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IOM Regional Data Hub
East and Horn of Africa

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Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration

TO CHANGE MY LIFE

Risk perception, expectations and migration experiences of young Ethiopians migrating along the Eastern Route toward the Arabian Peninsula

FINAL REPORT: *Obock, Djibouti*

April 2021

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Please contact:

Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa

Postal Address: P.O. Box 55040-00200, Nairobi, Kenya
Visiting Address: Sri Aurobindo Avenue off Mzima Spring Road, Lavington, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 020 422 1000

Email: Regional Data Hub (RDH) *rdhronairobi@iom.int*

For more information, please visit *https://ronairobi.iom.int/regional-data-hub-rdh*

Cover photo: A portrait of a migrant in Adogolo, near Obock, Djibouti. © IOM / Alexander Bee

THE REGIONAL DATA HUB

Established in early 2018 at IOM's Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa (EHoA), the Regional Data Hub (RDH) aims to support evidence-based, strategic and policy-level discussion on migration through a combination of initiatives. The RDH strategy is structured along four main pillars: data collection capacity, strengthening regional primary and secondary data collection and analysis to ensure harmonization and interoperability of key methodologies used to monitor population mobility; information management capacity, increasing information management capacity to strengthen data consolidation and quality control across the various data sources; regional research and analysis, conducting regional research and analysis on mixed migration topics and enhancing data dissemination and knowledge sharing across programmatic and policy-level stakeholders; and capacity building development initiatives, providing technical support to key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to enhance their migration data portfolio in line with regional and global initiatives. Publications and the 2019 RDH snapshot can be consulted at *https://ronairobi.iom.int/regional-data-hub-rdh*

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More information can be found at: *https://migrationjointinitiative.org/*

Aerial view of Alat Ela congregation point near Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Migrants walking in the desert from Alat Ela to Fantahero in Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

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List of acronyms

AVR	Assisted Voluntary Returns Programme
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EHoA	East and Horn of Africa
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
FM	Flow Monitoring
FMP	Flow Monitoring Point
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HoA	Horn of Africa
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ethiopia)
MRC	Migration Response Centre
RDH	Regional Data Hub
RMMS	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region
UMC	Unaccompanied Migrant Child
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar

Definitions

First-time migrants: individuals migrating along the Eastern Route to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for the first time.

Re-migrating individuals: individuals migrating along the Eastern Route to the KSA who attempted or successfully completed previous migration(s) to this destination.

Returning migrants: individuals migrating along the Eastern Route to the KSA who have decided to stop their journey in Bossaso and are returning to Ethiopia.

Internal migrants: individuals who have migrated internally within Ethiopia prior to their current experience of international migration.[1]

Risk perception: refers to migrants' awareness of challenges along the route and at arrival in the KSA, such as the lack of food and water, the crossing at sea, the war in Yemen and the risk of deportation.

Risk preference: refers to migrants' willingness to take on risks according to the perceived successful outcome, that is, reaching the KSA and finding a job that will ensure sufficient earnings.

Risk reduction: refers to migrants' strategies to mitigate risks against potential challenges along the route and upon arrival in the KSA. These strategies can be intentional, for instance obtaining information on the journey, or unintentional, for instance travelling in group when the group is set up by the broker.

1. Although it remains limited – in the period between 2008 and 2013 about 6.5 per cent of the Ethiopian adult population moved zone of residence – internal migration is growing and is increasingly directed towards urban areas and their fringes. Most movements happen within the boundaries of the regional states from rural to urban areas (34%) or within urban areas (25%, from one city to another). Rural-urban migration is often the first step towards international migration, as urban migrants usually experience welfare improvement, which may give them the means and aspirations to migrate internationally. As much as 25 per cent of survey's respondents are former internal migrants. (Bundervoet, 2018)

Migrants in the desert near Alat Ela, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

01 HIGHLIGHTS

1.1. WHAT DRIVES YOUNG ETHIOPIANS TO MIGRATE ABROAD?

- Economic factors are the main driver of young Ethiopian migration, with **nearly all migrants** in the qualitative and quantitative sample reporting that their migration was **primarily economically driven.**
- Unemployment stands out as a key economic driver, **with less than one in four migrants reporting that they had an income** in Ethiopia prior to migration, and **median monthly incomes at around 1,750 Ethiopian Birrs (ETB), that is, approximately 53 United States dollars (USD)**.[2]
- **Low, intermittent, and/or insufficient wages in Ethiopia** stood out as a strong economic driver amongst respondents who were working in Ethiopia: **less than half of the participants who had an income prior to migration reported that their income was sufficient to meet their basic needs**.
- **One third** of migrants reported that their households **occasionally exercise severe food-related coping strategies** such as skipping meals or reducing portion sizes.
- **Land-related factors such as land shortages, land fragmentation, land depletion, soil erosion and weather-related shocks** can be strong, secondary drivers pushing migrants whose households rely heavily on agriculture into economic vulnerability and migration.
- **One in four** surveyed migrants reported having **migrated internally in search of employment** before embarking on international migration journeys, yet most reported they had been unable to achieve their aspirations through internal migration due to **a lack of job opportunities or access to employment networks, low wages and prohibitive living costs in urban centres, dwarfing earned income.**

2. All USD values in this report have been calculated at the exchange rate of 1 USD = 33 ETB (*Bloomberg exchange rate in February 2020*).

- Unlike previous research, this study found that rather than devaluing education, **most participants held educational achievement in high regard**. Although many research participants did drop out of school prematurely to help provide for their families, this was, in most cases, not because they perceived education as a poor way to build a future in Ethiopia but because of **financial and other barriers preventing them from staying in school.**
- Most participants have high expectations of the outcome of their journeys and the benefits of migrating to the KSA, with the **expected median income of first-time migrants around 450 USD and more than seven times the median income reported in Ethiopia.**
- Migration **success stories play an influencing role** in promoting Eastern Corridor migration and many **migrants view migration as central to the development they are witnessing in their communities of origin.**
- Difficult return environments including **stigma and difficulties re-integrating** could be **pushing some returnees to re-migrate quickly.**

1.2. HOW AWARE ARE YOUNG ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS OF THE RISKS OF MIGRATING TO THE GULF AND WHAT EXPECTATION DO THEY HOLD REGARDING THEIR JOURNEYS?

- **Migrants are not always aware of how much their journeys will cost**, with some reporting having been deceived about the cost of the journey by brokers prior to departure or being extorted to pay additional fees en route.
- Many migrants also **underestimate the additional costs of buying food and water en route and some travel without any money**, thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to many protection risks such as abuse by brokers, dehydration, starvation and disease from adopting dangerous coping strategies such as drinking contaminated groundwater.
- Migrants can face a **range of challenges and hardships during their journey** from Ethiopia to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) via Obock, including **lack of access to basic services, shelter, medical care, food and water. They can be vulnerable to threats to their security such as extortion, trafficking, death by drowning, exhaustion and disease, and physical and psychological abuse, with women and girls most at risk of gender-based-violence (GBV)** perpetrated by various actors including brokers and other migrants.
- Despite the severe and in some cases life-threatening challenges migrants in this study reported experiencing en route, they often report strong **social ties and solidarity between travel companions**.
- First-time migrants interviewed during the quantitative phase of this study **displayed very low levels of awareness of the problems they might encounter during their journey.** Very few migrants indicated that they had been aware of the lack of food and water (around 15%) prior to departure, only one in five reported that they knew that their journey would involve multiple brokers (around 20%), and less than one third reported knowing about the war in Yemen (around 30%).

- **Risk awareness and knowledge are largely acquired by experience and likely to increase as journeys progress**, with pre-departure knowledge mostly limited to word-of-mouth information (from friends, peers, returnees and brokers) and often incomplete and/or inaccurate as both brokers and returnees may contribute to false narratives of the journey to the KSA or fail to depict a complete picture of the migration experience.
- Reasons for not engaging with, or not being influenced by information on risk ranged from **the perceived benefits of migration far outweighing the perceived risks, migrant determination and a general tolerance of hardship, migrant optimism and very strong deterministic beliefs in fate and/or faith.** Migrants displayed a strong determination to move and change their lives, irrespective of the risks and costs associated with migration.
- **Risk awareness may encourage migrants to adjust their behaviour and take precautionary measures that can lead to risk reduction.**
- **Traveling with sufficient money can significantly reduce the severity of risks experienced en route**. Disseminating information on the true costs of the journey could therefore be key to mitigating some of the risks migrants face en route.

1.3. HOW DO YOUNG ETHIOPIANS MAKE THEIR DECISION TO MIGRATE?

- A **strong culture of migration was evident amongst young Ethiopians** across regions of origin, with migration as a livelihood strategy deeply rooted in society.
- **Strong networks between origin and destination facilitate the flow of information, money and migrants**, creating an enabling environment in which embarking on migration projects is relatively easy.
- Migrants **exercise a large degree of agency in the decision-making process**, and migration tends to be **mostly self-initiated**.
- **Less than half** of surveyed migrants were able to finance their journeys using their **own funds.**
- **Migration decisions are often made rapidly**, with **over half** of quantitative survey respondents leaving **within two weeks** of first contemplating migration.
- In qualitative surveys, many respondents reported that they had initially **preferred regular migration** but had been deterred at some point during the process as it was seen as **too cumbersome, time consuming and expensive**.
- The decision **to migrate to the KSA in particular** is guided by the history of migration in communities, **which has led to strong cross-border networks** between Ethiopia and the KSA, the **perceived, relative ease of migrating to the KSA compared to the longer and more costly journeys South or North**, and **geographic proximity**.
- Although relatives can put pressure on family members and motivate migration to improve income streams, **only around 5 per cent** of quantitative respondents reported that **their families were actively involved in their decision to migrate and almost nobody indicated that they were pushed to migrate by their families (1%)**.

