposite is the case for the male population (CSA, 2021).

According to the Central Statistics Agency Report 2021, 17.1 percent of the Ethiopian population (not including the Tigray region) are internal migrants or IDPs.

MOBILITY AND ID-ENTITY

In Ethiopia, internal mobility is not formally restricted. It is nevertheless complicated by the difficulty of obtaining urban ID cards and - related to this - difficulties in accessing certain public services. Tsegay and Lichtfield (2019) points to a direct relation between conflict and a current decline in internal labour mobility, with conflict forcing many internal migrants to return to their village to avoid risk of attack. Covid-19 movement restrictions are likely to have exacerbated this trend.

Contrary to internal migration rates, Ethiopian internal displacements rates are relatively high. In 2018 and 2019 Ethiopia had one of the largest internally displaced populations in the world, with an estimated 3.19 million IDPs, of which one third were related to climate change impacts such as flooding, drought and landslides. Sixty-five percent of the IDPs were children and youth below the age of 25 years (OCHA 2019, 2020). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported a total of 633,000 Ethiopians displaced by disasters and 2,060,000 by conflict and violence as of 31 December 2020², of which over half were children³. While some of these may have returned to their homes, new displacements due to the ongoing conflict in Tigray and the conflict's expansion into the Amhara and Afar regions have contributed to increasing the number of IDPs. The Ethiopian government confirms that by September 2021 an additional half a million people, including children and women, were displaced from the Amhara and Afar regions due to the spread of conflict in northern Ethiopia.



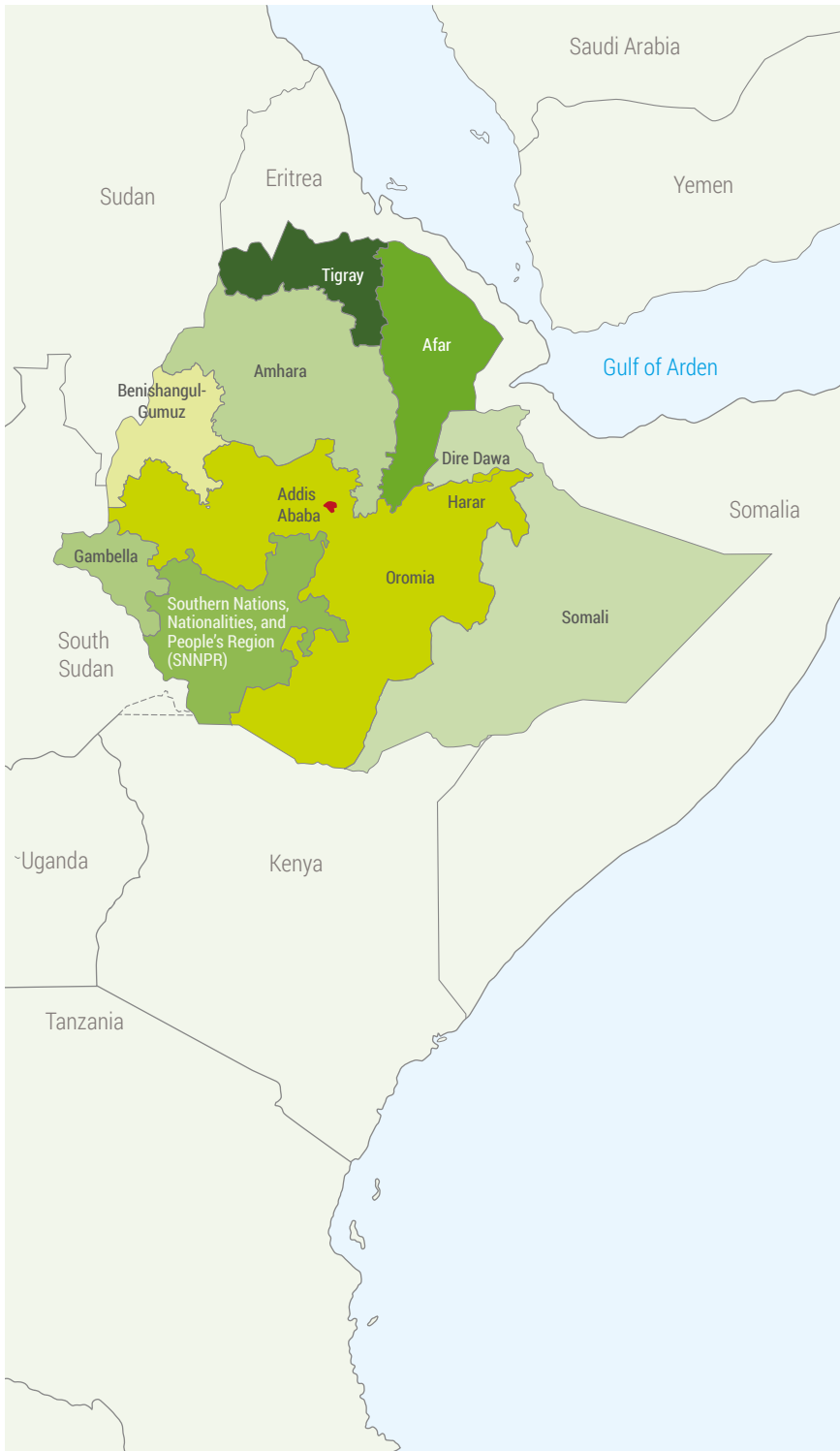
The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM 2020) estimates that 60 percent of Ethiopia's IDPs are displaced due to conflict, while some 30 percent are displaced due to environmental factors. This points to the importance of including the cross-cutting issue of climate change adaptation to matters pertaining to IDPs in Ethiopia.

INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

In terms of international mobility, Ethiopia is a country of origin, transit and destination for mixed migration flows in the region. The country has a long-standing history of hosting refugees and allows humanitarian access and protection to people seeking asylum on its territory. By 31 August 2021, UNHCR had registered a total of 795,108 refugees in Ethiopia, the majority from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea.⁴ Over half of these are children.⁵

International migration flows from Ethiopia have a long history, rooted in religious and trade relations with the Arabian Peninsula, flight from political persecution to neighbouring countries, and education and high- and low-skilled migration to destinations across Africa, the Middle East, North America and Europe (Kuschminder et al., 2018). While these flows have continued to grow in volume, composition and diversity of destinations, the average international migration rate of Ethiopia remains relatively low when compared to other African countries.

Ethiopia, regional states



An estimated 700,000 Ethiopians migrate annually due to social, economic, environmental and political factors. About 70 percent are young women and men between the ages of 16 and 24 years (Ayalew Mengiste, 2021). International migration to the Middle East primarily involves young women seeking employment in the domestic sector. Population growth coupled with high rates of youth unemployment, youth landlessness and pressure to provide for family members by sending remittances provide strong push factors. The presence of state and private brokers and human smugglers facilitates the flow. Ethiopian migration to South Africa primarily involves young men seeking employment in the informal sector. A relatively open South African migration and refugee policy allows Ethiopians to apply for asylum once they arrive and remain in the country until a decision is given. South Africa also serves as a transit country for migration to North America and Europe. Ethiopian migration to South Africa is primarily irregular.