- **Many families seem to disapprove of the initial departure** of their young relatives and **may even play an active role in trying to deter them from leaving**, with **only 35 per cent of migrants informing their families of their departure** and **less than half of informed families approving** of their decision. Of the 63 per cent of respondents who did not inform their families, 71 per cent believe that their family 'would have prevented [them] from going because the journey is dangerous' and 22 per cent did not inform their families as they 'did not want to worry them'.
- **Most** migrants reported **receiving different forms of support from family members already in the KSA**, in particular **financial support** and **information**.
- **Friends and peers are influential in shaping opinions and attitudes about migration**. **Very young migrants** seem to be **particularly vulnerable to migrating due to peer pressure.**
- **Brokers play a crucial role in organizing and sustaining irregular migration** from Ethiopia to the KSA and **using their services seems to be the norm**, with only 10 per cent of survey respondents reporting that they were travelling without a broker.
- **Brokers also seem to be relied on heavily for information** about the journey and brokers **were the most common source of information amongst respondents** who reported that they had sought to inform themselves about the journey prior to departure.
- **Brokers do not seem to be a reliable source of information** and most migrants reported that the information they had received from brokers prior to departure was **mostly inaccurate**. While there are some exceptions, it seems that **many brokers propagate false and misleading narratives about migration to the KSA** that help shape migration decisions **by downplaying risks and failures** and overstating the benefits of migration.
- **Migrants do not always analyse all information available to them before making the decision to migrate. More than one in two** interviewees during the quantitative phase of the research reported that they **did not inform themselves about the journey prior to departure (52%)**.
- **Returnees are mentioned by 30 per cent of migrants** who informed themselves prior to departure **as one of their main sources of information**.
- **It is common for brokers to be returnees themselves or recruit returnees** who are planning on returning to the KSA to advertise migration to others and travel for less themselves. Returnees can be very persuasive influencers as they are 'living proof' of successful migration.
- **Migrants seem selective about what information they believe. Strong perceptions about the high potential rewards of migration** and widespread migration **success narratives seem to undermine the credibility of risk information**.
- Rather than being a household decision, **the large majority of young women reported that they were the primary decision-maker when making the decision to migrate (85%)**, although **families were more involved in the decision-making process than is the case with male respondents**, with 11 per cent of women and girls reporting that the decision to migrate was taken by or with their family, compared to 5 per cent for men and boys.

Ethiopian migrants collecting ground water for drinking at Alat Ela congregation point near Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Portrait of a local woman selling bread to migrants in Fantahero, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

02

Introduction

In 2019, the IOM Regional Data Hub (RDH) for the East and Horn of Africa (EHoA) launched a multistage research project aimed at better understanding the expectations, experiences, decision-making and risk perceptions of young Ethiopians along the Eastern Route regarding their migration projects. The project aims to investigate the nexus between decision-making, migrant expectations and realities on the ground by interviewing migrants leaving the Horn towards the Arab Peninsula. Although a reasonable body of work examining migrants' decision-making processes exists, most of this research was conducted outside of the EHoA region. A more nuanced understanding of the migrants' decision to migrate will help inform strategy and programmatic planning for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other humanitarian and development actors in the region.

Obock (Djibouti) and Bossaso (Somalia) were selected as the main study sites. Both being gateways to Yemen, they receive a large number of Ethiopian migrants travelling on the Eastern Route. The project involves both a quantitative and a qualitative phase in Obock, during which surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of young migrants. Only quantitative data was captured in Bossaso, as the qualitative data collection had to be put on hold because it coincided with the onset of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Three different types of individuals migrating along the Eastern Route to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) were included in the sample: (i) individuals migrating for the first time, (ii) individuals who have attempted or successfully

completed this journey before; and (iii) individuals who have decided to stop their journey in Obock or Bossaso and return to Ethiopia. The final phase of this project will be conducted in five communities of high emigration in early 2021 and explore the role families and communities play in migration decisions, how migration and in particular remittances and their usage impact families and communities at origin, and the impact of COVID-19 on migration aspirations. The final phase will also explore information gaps prior to migration to identify platforms through which accurate information on the risks of migration could be disseminated – since risk awareness can lead to risk reduction.

This report illustrates the findings for the first phase of the project conducted in Obock, Djibouti, between September 2019 and February 2020. Structured surveys were administered to a sample of 2,140[3] young migrants between 15 and 29 years old at four congregation points in the Obock area, as well as the town centre of Obock and IOM's Migrant Response Centre (MRC) in September and October 2019.[4] Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Obock in February 2020 to complement the quantitative data collected, explore themes that had arisen and gather more nuanced information on migrant risk awareness, expectations and experiences. This report is designed to complement the quantitative findings from Obock which were presented in an earlier report titled "*The Desire to Thrive Regardless of the Risk: Background Analysis by Migrant Category Obock, Djibouti*" with qualitative data and quotes, giving voice to the migrants to tell their stories. Quantitative findings from Bossaso were published in the report "*The Desire to Thrive Regardless of the Risk: Background Analysis by Migrant Category Bossaso, Puntland*".

Following a brief overview of the research context and the methodology developed for the study, the chapters are structured around the main research questions: (i) main drivers of migration, including socio-demographic characteristics of migrants and their regions of origin in Ethiopia; (ii) migrants' experiences and their pre-departure perceptions of risks and expectations regarding the outcome of their migration, including information from re-migrating individuals on their previous experiences; and (iii) the migration decision-making process, including the role of family, friends, brokers and returnees, as well as the pervasiveness of a culture of migration and the existence of transnational linkages between the communities of origin and the KSA. An overview of the assessed indicators can be found in Annex II.

3. The total number of individuals asked for interviews is 2,153, of whom 2,140 volunteered to be interviewed, with a refusal rate of less than 1 per cent.

4. The four congregation points in the Obock area are: Fantehero, Adogolo, Alat Ela and Alat Ela en Haut.

Migrants gather for a prayer in Adogolo while waiting for pickups to take them to the boats. © Alexander Bee/IOM

03

Research context

The Eastern Route to the Middle East via Djibouti and Somalia is one of the three main international migration routes from Ethiopia.[5] Although exact figures on outward migration are largely unknown,[6] the World Bank cites the 2017 stock of Ethiopian emigrants to be at around 850,000 – of whom around 20 per cent reside in the KSA alone.[7] According to figures provided by the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), these estimates appear to be conservative and the total number of Ethiopian migrants abroad is closer to 3 million – approximately 17 per cent of whom reside in the KSA (Yeshitla, 2019). Data on migration flows are also very limited. MoLSA estimates that between 2008 and 2014, around 480,000 Ethiopians have migrated to the Middle East through legal channels – 79 per cent of whom migrated to the KSA (Yeshitla, 2019). The majority of movements are, however, believed to be irregular, with MoLSA estimating that regular labour represents only 30–40 per cent of all Ethiopians in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, while most migrants have an irregular status.[8]

5. Three main migration routes out of Ethiopia exist: the first includes movements through Sudan and sometimes Egypt to Libya and oftentimes onward to Europe (Northern Route); the second includes migration towards the Middle East, especially the KSA, via Djibouti and Somalia as international transit countries (Eastern Route); and the third entails movement towards South Africa via Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi as the main international transit countries (Southern Route).

6. Obtaining an accurate picture of the current migration situation in Ethiopia is extremely difficult. Limitations of migration data include the existence of different definitions for different categories of migrants, and the lack of documentation on irregular migration.

7. World Bank staff estimates based on UN Population Division, OECD, the Australian Bureau Statistics, the German Federal Statistical Office, the UK Office of National Statistics, and the US Census Bureau (Worldbank, 2019). According to UNDESA and UNICEF, the crude net migration estimate (per 1,000 population) in Ethiopia is of -0.11 for the period 2015-2020. (UNDESA, 2019).

8. MoLSA as cited in a report by MMC (MMC, 2015).

IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data confirm the importance of the Eastern Route in the context of both the EHoA region and Ethiopia: of the approximatively 745,000 migration movements tracked throughout the region in 2019, 63 per cent were observed along the Eastern Route alone (nearly 470,000 movements, 80% of which were intended towards the KSA). Bossaso was the main area of departure (62%), followed by Obock (38%) (IOM, 2019a). In line with previous observations, Ethiopians represent the vast majority of those moving along the Eastern route (97%). During the first half of 2020, a total of 108,688 movements were observed along the Eastern Corridor, of which over 66 per cent originated in Ethiopia, and more than 84 per cent were headed towards the KSA. This marks a 54 per cent decrease in movements compared to the first half of 2019, due to a sharp decrease in monthly movements as of March 2020, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region (IOM, 2020c).

Informal migration to the Middle East is highly gendered and skewed towards younger age groups, while legal channels are predominantly available to women. Irregular migration channels tend to be dominated by young males. IOM Flow Monitoring (FM) data for the EHoA confirm that compared to other migration routes, the Eastern route tends to be used more frequently by young, adult males (68% of all migrants tracked along this route) and has the second highest percentage of Unaccompanied Migrant Children (UMCs): 4 per cent of all migrants recorded in 2019 (IOM, 2019b).