CHILD AND YOUTH MIGRATION: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

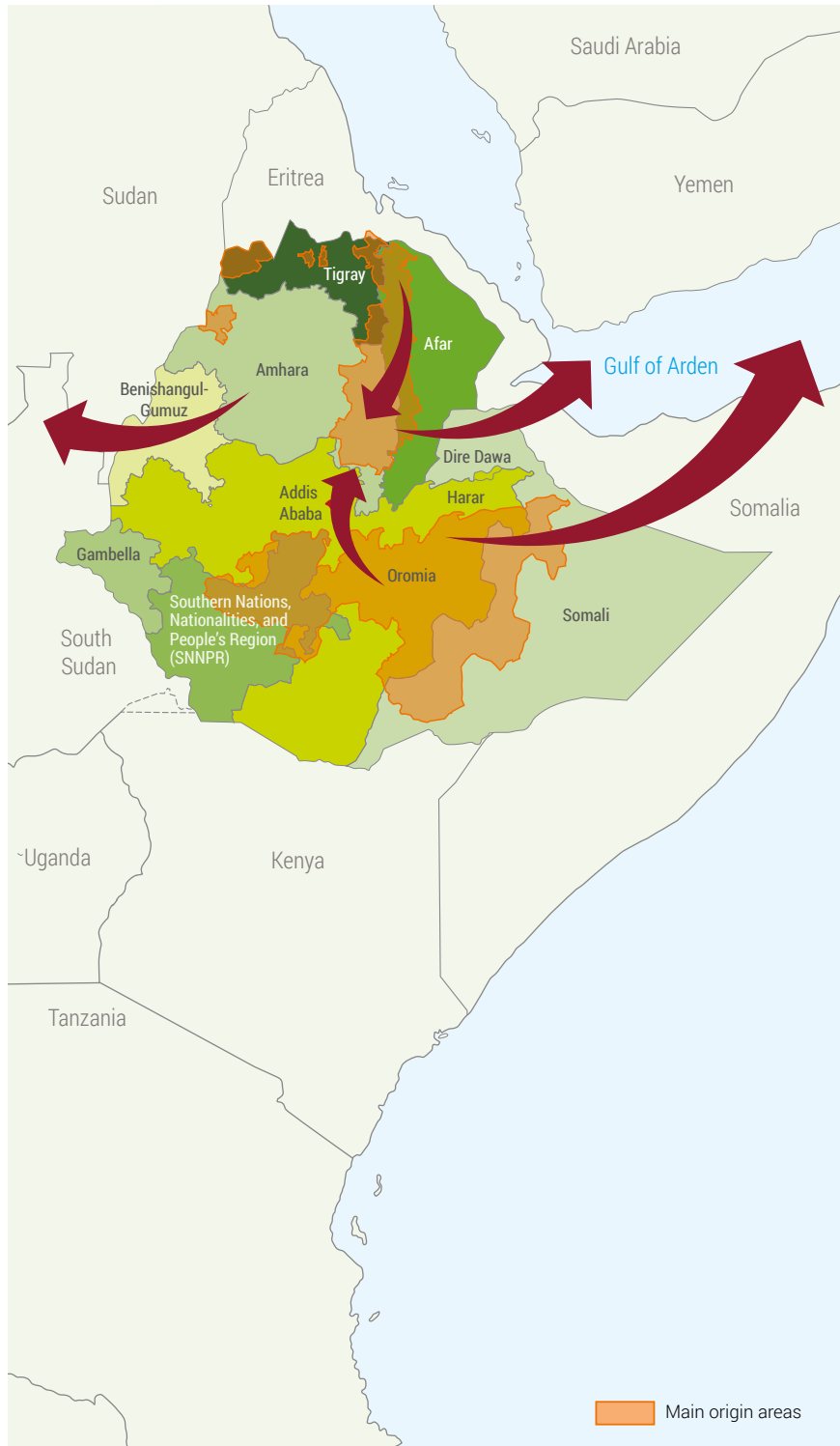
Ethiopia is a source, transit and destination country for children and youth on the move, including internally displaced children, child refugees, asylum seekers and returnees.

The internal migration of children and youth is related to reductions in land for farming, population growth and climate challenges, which have forced many to venture to the cities in search of work to supplement their family's income. In some cases, this movement is seasonal: children and youth go to urban areas during school holidays or during non-productive seasons as means of livelihood diversification and return back to their home at agricultural production season. In other cases, their movement is more long-term. In both cases migration is often deeply embedded within families and communities as a key coping strategy providing opportunities but also huge risks.

Key informants consistently pointed to the combined impact of poverty, family breakdown and/or the death of parents, family violence, early marriage, the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and peer influence as additional drivers behind the movement from rural to urban areas for children and young people in Ethiopia.

Children and youth on the move face multiple challenges. Particularly the children displaced to urban areas and living on the streets are at high risk of violence and abuse. They are constantly vulnerable to violent assaults and abuses both from

Main Ethiopian migration routes



Source: Elaboration based on Ayalew Mengiste 2021.

other people and groups living on the street and from the authorities who often chase them away from the areas where they congregate and seek shelter. This is particularly the case for younger children, who in order to protect themselves often form groups and keep watch during the night to avoid assaults. Girls living on the streets are at higher risk of sexual assaults and abuses. The Red Cross project coordinator at the headquarters in Addis Ababa described the complexity of the situation:

Our studies show that women and girls displaced to urban streets spend on average 33 percent of their income on shelter, while men only spend 5.5 percent. They are also facing a heightened risk of being exploited for sex work, which often is linked with sexual abuses and assaults. Girls primarily migrate to Addis Ababa to work as domestic workers and many are, through this work, subjected to sexual assaults or forced into sex work.

For boys, there are significant risks associated with taking on day labour jobs, which together with begging is their predominant source of livelihood. The vast majority of them are unsatisfied with their working conditions largely because of the abuses, frequent punishments and hazardous working conditions. Due to the unavailability of stable livelihood opportunities, children displaced to and living on the streets of cities have difficulties meeting their nutrition needs. The food available to the children is often obtained through begging for leftovers from restaurants or from going through the trash which constitutes a health hazard as the food often contains plastic or other dangerous materials.