Economic factors are at the root of movements along the Eastern Route. Nearly all movements observed at IOM EHoA Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) were fuelled by economic drivers and intended towards the KSA (98% and 88% of movements, respectively). A recent UNICEF (2019) and Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency report on multi-dimensional child poverty in Ethiopia found that an estimated 36 million out of 41 million children in Ethiopia can be considered poor across multiple dimensions.[9] The study found that deprivation intensity (average count of deprivations across multiple dimensions) varied significantly between rural and urban areas, with children in rural areas experiencing 4.5 deprivations on average, while their urban counterparts experienced an average of 3.2 deprivations. Oromia, Amhara and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) regions had the highest share of multi-dimensionally poor children (34 million out of the 36 million multi-dimensionally poor children in Ethiopia), in part attributable to the high population density in these areas.

In 2019, UNDESA estimated Ethiopia's population to be at around 115 million, with an average annual population growth rate of 2.6 per cent between 2015 and 2020 (UNDESA, 2019). The population continues to grow, straining basic services, infrastructure and the environment. Root causes of poverty in Ethiopia include rapid population growth, declining land holding size, deforestation, soil erosion, and rainfall-dependent agriculture coupled with erratic rainfall (UNDP, 2018; Tefera, 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2017). Moreover, unemployment rates are high, with unemployment rates for urban youth at 22 per cent, compared to 17 per cent for all ages. Given Ethiopia's broad-based population pyramid with more than 70 per cent of Ethiopians under the aged of 30, youth unemployment remains a key economic driver of youth migration out of Ethiopia (UNDP, 2018).

9. A child is considered multi-dimensionally poor in the study if he or she is deprived of basic goods and services in at least three of nine dimensions: physical development and stunting; nutrition; health; education; health-related knowledge; water; sanitation; housing; and information and participation.

In the GCC countries and particularly in the KSA, there is a strong structural demand for low-skilled labour, which allows for the rapid absorption of newly arrived irregular migrants into informal labour markets within weeks or even days of arrival (Fernandez, 2017). Migration flows are therefore not particularly sensitive to changes in immigration policies, and Ethiopian migration to the KSA continues despite strict border control, mass deportations and risks along the route, including the conflict in Yemen.[10] According to IOM FM data on arrivals to Yemen, migrant crossings continued throughout 2019 (IOM, 2019c). The conflict in Yemen has not had a significant impact on movement choices for a variety of reasons, including lack of resources to pay for alternative routes and travel modalities. Moreover, some Ethiopians believe, or have been led to believe by brokers and other actors, that the power vacuum in Yemen provides opportunity for transiting through the country unnoticed, while smuggling networks in Yemen operate with relative impunity (EUTF Research & Evidence Facility, 2017).

Conditions in the Middle East are very challenging for Ethiopian migrants. A growing literature documents the exploitation that female domestic workers face in the Middle East, including delayed or partial payment of salaries, withholding wages altogether, food deprivation, long working hours without rest, psychological, physical and sexual abuse, demeaning treatment, confinement and social isolation (Ayalew et al., 2019; De Regt & Tafesse, 2016; Dessiye & Emirie, 2018; Gomes, 2018; ODI, 2014). At the same time, there is evidence of the many hardships faced by Ethiopian male migrants, who are mostly employed in agriculture and construction as daily labourers. Verbal violence, refusal to pay wages, discrimination and difficulty to adapt were all challenges faced by Ethiopian workers while abroad (ILO, 2018). Xenophobia towards Ethiopian labour migrants has also been reported (De Regt & Tafesse, 2016).

In addition to being informal, economically driven and highly risky, migration to the Middle East tends to be temporary, meaning that most migrants return to Ethiopia after a few years abroad. Migration to the KSA started in the 1970s and different migrant communities, especially Ethiopians, have established strong transnational networks connecting the two countries. However, following the 2016 announcement of its 2030 vision reforms, the KSA committed to reducing unemployment among Saudis through Nitaqat, the Saudi nationalization scheme, which promotes the Saudization of the workforce. This led to the tightening of immigration policies for undocumented migrants. In 2017, at the time the decree was issued, an estimated 500,000 migrants were present in the KSA. IOM has been tracking arrivals at Bole Airport in Addis Ababa since April 2017 and registered around 320,000 individuals as of 31 January 2020. Nearly all were returning involuntarily (99%). The proportion of voluntary returns has shown a downward trajectory in the past years, with 35 per cent of returns in early 2017 being voluntary before decreasing to less than 1 per cent in 2019. According to ILO (2018), many returnees face severe difficulties reintegrating, as they return empty-handed because they used their earnings for living expenses and remittances. Many of them also experienced severe hardships during their stay and during return, causing medical and psychological conditions.

10. In February 2019, the UN declared that the humanitarian crisis in Yemen continues to be the worst in the world, with close to 80% of the population (an estimated 24 million people) in need of assistance and protection and the number of individuals in acute need 27% higher than in 2018, when the Yemeni crisis was already considered to be the worst humanitarian crisis in the world (UN News, 2019).

Given its intrinsic characteristics, migration along the Eastern Route is only bound to increase, as more young job-seekers enter the labour market,[11] move from rural into urban areas[12] and benefit from the flows of remittances and transnational networks.[13] It is therefore critical to further investigate what drives them to migrate East despite the high-level of risk associated with this route. By interviewing migrants leaving the Horn towards the Arab Peninsula, this study aimed to investigate the connections between migration decision-making processes and their expectations of what awaits during their journey or upon arrival to the KSA in comparison with the realities on the ground. By examining how the expectations and assumptions of first-time migrants relate to the experiences of those migrants who are re-migrating and those who are returning, this study also tries to shed light on the level of risk awareness amongst the target population.

11. According to the Ethiopian MoLSA, as of mid-2019 there were approximately 11 million young job-seekers, with a projected increase of 2 million each year (Yeshitla, 2019).

12. Rural-urban migration is often the first step towards international migration, as urban migrants usually experience welfare improvement, which may give them the means and aspirations to migrate (MMC, 2015).

13. Local and transnational migrant networks play an important role in triggering or structuring migration. Case studies suggest that once migration is added to a community's social capital, it is more likely than other forms of capital to induce migration (Adugna, 2019).

A migrant praying in Adogolo before being picked up to be taken to a boat going to Yemen. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Migrants sitting on the beach in Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

04 METHODOLOGY

4.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS

The overarching objective of the study is **to better understand the migration decision-making process, migrants' risk-awareness, as well as the expectations and experiences of young Ethiopians migrating on the Eastern Route towards the Arabian Peninsula.**

The **specific objectives** of the study are to answer the following questions:

1. What drives young Ethiopians to migrate abroad?
2. How do young Ethiopian migrants on the Eastern Route make their decisions to migrate?
3. What role do household and community members play regarding individual decisions to migrate?
4. What expectations did young Ethiopian migrants hold at the beginning of their journey regarding the journey itself and the outcome of their migration?
5. How aware are young Ethiopian migrants of the risks of migrating to the Gulf?

4.2. TARGET POPULATION AND MIGRANT CATEGORIES

The subjects of this research are young Ethiopians between the age of 15 and 29 migrating to the Arab Peninsula and in particular the KSA.[14] The research intends to capture a wide range of participants as well as outward, return and re-migration movements. Three types of migrants were interviewed for this study: first-time, re-migrating and returning migrants.[15]

4.3. PHASE I OF THE YOUNG ETHIOPIAN RESEARCH: OBOCK, DJIBOUTI

This report details the findings of the first research phase of a larger, mixed-methods research project on young Ethiopians migrating along the Eastern Corridor. Phase I consisted of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and was conducted in Obock, Djibouti between September 2019 and February 2020.

4.3.1. Preliminary Research: Literature Review and Explorative Phase[16]

At the onset of the study, an extensive literature review was conducted to identify internal and external datasets, factsheets, reports, academic studies and other relevant material to help gather secondary data to supplement the study's findings and inform the questionnaires and study design. The complete analytical framework and reference list can be found in Annex I and Annex XI, respectively. As part of this undertaking, several IOM data sources were analysed, including IOM's DTM Flow Monitoring Data for both the East and Horn of Africa Region and arrivals to Yemen. This data was used to establish a preliminary profile of young migrants transiting through Djibouti on the Eastern Route and inform sample size calculations. Obock was selected as the study site as it receives a large number of Ethiopian migrants traveling on the Eastern Route, due to its location as one of the Horn's gateways to Yemen.

4.3.2. Quantitative Research: Surveys (September–October 2019)

Three structured surveys designed specifically for the three groups of migrants in this study were administered by trained enumerators to a sample of 2,140 young adults between the ages of 15 and 29 years at four congregation points in the Obock area, as well as the town centre of Obock and IOM's Migrant Response Centre (MRC).[17] The three questionnaires included indicators relating to the migrants' profiles, their journey, migrant decision-making and conditions at origin, as well as questions on migrant perceptions, risk awareness, expectations and whether these expectations were met. Indicators specifically pertaining to re-migration journeys and return migration were also collected. The full list of quantitative indicators can be found in Annex II.