Domestic workers in Addis Ababa include numerous girls as young as 10 years old. Despite their large numbers, they remain largely invisible and therefore highly vulnerable to abuse (Erulkar and Mekbib, 2007). The fact that some have fled to the city to escape early marriage or abusive family relationships attests to their agency, without necessarily lowering the risk for further abuse (Erulkar et al., 2006).

Children displaced to urban areas and living on the streets are deprived of health service access and opportunities as they are not formally registered and lack residence ID. Few children migrating to Addis Ababa are successful in finding permanent employment opportunities that enable them to meet their basic needs, let alone send money back to their families. The majority of the boys living on the

streets engages in begging, daily labour or tries to make a living through shoe shining or other small businesses. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) provides some support to income-generating activities, but this support is limited in scope and only targets groups. A DRC study shows that additionally, access to credit is considered a key impediment for many to start a business with interest rates being high (around 17 percent) and the urban destitute rarely able to access credit at any rate (DRC, 2019). Many street children cannot afford the materials for schools and for obvious livelihood reasons give preference to working over attending school. The harsh living conditions facing children and youth often leads to serious mental health problems.

There are several barriers to interventions aimed at reunifying children with their immediate or extended family or to find alternative care arrangements, such as foster care or adoption. The expectation that the children should return with money for the family is often a key impediment and cause for shame. For girls who have been abused, the risk of being subjected to significant stigma upon return to their home communities is an additional factor. Some older children, who have lived a longer period on the streets, may for different reasons not want to reunite with their families or be placed in alternative care. Furthermore, some children have adopted life on the streets as an identity, have their social network support structures there, and are unwilling to give this up. As a result, reunification with families or relatives or placement in alternative care is not a viable or appropriate solution for all children, and some require support to move to independent living, while others should be assisted to live a safer life on the streets.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A key gap in knowledge on child and youth mobility in Ethiopia is that general research mainly has approached adults' migration for employment, while studies targeting children and/or youth mostly have focused on child trafficking and the vulnerabilities associated with human trafficking in general. However, a considerable proportion of current internal migration involves children as young as 13 years old, who while moving without a caretaker are at risk of trafficking, but not necessarily are trafficked. About 70 percent of current international migration involves young men and women between the ages of 16 and 24 years, who in the lack of safe, regular and orderly pathways turn to high-risk journeys facilitated by human smugglers over land and sea routes. The danger of these journeys has raised

concern over the spread of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, not only because of their impact on migrants' rights and safety, but also because they facilitate irregular migration to Europe.

Children and youth moving abroad irregularly experience challenges during the migration process. Underlying risk factors of deprivation, abuses and exclusions that may have led children and youth to leave their homes in the first place may be perpetuated while they are en route, in destinations, during deportations as well as upon return to Ethiopia. There are multiple risk factors for children and youth on the move, including violence, deaths and disappearances. Children and youth migrating along the routes to the Middle East, South Africa and Europe have confirmed exposure to life-threatening risks, including traveling through hostile environments (seas, dense forests, mountains, deserts, unstable and war-torn regions along Yemeni-Saudi borders, and fortified borders). Other reported causes of suffering involve gender-based violence, physical hardship, accidents involving motor vehicles, drowning of boats in the Red Sea, deprivation, malicious neglect or abusive practices by smugglers, torture by traffickers and other criminals for ransom, banditry attacks and violent acts by state officials while in detention and across borders (UNICEF, 2020b).

O'Connell Davidson (2011, 2013), nevertheless, points to a substantive gap between states' spoken commitment to children's rights and their lived experience. The gap is evidenced by intense public and policy concern with the suffering of trafficked children coupled with a relative lack of interest in the multiple other ways child migrants suffer, in particular as a result of migration policy enforcement. This suggests a need for a shift in focus from 'the vulnerability of children on the move' to also include analysis of 'the vulnerabilities produced by migration policy'.

For this reason, assuming that children and young migrants simply and always are prone to become victims of human trafficking would be a mistake. Many are active agents in their own lives and often seek to construct protective environments through their own decision making, actions and the relations established with the surrounding community, fellow travellers or children and youth in the same situation at destination. When traveling undocumented, children and youth often seek protection off the official radar, including through networks of friends and human smugglers, in the latter case often with awareness of the risks this may bring.