Interviewed migrants fulfilled the age selection criteria and were either visiting the MRC in Obock or identified at the congregation points while waiting for the last leg of their journey to commence before crossing to Yemen. As returning migrants have been observed less frequently in Obock compared to first-time migrants, during the period of data collection the field teams tried to purposefully survey all returning migrants at the Obock MRC who fit the age parameter of the study and were willing to participate. For the large number of first-time migrants, the sample was stratified by region of origin to somewhat mirror the reference population of young Ethiopians on

14. Interviews with migrants younger than 15 years were not conducted for ethical reasons.

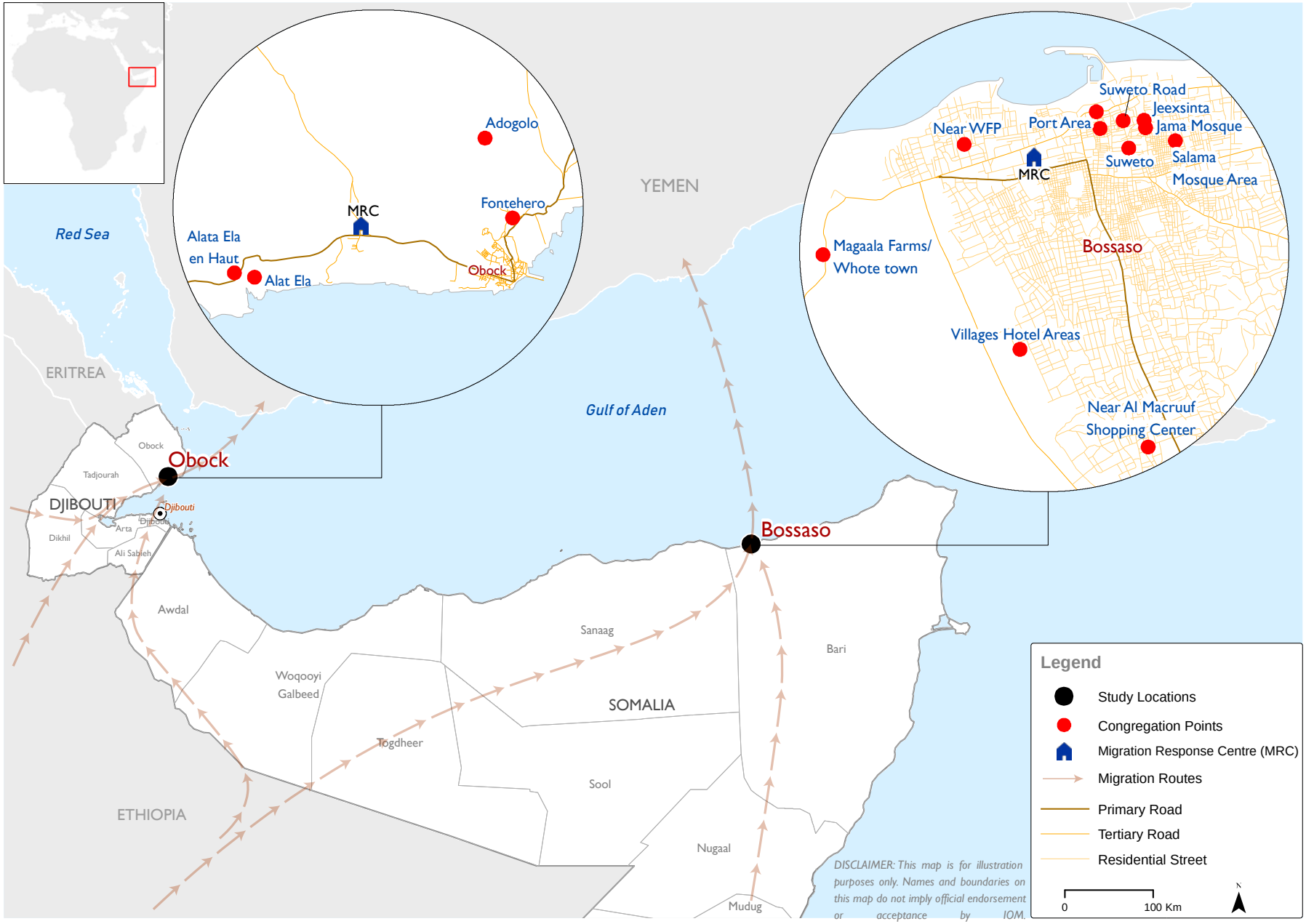
15. Please refer to the 'definitions' section for more information on these categories.

16. For the complete reference list see Annex XI.

17. The four congregation points in the Obock area are: Fantehero, Adogolo, Alat Ela and Alat Ela en Haut.

the move that had been estimated using DTM data. Different ethnic groups congregate at different congregation points in Obock, which enabled the field team to control the regional proportions within the sample. The sample is by no means a representative sample. Due to the lack of a sampling frame or the list of all migrants transiting by age and sex and nationality, it is not possible to draw a probabilistic sample or perform any kind of power calculations. Nonetheless, the sample mirrors the age, sex and region of origin distribution in the reference population as much as possible. Results cannot be generalized to the reference population.

Ethiopian migrants walking in the desert towards Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM



Map 1: Main migration routes, congregation points and Migration Response Centres (MRCs) along the Eastern Corridor.

4.3.3. Qualitative Research: Semi-structured Interviews (February 2020)

The information compiled in the quantitative phase of the research was analysed to delineate a clearer picture of the decisions young Ethiopian migrants make when migrating, how they perceive their migration endeavour and what expectations they have. The information also provided initial data on the challenges faced by this population during their migration. The information gleaned from the quantitative questionnaires allowed for the identification of certain themes and hypotheses that were tested with the migrants during the qualitative phase of the Obock research, during which semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 66 young migrants identified at different congregation points as well as IOM's MRC in Obock. The researcher tried to interview as many female migrants as possible[18] as well as migrants from different regions within Ethiopia. Interview transcripts were analysed using Nvivo, a software that allows for qualitative data analysis through inductive coding. Codes were defined according to the research questions and themes of the research. Further codes were created during the analysis when interesting themes that were not anticipated at the outset of the study arose. Interviews were conducted in Amharic and Oromifa with the help of translators. Qualitative interviewees are quoted throughout this report to help unpack migration along this corridor using migrants' own voices.

4.4. LIMITATIONS

Given the sample size and operational limitations of the study, the data gathered cannot be considered representative of all young Ethiopian migrants on the Eastern Route, but rather indicative of the situation. The selection of Obock as the study site implies a certain degree of selection bias as the Obock route is predominantly frequented by migrants from Oromia, Tigray and Amhara; the experiences of young Ethiopians from other regions are therefore not represented. To mitigate this bias, the second phase of the research was carried out in Bossaso, Puntland along the other most common route on the Eastern Corridor, to capture a wider range of ethnic backgrounds. Children younger than 15 years were excluded from the sample for ethical reasons and their views as 'young Ethiopians' are not represented. Respondents were selected based on self-reported age and very young migrants younger than 15 years, of whom there is a sizeable number in Obock, may have been included in the study if they reported to be older than 15 years despite our best efforts.[19] Female youth are also underrepresented in this study, partially due to language barriers resulting from operational constraints. The majority of enumerators spoke only Amharic (only a few spoke Oromifa and Tigrinya), hence migrants who were unable to speak Amharic (and are possibly also less educated) may be less represented. Lastly, participants were asked to recall decisions made prior to departure and, in the case of re-migrating migrants, decisions made prior to previous journeys (in some cases several years ago). It is therefore not unlikely that there is a certain amount of recall bias in their responses.

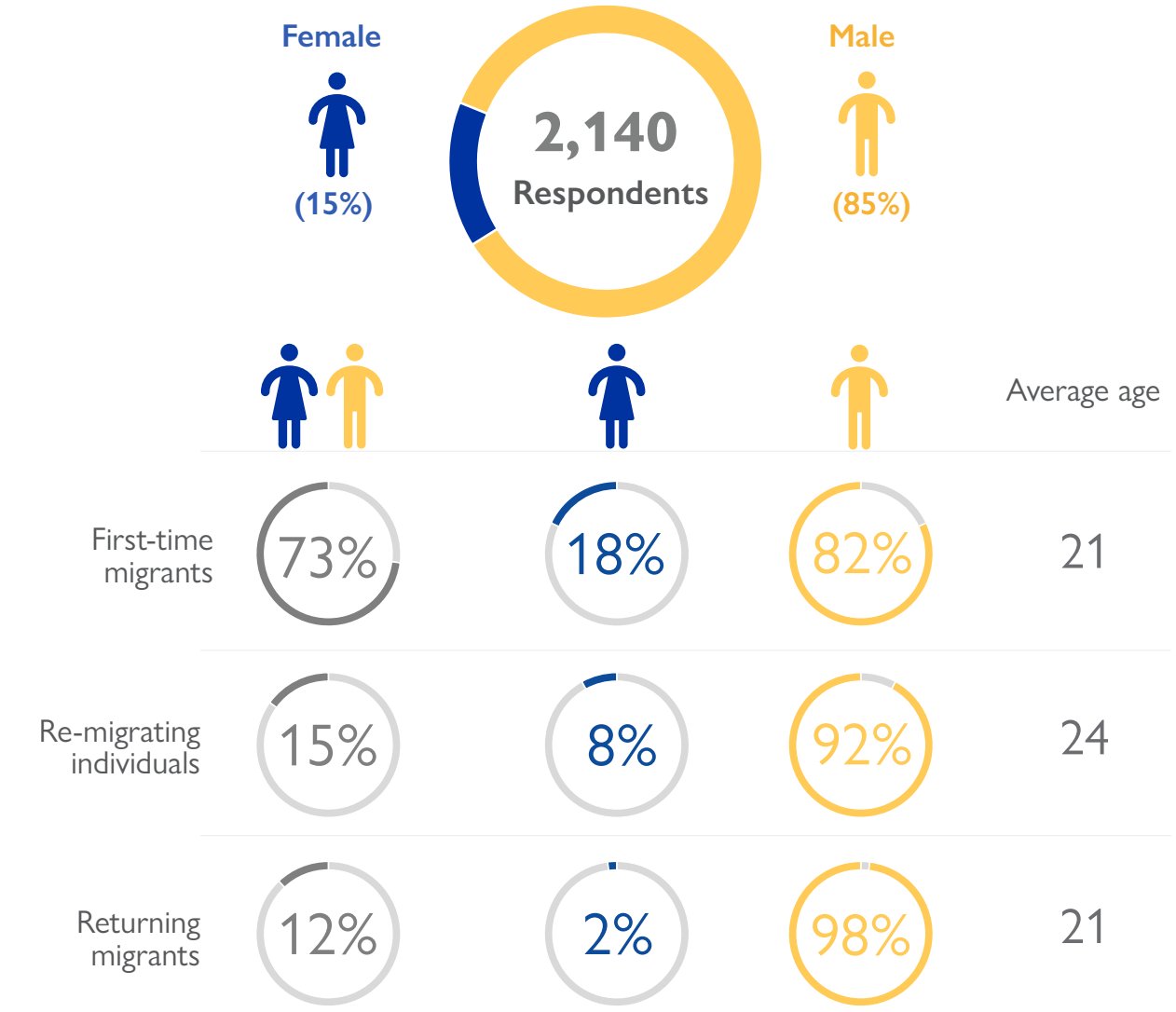
Nonetheless, findings and insights into the decision-making process, perceptions and expectations of young Ethiopians migrating eastwards gleaned from this study can inform future research efforts on the phenomenon; evidence-based return and reintegration programmes in communities of origin; protection programming in areas of transit; and awareness-raising and information sharing programmes carried out by governments, regional bodies and organizations operating in the region. The findings can also shed some light on the characteristics of young Ethiopians on the largest migration corridor in the region.

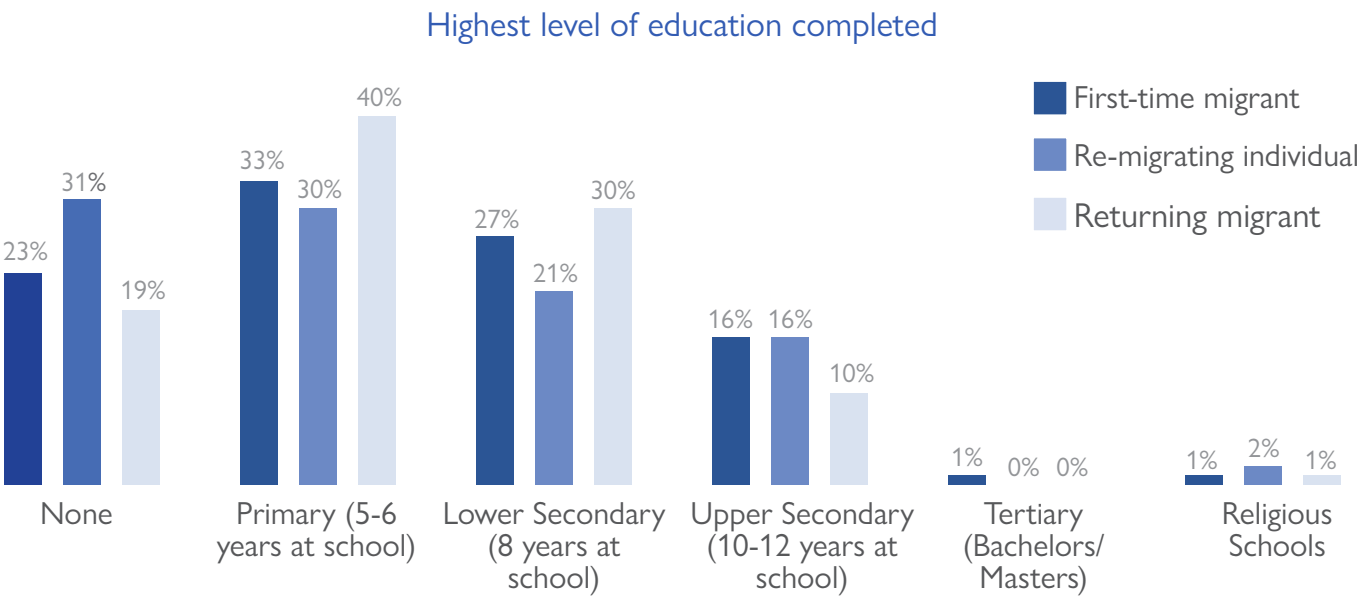
18. Interviewing female migrants proved to be challenging in the field due to language barriers (most interviews were conducted in Amharic and many female migrants did not speak Amharic) as well as a lack of willingness to participate (male migrants consented to being interviewed more often than female migrants did).

19. It is not uncommon for very young migrants to report that they are older than they are to avoid additional scrutiny by authorities.

4.5. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 1. Socio-demographic profiles by migrant category





During the quantitative phase of the research in Obock, 2,153 individuals between the ages of 15 and 29 years were asked for interview, of whom 2,140 volunteered to be interviewed and completed the full questionnaire, with a refusal rate of less than 1 per cent. Individuals migrating for the first time account for nearly three fourths of the sample (73%). Re-migrating individuals (15%) and returning migrants (12%) are nearly equally represented in the remaining fourth.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents by migrant category (first-time, re-migrating and returning). Overall, only 15 per cent of respondents are females – most of whom are attempting the journey for the first time (90%), with very few of them re-migrating (8%) and nearly none returning (2%). This gender imbalance partially reflects operational limitations and language barriers making it harder for enumerators to interview female migrants. Migrants are, in general, very young (the average age is 22 years) and the average age difference between re-migrating and first-time migrants is only three years. The vast majority of individuals are single (83%) and around one third (28%) have an average of three dependents. The difference between the share of those who are married (15%) and those who have dependents (28%) indicates how the notion of family and kinship plays an important role in Ethiopia.[20] Re-migrating individuals are the most likely to be married (32%).

Migrants generally had low levels of education, with over half of all respondents having no education or not having received more than primary school education (24% and 33%, respectively). In fact, only 10 migrants in the sample completed tertiary education (bachelor's degree or higher). Younger migrants tend to be slightly more educated (43% have completed secondary school versus 38% of older migrants), possibly in line with the increasing trend in education throughout Ethiopia.[21] Tigray (39%) and Oromia (38%) are the main regions of origin of migrants interviewed in Obock, followed by Amhara (17%). The other regions account for 6 per cent of the sample (134 individuals).

The figures in this report are provided for the full sample and disaggregated by the three main population types – first-time, re-migrating[22] and returning individuals. Gender and regional differences are provided where significant, together with findings on individuals who have experienced an internal migration prior to the current migration journey (former internal migrants). A full table of the socio-demographic characteristics of quantitative respondents according by migrant category can be found in Annex III. A table of the socio-demographic profiles of the qualitative interview respondents can be found in Annex V. A comprehensive overview of the quantitative data collected in Obock by migrant category can be found in the background analysis report of this research for Obock "*A Desire to Thrive Regardless of the Risk*".

20. Several studies on transnational networks and remittances show how migrant households often include members beyond the immediate family such as extended families, friends, neighbours, and even local institutions (e.g. churches, mosques) (Adugna, 2019).

21. According to Ethiopia's 2016 Demographic Health Survey, only 8 per cent of males aged 15–19 have no education versus 15 per cent of those aged 20–24 and 21 per cent of those aged 25–29. A similar trend was observed with regard to females, the respective figures being 14 per cent, 28 per cent and 49 per cent. (Central Statistical Agency, 2017).

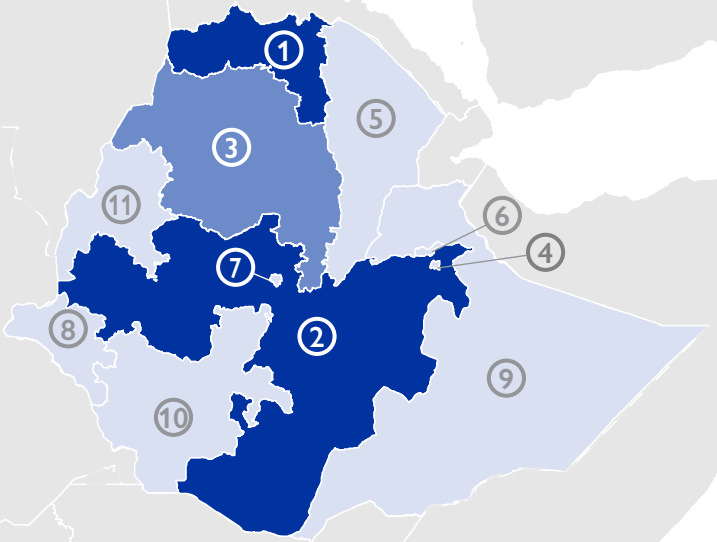
22. Findings for re-migrating individuals generally refer to the experience of their current migration if not otherwise specified (referred to first/previous migrations).