FORCED RETURNS

Irregular child and youth migrants also experience sudden mass deportations from destinations, some after prolonged detention experiences, known to have a profound negative impact on their well-being (Corlett et al., 2012). Deported children and youth experience multiple forms of challenges to reintegrate socially and economically in their hometowns or villages of origin. For many returnees, the conditions of post-deportation life in countries of origin are depressing. The feeling of uncertainty, suspension, and purposelessness, as well as a sense of 'having no destiny' haunt the life of 'failed return migrants' (Khosravi, 2018). Many Ethiopian returnee children and youth from the Middle East and Gulf States have passed through ordeals and abusive conditions and are returned with serious mental illness and trauma to Ethiopia (de Regt and Tafesse, 2016). Due to a combination of resource and capacity shortages, few reintegration programmes are successful, as evidenced by high remigration attempts among young Ethiopian returnees. An Ethiopian Red Cross programme officer in Oromiya Region described these resource limitations by pointing out how in a single project site 5,000 returnees registered for psychosocial and livelihood supports. However, the Red Cross could only support 300 returnees due to resource limitations.

An overly strong focus on vulnerability among children and youth, both in terms of climate change and migration related vulnerability, can lead to their portrayal as passive victims only. A more balanced approach might be to establish what it means to be young in a country emerging from a context of protracted crisis, how this relates to children and youth's climate change adaptation strategies (Hub, 2020) and mobility aspirations (Belloni, 2020), and as such pay attention to the active role they play in trying to construct a better future themselves. At the same time – and despite the evidence pointing to climate change related internal and international mobility among children and youth, the likelihood of involuntary mobility should not be overlooked (Horwood, 2020). Taken together, this would facilitate the development of new child- and youth-centred responses to climate change that can contribute to household and community resilience.





**AVAILABLE PROTECTION
MECHANISMS**

LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

The government of Ethiopia has introduced various policy, institutional and legal frameworks to minimise vulnerabilities to climate change, manage displacement and protect children and youth exposed to risks and violent conditions. The major policies, programmes and protection schemes include: the National Child Policy, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), the Urban Productive Safety Net's Project (UPSNP), the National Social Protection Policy of Ethiopia, the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE), the Urban Development Policy, the Job Creation Strategy, the Household Asset Building Programmes, and the National Adaptation Plan of Ethiopia (NAP-ETH), as well as the 2019 Durable Solutions Initiative for IDPs. Additionally, several institutions are mandated to deal with child protections and climate change and disaster managements in Ethiopia. The major ones are the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Peace, Disaster and Risk Management Agency (DRMA), the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, and the Attorney General Office.

Article 36 (1) of the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution stipulates a wide range of child rights: The right to life, to know and be cared for by parents or legal guardians, not to be subjected to exploitative practices, neither be required nor permitted to perform work which may be harmful to their education, health, or well-being, and to be free of corporal punishment or cruel and inhuman treatment in schools or other institutions responsible for the care of children. Children vulnerable to a broad range of risk thus have the right to protection, including from risks stemming from climate change related disasters and displacements.

The New Refugee Proclamation No. 1110/2019, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and the National Refugee Child Protection Strategy (2017-2019) detail the rights of displaced persons and refugees, including the right to have access to basic services such as education and health facilities, the right to work, and protection from all kinds of natural and man-made violence and risks.

The Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178/2020 and the National Strategy and Action Plan to end Harmful Traditional Practices and end Child Marriage are also initiatives and legal frameworks relevant to protect the rights of forced migrants and children on the move. Proclamation No. 1178/2020 strives to implement Article 18 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia that prohibits human trafficking in any form.

Ethiopia has additionally ratified relevant regional and global child protection legal instruments, namely the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the ILO Convention No. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) further pledging to prevent and eradicate child labour and exploitation, the African Union Child Convention, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2009) and the Global Compact on Refugees and Migrants 2018. These regional and global instruments require parties to develop context specific policy and institutional frameworks to protect children and young people forcibly displaced by disasters, including those stemming from climate change.

OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

Major policies, programmes and protection schemes include the National Child Policy, the mentioned PSNP and UPSNP Programmes), the National Social Protection Policy of Ethiopia, The Climate Resilient Green Economy Policy (CRGE), the Urban Development Policy, the Job Creation Strategy, the Household Asset Building Programme, and the National Adaptation Plan of Ethiopia (NAP-ETH), as well as the 2019 Durable Solutions Initiative for IDPs.

The Social Protection Policy of 2014 envisions a coordinated protective measure for those susceptible to serious vulnerability due to natural and man-made risks. It establishes multifaceted social insurance mechanisms to prevent exposure to risks, strengthen earnings and improve livelihoods of citizens, employment opportunities and living conditions, and provide legal protection and support for those vulnerable to abuse and violence. The policy targets victims of human trafficking, children under difficult circumstances, repatriated emigrants and families under difficult circumstances as well as vulnerable social groups that are eligible for state welfare supports. UPSNP and PSNP strive to mitigate food insecurity and reduce climate related rural vulnerability via household asset building, cash transfers, agricultural extension services, technology transfer, irrigation and water harvesting schemes. Both programmes give priority to support poor and women household heads with children.

Ethiopia has developed a Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy and mainstreamed it into the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTPII) and now (2021) the Ten Years Development and Prosperity Plan. The CRGE strategy details climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, goals and impacts resilient to climate change. More specifically, the National Adaptation Plan of Ethiopia (NAP-ETH) aims to strengthen holistic integration of climate change adaptation in Ethiopia's long-term development pathways. The adaptation options in goals 8 and 16 target: (1) building social protection and livelihood options of vulnerable people—giving special emphasis to women, children and impoverished communities by putting in place safety net schemes, supporting asset creation, improving access to credit, promoting livelihood diversification and arranging voluntary resettlement/migration; (2) improving early warning systems to enhance planning for disaster and climate risk management; reinforce early warning systems related to both quick and slow onset disasters; and install knowledge management system, climate information exchange systems and enhanced networking capabilities, which are all vital for effective data sharing and decision making. The UN-led 2019 Durable Solutions Initiative for IDPs strives to have coordinated effort between international agencies, donors and government organisations to have legal, policy, institutional and operational platforms in addressing IDPs management challenges in Ethiopia. However, this has not yet been implemented.

GAPS IN PROTECTION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Despite the magnitude in laws, policies and protection frameworks, children and youth on the move (IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers, street children and labour migrants) continue to experience multiple forms of violence and exploitations before, during and after migration, both within Ethiopia and along the migration routes, since the existing protection systems hardly reach these groups. Displaced, trafficked and smuggled children and youth remain the most vulnerable categories of all migrants due to weak coordination mechanisms among stakeholders and a shortage of resources and capacity to implement policies and laws DRC 2019 (Ayalew Mengiste, 2021).

An Ethiopian Red Cross livelihood officer for assistance and resilience for vulnerable returnees and their communities project in Oromiya Regional State explained the challenges as follows:

At the national level there are policies, laws and practices about child and youth protections and management of returnees. These policies are being implemented through job creation activities, legal support activities, livelihood support, and so on. However, these practices have been less disseminated and communicated at zonal and district governance structures. People who are working at these administration levels don't know these policies, laws and practices. There is also a shortage of financial resources or loan opportunities to provide needed supports for returnee children and youth at the lower levels of administration, particularly in remote villages and rural areas.

In Debarq, Amhara Region, a programme coordinator pointed to the following organisational challenges:

There are several government organs, such as Bureau of Children, Youth and Women, Bureau of Labour Affairs, courts and the police, who all are directly responsible for the protection from violence, labour exploitation and being trafficked as well as for displaced and moving children. Nevertheless, given the depth of the problems, the government efforts are insignificant. The government is short of resources and commitment and does not possess the capacity/skills needed to solve the problems. Some bureaus are only present at regional and zone levels, while the problems are in the villages and localities where there is no government structure to prevent the child problems in the source areas. There are laws, regulations and policies regarding trafficking, yes, but they are toothless as there are no implementation capacities for state organisations.

Policies and laws related to child protection and adaptation to climate change are not harmonised and dispersed in different sectoral agencies and ministries. Neither do they fully address children's needs. For example, the PSNP and UPSNP target households but not children, who are most affected by climate change vulnerabilities such as water shortages in rural areas, which increases burden on child labour as they move long distances to get pasture and water for cattle or camel in pastoral areas of Ethiopia. The labour burden pushes children to drop out of schools and

often forces them to migrate. Crop failure and livelihood distractions by extreme weather events lead to malnourishment which in turn results in health impediments and low performance in school. Other more serious problems of the UPSNP and PSNP were noted by a key informant: 'On the one hand these programmes are limited in scope to reach all needed families. On the other hand they create a form of "dependency syndrome" among many rural families as they remain dependent on food aid instead of building resilience capacities to shocks as the programme envisaged.' Whether poor people develop 'dependency syndrome' due to being deprived of access to adequate resources across generations remains an open question.