4.5.1. Regional Patterns of Migration

Patterns of migration at regional and sub-regional level depend on a number of factors including geographical proximity to the destination country and the existence of transnational migration networks. According to MoLSA, the main regions of origin and transit for irregular migration include: Addis Ababa, Tigray, Amhara, Oromia and SNNP. This survey indicates that the GCC countries including the KSA, with Obock, Djibouti, as a main transit point, are primarily selected as destinations by individuals originating from the three regions of Tigray, Oromia and Amhara and, more specifically, the north-eastern zones of Mekelle (Tigray), North and South Wello (Amhara) and Jimma (Oromia). Migrants originating from these regions tend to have low levels of education and poor employment opportunities. In our sample, around 25 per cent have no education and only 16 per cent have completed upper secondary and/or tertiary education, only 23 per cent were working prior to their current journey (44 per cent of whom as daily workers). Tigrayans were the most educated (50% had completed at least eight years in school), the most likely to be formally employed (12%) and the least likely to rely on farming (8%). In contrast, Oromos and migrants from Amhara reported lower levels of education, were slightly younger and mostly working as daily labourers or farmers, if employed prior to migration.

Another important factor in explaining regional patterns is the presence of family members and/or relatives in the KSA. The top regions of intended destination in the KSA are Riyadh (33%), Jizan (18%), Makkah (15%) and Al Madinah (11%). Tigrayans are slightly less likely to intend migrating to Al Madinah (9%) and Makkah (10%) than migrants from Amhara (16% and 15% respectively), Oromos (11% and 19%) and migrants originating from other regions (13% and 18%). They are more likely to intend to migrate to Riyadh and less common destinations such as Ragu (6%) and Ha'il (2%). This finding may be linked to the higher likelihood of Tigrayans having family members who have already migrated to the KSA (46%) who may be residing in these areas. The presence of relatives in the KSA may also explain the higher proportion of female migrants among Tigrayans (23%). Fewer Oromos reported being able to count on family networks (25%) as well as remittances (1%).

A group of migrants walking in the desert to reach Obock. © IOM / Alexander Bee



Map 2: Regions of origin in Ethiopia and regions of intended destination in the KSA

Regions of Origin in Ethiopia

1	Tigray	39%
2	Oromia	38%
3	Amhara	17%
4	Harari	2%
5	Afar	2%
6	Dire Dawa	1%
7	Addis Ababa	1%
8	Gambela	<1%
9	Somali	<1%
10	SNNP	<1%
11	Benishangul Gumuz	<1%

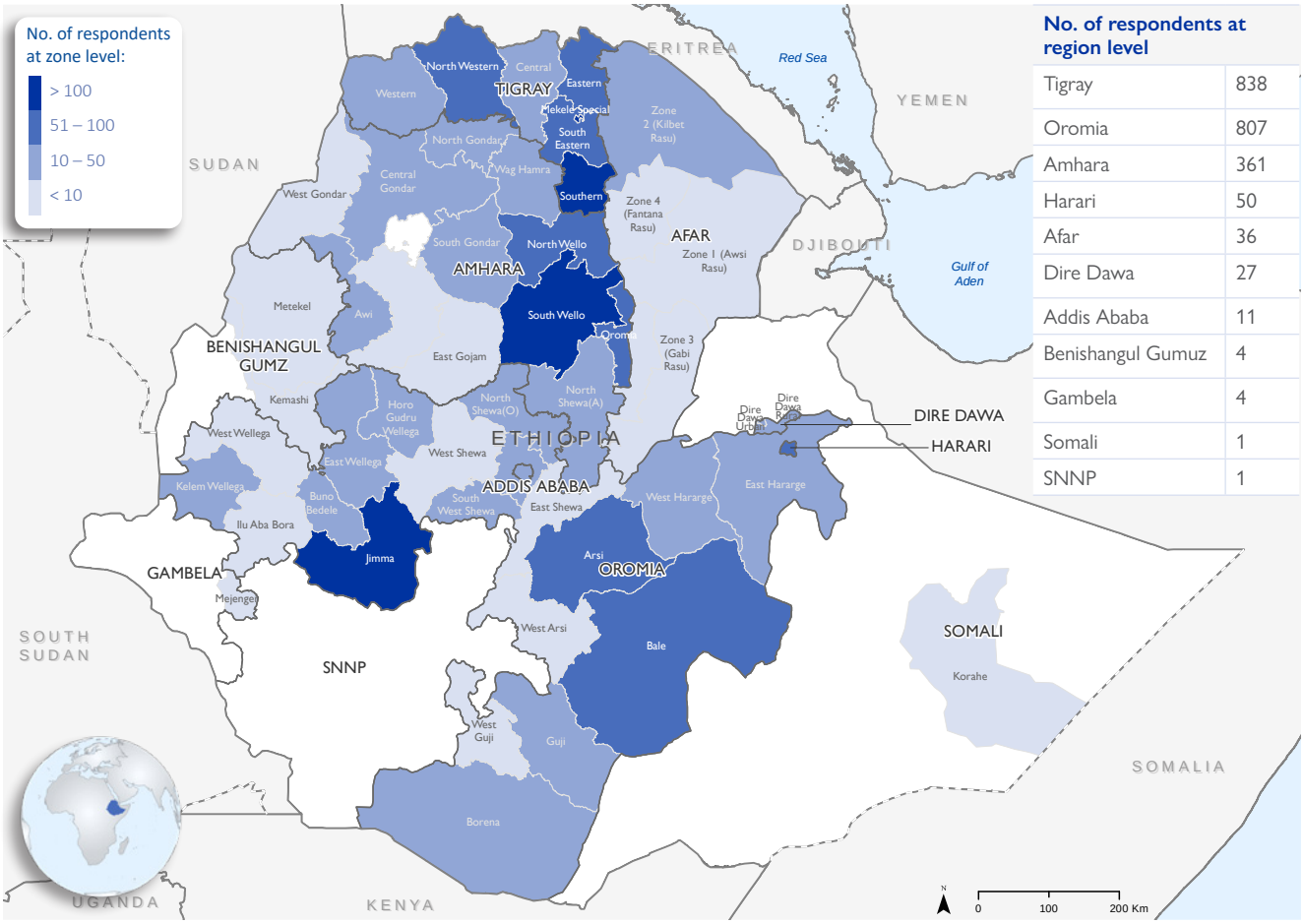
Regions of intended destination in the KSA

1	Riyadh	32%
2	Jizan[a]	21%
3	Makkah	14%
4	Al Madinah	11%
5	Al Qassim	7%
6	`Asir	4%
7	Najran	2%
8	Ha'il	1%
9	Ash Sharqiyah	<1%

9%
of respondents are unsure of their destination in the KSA

[a]Jizan includes participants headed to the border region known as 'Ragu'.

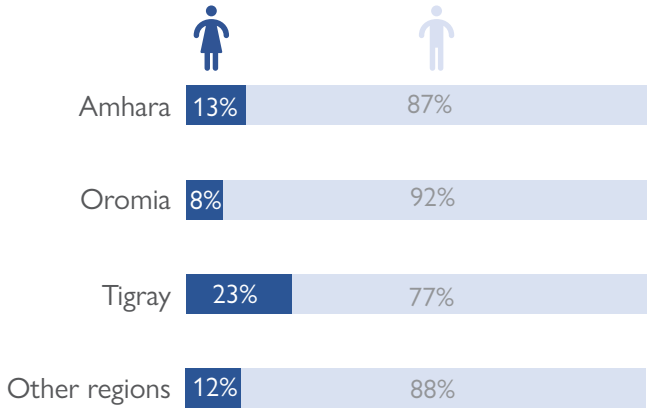
Map 3: Zones of origin in Ethiopia



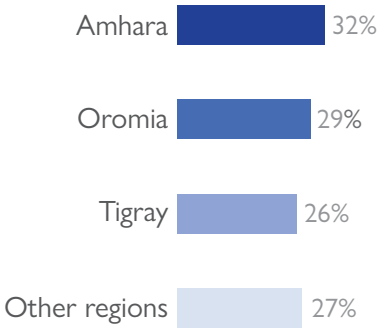
No. of respondents at region level	
Tigray	838
Oromia	807
Amhara	361
Harari	50
Afar	36
Dire Dawa	27
Addis Ababa	11
Benishangul Gumuz	4
Gambela	4
Somali	1
SNNP	1

Figure 2: Characteristics of migrants by main regions of origin

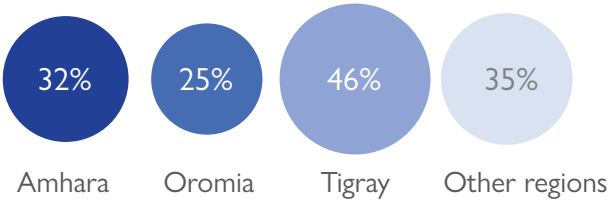
Gender



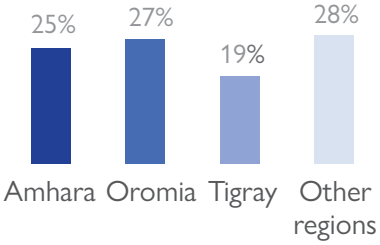
Age (15–19)



Relatives migrated to the KSA



No education



Ethiopian migrants walking on a road towards Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

05 What Drives Young Ethiopians to Migrate Abroad?

5.1. MAIN DRIVERS OF FIRST MIGRATION

In line with the trends observed along the Eastern route in other IOM data collection activities such as the DTM, labour migration is the most common form of irregular movement from Ethiopia to the KSA via Obock. Nearly all respondents reported that they had attempted their first migration journey due to economic reasons, while all other assessed drivers accounted for less than 1 per cent of responses each.[23] The young age of the sampled respondents (15–29 years) may explain the strong prevalence of the economic driver. 'Natural disaster and/or environmental conditions' were more commonly reported as migration drivers amongst migrants from the Amhara region.[24] A full table of migration drivers by migrant category and demographic characteristics can be found in Annex IV.