Children and youth on the move or in IDP camps remain exposed to violent conditions and their basic needs are not yet sufficiently met. Unlike the case with refugee and asylum matters, Ethiopia's legal and policy framework, as well as its institutional management approach, is somewhat weak regarding IDPs and no national laws comprehensively addresses IDP issues. Despite the adoption of two Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) guiding documents, developed with UN partnership, institutional responsibility and leadership is largely focused along the lines of a disaster response approach with no agency or cross-agency structure empowered to manage internal displacement in all its facets that could ensure implementation of durable solutions, full protection of IDP rights, as well as effective advocacy for IDPs within government policy deliberations. The existing policies and legal frameworks do not fully address specific vulnerabilities of children exposed to climate change, less so their climate change related forced mobility and immobility. There is no clear strategy to protect children before, during and after displacement. On the international stage, at the continental level, the primary guiding policy is the African Union's Kampala Convention which binds its ratifiers to certain standards and practices, and which would require focused national leadership to ensure adherence and to guide and ensure domestication of its provisions. As of May 2021, Ethiopia's Parliament has ratified the convention; however, it has not yet been officially implemented with the AU and domestication actions are not yet moving forward. Regarding IDPs, there is a lack of clarity as to which government agency oversees the IDP issue as a whole. It is clear that the disaster or emergency response is with the DRMA, but overall IDPs protection, planning and advocacy responsibilities remain unspecified in legislation or regulation.

In sum, the IDP issue is of special concern as the institutional management framework remains weak. While the DRMA is effective in dealing with the emergency response aspects of internal displacement, it is not providing comprehensive solutions generally and no specific programmes or laws are available to better protect IDP children. This calls for an institutional review of the oversight of IDP issues, including the plight of children and youth.





**POLICY DILEMMAS:
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

All over the world, children and youth are feeling the effects of unprecedented, intensifying and in some instances even irreversible climate change. Those growing up in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to these changes. With uncertain prospects, further nurtured by the August 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, some will be forced to relocate, others will be trapped and unable to move, while yet others may adapt to climate change by moving elsewhere. Those most probably staying where they are - because they cannot overcome the challenges posed by climate change and unequal access to both natural resources and mobility - may face conditions that threaten their ability to thrive, grow and progress through their life course. This severely affects human development prospects. The report has focused on how children and youth in Ethiopia - a country severely impacted by climate change - cope with poverty and the effects of worsening environmental conditions. The report has further highlighted how children and youth of different genders, and living in different places and situations, engage in a variety of mobility practices. Finally, the report has reviewed what is available in terms of protection mechanisms.

Ethiopia is a poor country with established rural-urban and international migration traditions. What that means for the aspirations of children and youth growing up under rapid and significant climatic changes needs further exploration. A second related question is whether and how a combination of climate change directed adaptation interventions and social protection schemes can shape and influence child and youth mobility within the country and beyond. By summarising existing knowledge, several important issues and policy dilemmas to consider in future analysis are identified:

1. Vulnerability to climate change interacts with other migration driving factors. Besides poverty, environmental degradation, land shortage and limited climate change adaptation capacity, established migration traditions, family pressure and peer encouragement are important drivers to consider. Albeit a more nuanced understanding of such intersections is emerging, the multicausal nature of population mobility in general, and child/youth mobility in particular, present essential policy dilemmas.

2. While human mobility may constitute a viable adaptation strategy to slow onset climate change, extreme weather events – a derivative effect of climate change - tend to lead to significant human displacement. Climate change and mobility are usually dealt with in different policy arenas. So are so-called 'voluntary' migration and 'forced' displacements. How to balance these in the area of child and youth mobility constitutes a second policy dilemma, not least due to the vulnerabilities produced by restrictive migration policy.
3. Widely shared concern about the vulnerability of children and youth on the move is not adequately addressed in existing social protection frameworks that tend to target adults or children within families. Childhood not necessarily fixed within stable family structures presents a final policy challenge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As highlighted by UNICEF's comprehensive and most recent report on child and youth migration in the Horn of Africa, migration stakeholders need to embrace a child-centred understanding of the drivers and characteristics of migration that recognises children's right to protection irrespective of the circumstances or nature of their migration (UNICEF, 2021). Only by taking children and youth's own perspectives and strategies into account can effective responses be developed. To ensure effective protection, child protection systems need to be reformed and multisectoral and integrated responses must be adopted (UNICEF, op. cit.). Findings in this report confirm these needs.