23. Respondents in Obock were asked for the 'main reason' behind their migration. During the second phase of the research project in Bossaso, respondents were asked for their 'top three reasons', thereby offering more insight into other migration drivers. The background report on the findings from Bossaso can be found *here*.

24. Ethiopia recorded high displacement figures between February and March 2020, with 1,735,481 internally displaced persons (IDPs). A significant portion of these displacements (around 67%) are conflict-induced, largely related to ethnic and border-based disputes, such as the contestation of the Oromia-Somali regional border. Droughts (around 22%) and floods (around 4%) are major causes of climate-induced displacement. In many low laying areas, certain areas can experience reduced rainfall, while others endure heavy rainfall and floods during the *kiremt* rainy season (IOM, 2020b).

5.2. THE DIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC DRIVERS

Although much of the migration along this route is viewed as a coping mechanism to address economic concerns, economic factors are diverse. The qualitative interviews conducted in Obock shed light on the variety of different micro-level, economic drivers. Moreover, the analysis of livelihood indicators from the quantitative surveys suggests a strong linkage between unmet economic aspirations associated with staying at origin, compared to the strong perceived benefits associated with migration.

5.2.1. Unemployment

Just under one in four migrants surveyed during the quantitative phase of the research had some sort of income before migrating (23%) – with a pronounced gender difference (25% of males versus 12% of females). Internal (29%) and returning migrants (28%) were slightly more likely to have an income than first-time migrants (22%). In most cases, earnings came from daily labour and provided a median monthly income of 1,700 ETB (around 52 USD). Around half of the women and girls who reported having an income were salaried employees and earned around 1,000 ETB (30 USD) or less per month. Females were also more likely to report being dependent on remittances or support from family in Ethiopia (23%).

Unemployment also stood out as a key, micro-level driver during the qualitative interviews. Almost one fourth of all qualitative interview respondents reported not being able to find a job in Ethiopia as the main reason why they were migrating.[25] Some migrants offered a reason for their unemployment including land issues,[26] political persecution,[27] as well as a lack of available jobs.[28] According to several migrants, jobs are scarce in their communities of origin, even for those with higher levels of education.[29] According to one interviewee, unemployment can have a psychological impact on men due to gender roles that view men as breadwinners:

> *"My family's wish is that I stay with them and share what they have. They know that bad things will happen to us, but they will not stop us because they know that a grown-up man does not feel well when he has no job."*[30]

5.2.2. Barriers to Job Entry

A commonly reported mechanism underlying unemployment is the lack of capital to start a business. Migrants expressed this idea by explaining that in order to start the small businesses available to individuals in their community, one has to have sufficient money to do so.[31] Individuals below a certain poverty threshold are unable to break out of their poverty, as they lack the means to start such a small business, a classic poverty trap.[32] When asked about the types of opportunities that exist in their communities of origin aside from migration, a common answer was that there

25. Respondent 4; Respondent 5; Respondent 6; Respondent 11; Respondent 12; Respondent 16; Respondent 18; Respondent 22: Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 29; Respondent 30; Respondent 46; Respondent 58; Respondent 61

26. Respondent 16

27. Respondent 22

28. Respondent 4

29. Respondent 18

30. Respondent 30

31. Respondent 1; Respondent 11; Respondent 14; Respondent 18; Respondent 26; Respondent 33; Respondent 38; Respondent 41; Respondent 42; Respondent 45; Respondent 46; Respondent 9

32. A 'poverty trap' is a self-reinforcing mechanism causing poverty to persist (Leibenstein, 1957; Dasgupta, 1986).

CASE STUDY: EDUCATED YET UNEMPLOYED

Respondent 46 graduated from college with a teaching degree in mathematics. He is migrating because he has "been jobless since [he] graduated". He has competed for all teaching posts he has been aware of and has "tried many times". He explained that there are "not many opportunities" in his field of study and the next round of hiring for teachers is in September [interview was conducted in February 2020]. According to him, "everyone who graduated is now jobless". His older brother graduated in accounting and is also unemployed. The respondent reported: "I got fed up sitting at home jobless despite graduating and wanted to try a new chance."

are jobs and small business, but that a large initial fixed cost is required to start a business: "There are many jobs like carpentry, metal work and most commonly, shops. However, you need to have money to start your own business."[33] Job opportunities that were reported as existing but requiring initial capital were opening a shop,[34] buying and selling cows,[35] carpentry or metal work,[36] owning a café or restaurant,[37] owning a hotel,[38] being a taxi or bajaj driver[39] as well as livestock or crop farming for profit.[40] Two migrants linked their lack of money to start a business directly to their current migration project, explaining that since they had no money they "had no options"[41] at home. Respondent 26 explained his predicament as follows: "The jobs available to you depend on what you can afford to do. Some work in construction, others have small businesses and those who own land do farming. I don't have land so I can't farm. […] I decided Saudi is better. I thought working for one or two years in Saudi can change my life."[42]

5.2.3. Low and Insufficient Wages

Low, intermittent, and/or insufficient wages in Ethiopia stood out as another key economic driver among qualitative interview respondents.[43] When asked why they have chosen migration over finding employment in Ethiopia and what other opportunities exist within their communities other than migration, respondents commonly reported that the wages they could earn in Ethiopia were insufficient:[44] "The problem is that you don't get paid well. You can't survive with the salary you get."[45] Aspirations of a better life through higher wages shone through in several interviews: "As a barber my income was hand-

33. Respondent 14

34. Respondent 9; Respondent 45; Respondent 42; Respondent 41; Respondent 33; Respondent 26; Respondent 18; Respondent 14; Respondent 1

35. Respondent 1; Respondent 38

36. Respondent 14

37. Respondent 45

38. Respondent 18

39. Respondent 46

40. Respondent 9; Respondent 26; Respondent 38; Respondent 42

41. Respondent 42

42. Respondent 26

43. Respondent 11; Respondent 15; Respondent 17; Respondent 20; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 27; Respondent 37; Respondent 42; Respondent 43; Respondent 52; Respondent 7

44. Respondent 17; Respondent 20; Respondent 23; Respondent 43

45. Respondent 11

to-mouth, I couldn't change myself with that income. My intention is to really change my life."[46] According to a female interviewee, women and girls in her town predominantly work in coffee and tea shops as well as beauty salons. She explained that "those who have tea shops can make up to 500 ETB (15 USD) on local market days and up to 100 ETB (3 USD) on other days. You don't get more than this. This amount is nothing as there is tax and rent to pay."[47]

Other migrants reported that their monthly earnings were insufficient because they were only receiving intermittent income from casual and oftentimes daily contracts, or seasonal income during harvest times. Intermittent earnings were often reported by migrants whose families are living off their land's harvest, but are only able to harvest their crops a few times a year, resulting in their income not always lasting until the next harvest.[48] Respondents who had been working on construction and mining sites also reported intermittent jobs and wages.[49] Irrespective of whether they had an income in Ethiopia prior to migration or not, migrants commonly felt that no matter how hard they tried and how committed they had been to their work, they were unable to succeed in Ethiopia. For an overview of the self-reported salaries interviewed migrants and their relatives were earning by occupation, please view Annex VI.

A study conducted in Ethiopia by the European Union Research and Evidence Facility (2019) on the impact of youth employment on migration dynamics confirms the link between migration and job satisfaction. The study suggests that employment only decreases aspirations to migrate when individuals are satisfied with their jobs. In Ethiopia, the shortage of employment opportunities is leading people to engage in "irregular, unreliable and typically poorly remunerated work either in the informal sector or through self-employment" (p. 27). Hence, it is not just any form of employment, but adequate employment that is key to understanding the link between employment and migration. Adequate employment should be meaningful for the youth and sufficient to not only sustain, but also improve their lives.

5.2.4. Internal Migration for Employment

Given the lack of employment opportunities and alternatives to agriculture in some of the areas studied, this research also looked into whether migrants were moving internally in Ethiopia in search of employment before embarking on international migration journeys. Of the quantitative survey respondents, 532 individuals (25% of the sample) reported having migrated internally within Ethiopia prior to their current journey to the KSA. Tigray and Oromia were the two main regions of origin of internal migrants (39% and 37% respectively), with most of them originating from the zones of Jimma (24%), Mekele (23%) and Southern Tigray (9%). Migrants from the Amhara region account for 15 per cent of internal migrants (most of whom are from South Wello, North Wello and Oromia), and all other regions and cities for less than 10 per cent. Internal migrants have a similar demographic profile to other migrants in terms of age (nearly half are 20–24 years) and marital status (over 80 per cent are single). Women are less represented (10%) amongst this group. Internal migrants also tend to be more educated, on average.