Below a list of recommendations related specifically to the protection challenges facing child and youth migration in Ethiopia and of young Ethiopians crossing international borders.

Policy changes

1. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia should ratify and domesticate into national law and policy, with necessary reservations or exceptions for some elements as needed, the key IGAD, AU and UN treaties addressing displacement and migration governance, including the Niamey Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation and the Kampala Convention for the Assistance and Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, the ILO Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers, and the AU and IGAD Free Movement Protocols.

2. National authorities should communicate and implement existing child protection policies, directives and proclamations down to the lower levels of administration in villages and towns. This needs to be aligned with the experiences and challenges facing children and youth on the move.
3. In addition, a comprehensive and harmonised policy response to address durable solutions for internally displaced children and youth should be promoted by:
 - Institutionalising an inter-agency government mechanism for IDP matters responsible for building a comprehensive and coordinated strategy on IDPs management, peace building and conflict transformation, taking the specific needs of children and youth into account.
 - Enhancing the comprehensive disaster risk management interventions, ensuring they are specifically tailored for IDP situations, including those of children and youth.
 - Ensuring alternative livelihood and self-reliance opportunities, and social services for IDP children and youth.
 - Setting up a holistic approach to prevent and strengthen resiliency of communities at high risk of climate change related displacement that include the experiences of children and youth.

To ensure the implementation of these recommendations it is necessary to:

4. Make the necessary human, financial and infrastructure resources available and accessible for the state and non-state actors that are providing services and protections for climate change affected children and youth, including IDPs and migrant children at all stages of migration.

Facilities and services

5. Facilities should be established offering protection and care for vulnerable migrant children and youth displaced to urban areas, including street children and children in risk of human trafficking. Such facilities should also be established in more remote areas of the migration trails and in areas close to border control posts.
6. A continuum of services that are inclusive, resilient and responsive to children and youth's specific needs should be offered, including disaster prevention that, if unattended, may lead to high-risk mobility responses. Service provisions should not only include basic services such as food, clean water and washing

facilities, schools and health care facilities, but also access to money, communication and employment services that can support children and youth to safely transition into adulthood.

The promotion of resilient child protection systems would require the linking of humanitarian and development programming, and, to ensure sufficient outreach, diversifying service providers and adopting a multi-sectoral approach to ensure access across services, prevention and response.

Return

7. To ensure the safe return of migrant children and youth, cross-border, interregional and international cooperation must be strengthened, including advocacy for the rights and adequate protection responses for children and youth on the move and in detention.
8. To ensure the social and economic reintegration of migrant children and youth, rehabilitation centres should be established. Apart from offering standard protection services to children and youth, including psychosocial services specifically targeted to children and youth subjected to human trafficking, services should respond to the problems and needs that mobilise children and youth in the first place.

Further knowledge needed

The report reveals to two particular areas in need of further research:

9. As evidenced by the report and the annotated bibliography, the majority of existing studies of Ethiopian mobility practices are not attentive to the specific experiences of children and youth. New research, sensitive to children and youth, should look into what it means to grow up in communities severely affected by climate change and how this may affect children and youth's perceptions of future opportunities. How, for example, do children and youth perceive their own vulnerability and how do they interact with climate stressors and existing climate change strategies and responses in a process that influences their mobility aspirations and abilities to move? Under which circumstances may child and youth migration be considered a successful adaptation strategy? And in which instances may they find themselves engaged in 'distress mobility' (including being 'trapped' in new locations, vulnerable to climate change, with limited options for resettlement)?

10. Many programmes and actors are already involved. The majority work with substantial resource constraints. A mapping study should be conducted of all national stakeholders, their profiles, mandates, capacities and the roles they could play in climate change adaptations, migration and displacement governance for children and youth. The mapping study should not be limited to state actors and NGOs but also include non-state traditional actors like iquib (credit associations), idir/ afocho (self-help community networks) and similar actors of potential relevance for children and youth.

NOTES.

1 Of these, approximately 13 million are child refugees, close to 950,000 are asylum seeking children and 17 million children have been forcibly displaced within their own country. The rest child migrants are not specifically accounted for but include returned and deported children (Marcus et al. 2020).

2 See <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/ethiopia>

3 See <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2021-HAC-Ethiopia.pdf>

4 See <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/eth>

5 See <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2021-HAC-Ethiopia.pdf>

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Photos

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