46. Respondent 15
47. Respondent 27
48. Respondent 42
49. Respondent 26; Respondent 37

Around 38 per cent of migrants interviewed during the qualitative phase of the study had migrated internally in Ethiopia in search of work before their current international journey, indicating that migration to the KSA is, at least in some cases, a measure of last resort.[50] Explanations of why their search for a better life within Ethiopia through internal migration had not succeeded in them meeting their aspirations ranged from not having been able to find a job:[51] "I didn't find a job. All the work is occupied by people from the local community. There is no new job creation in Ethiopia;" [52] low and/or insufficient salaries:[53] "I have been to Asaita. I was working on charcoal mining […] The income was very small. We were doing that for it was better than sitting idly but […] I didn't save any money so I returned;"[54] and earning gains dwarfed by higher living costs in urban areas:[55] "I couldn't live [in Addis] on the income I got from the job. It's not enough for housing and food."[56]

The importance of networks, as well as ethnic belonging when looking for employment outside of their own community was raised by several respondents:[57] "Things are difficult in Addis. There is high corruption in the construction industry. There is also ethnic marginalization. I couldn't pursue my job. The work is dominated by Amhara people. They cast away Oromo people from the work."[58] Respondent 38 emphasized the importance of networks in finding employment in urban centres such as Addis Ababa "to facilitate a job for you."

Migrants who had not tried to migrate within Ethiopia prior to their current, international migration journey used similar arguments to explain why they had not attempted internal migration in the first place. Prohibitive living costs in urban centres were cited as one argument.[59] The lack of family presence in these places further compounded this argument, as resident family can assist with housing, food and finding employment.[60] Low wages were also cited as reasons why internal migration had not been chosen.[61] Others expressed a sense of hopelessness that they would not be able to find a job elsewhere in Ethiopia:[62]

> *"I am hopeless about finding work anywhere in Ethiopia".*[63]

50.Respondent 1; Respondent 14; Respondent 15; Respondent 18; Respondent 2; Respondent 20; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 27; Respondent 29; Respondent 30; Respondent 33; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 39; Respondent 46; Respondent 48; Respondent 52; Respondent 53; Respondent 57; Respondent 6; Respondent 9

51. Respondent 14; Respondent 20; Respondent 29; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 52; Respondent 53

52. Respondent 14

53. Respondent 1; Respondent 15; Respondent 23; Respondent 27; Respondent 37; Respondent 46; Respondent 48; Respondent 9; Respondent 6; Respondent 33; Respondent 25

54. Respondent 25

55. Respondent 27; Respondent 46; Respondent 2

56. Respondent 46

57. Respondent 18; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 25

58. Respondent 22

59. Respondent 11; Respondent 30; Respondent 7

60. Respondent 11

61. Respondent 3; Respondent 36

62. Respondent 16; Respondent 41; Respondent 45; Respondent 55

63. Respondent 16

Case Study: International Migration as a Last Resort

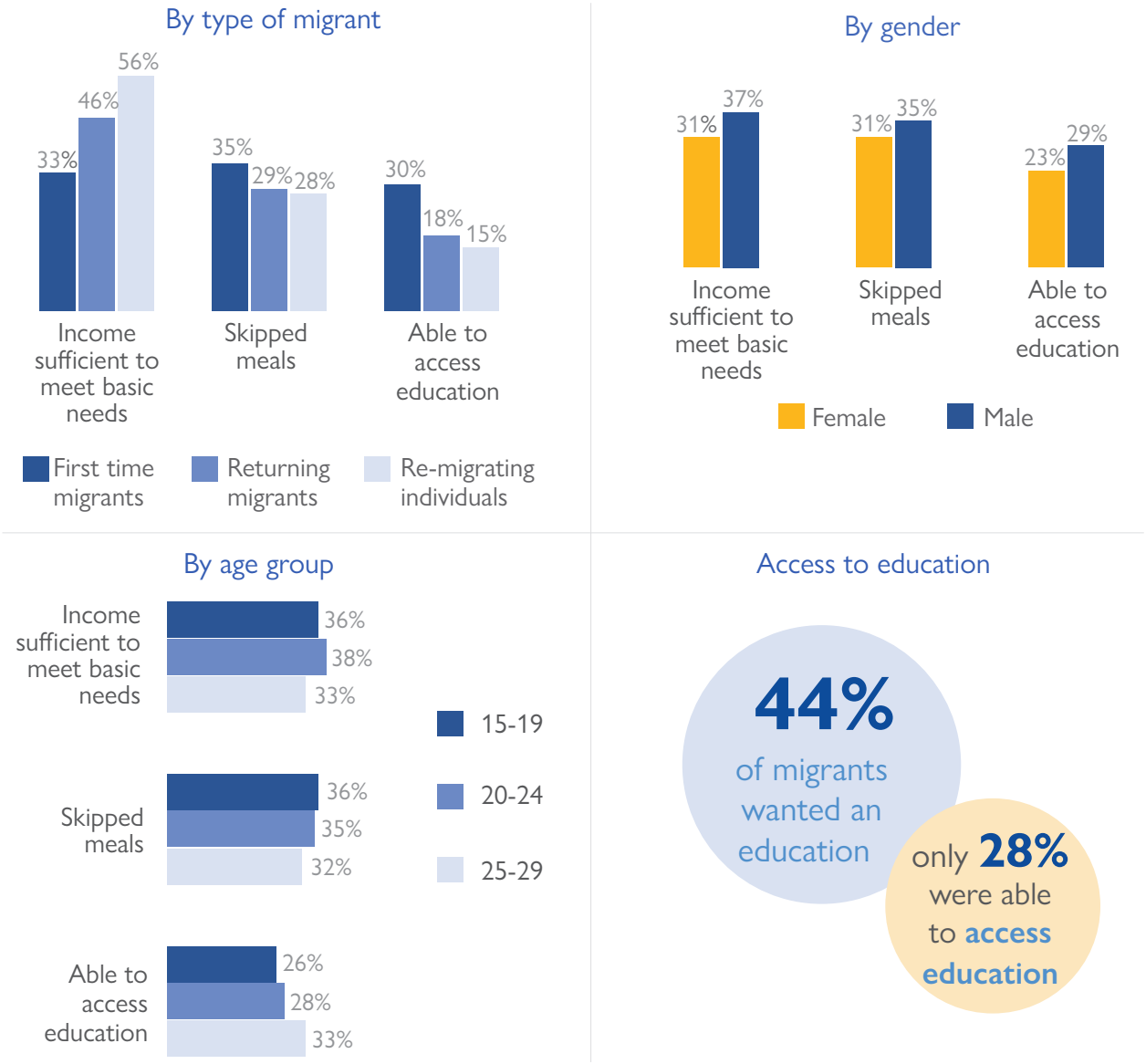
Respondent 27 is a mother of one and the main breadwinner of her household of eight, comprised of her mother and brothers. Her family does not own land and she was forced to drop out of school due to lack of education materials. She "quit knowing education is key to change because [she] couldn't support [herself]" and "even tried distance learning but could not afford it." She has migrated three times within Ethiopia to sustain her family, to Bahirdar and Metema to work as a domestic worker, and to Addis Ababa to work as a waitress. As a domestic worker, she "couldn't make enough money to help [her] family as they have no house or land because [her] income was too little". In Addis Ababa she earned 2,500 ETB per month (75 USD) in addition to tips from her customers. Nonetheless "it couldn't get [her] changed. [She] finished it on taxis, housing and food". She left Addis Ababa as she "couldn't change" herself although she emphasized that she "didn't hate living in Ethiopia". It was her "life conditions" that forced her to migrate internationally.

5.3. ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

Less than half of the quantitative study participants who had some sort of income before migrating (474 individuals) stated that their income was sufficient to meet basic needs. Returning (46%) and re-migrating (56%) individuals were more likely to report that they were able to satisfy their basic needs than first-time migrants (33%). Moreover, one third of migrants come from households where members occasionally 'skip meals' and/or 'reduce portions', both of which can be considered fairly severe coping strategies. In addition, access to education was also reportedly limited, with nearly 50 per cent of migrants reporting that they would have liked to attend education/vocational services in the year before leaving, but only 28 per cent reporting that they were able to do so. Lack of access to education was particularly prominent amongst former internal migrants (62%) and individuals with dependents (57%). Although access to health care was, on average, better than access to education, around one third of respondents who reported that they or a member of their family had needed health care in the year prior to migration, had been unable to access such care.[64] A full table of income sufficiency, coping strategies and needs by migrants' characteristics can be found in Annex VIII.

64. Access to health care and education were computed as a percentage of those reporting needing or wanting to access such services in the past year before data collection.

Figure 3: Income sufficiency, coping strategies and needs



5.4. LAND ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DRIVERS

Rural Ethiopia is historically an agrarian society, yet over the past decades land shortages have fed both rural-urban and rural-international migration (ODI, 2014). Many families work on increasingly fragmented and in some cases miniscule plots of land, producing outputs that are inadequate to feed the family, let alone make profit from (Tefera, 2018; ODI, 2014). Soil erosion and depletion, landlessness, weather-induced shocks such as droughts and floods, fluctuating income within the agricultural sector and lack of non-agricultural employment alternatives in many rural areas have strongly affected the economic well-being of rural populations (Tefera, 2018; Hermans & Garbe, 2019). This can leave young Ethiopians from farming households economically vulnerable. Two thirds of qualitative interviewees reported land-related issues as factors contributing to their economic vulnerability. All of the land-related push factors above were cited by respondents in this study, particularly small and declining plot sizes through generations, poor soil fertility and weather-related shocks.

Low and in many cases insufficient agricultural yields were regularly linked to small plot sizes and were, with only two exceptions, overwhelmingly reported by migrants from the Oromia region.[65] Of these migrants, nine reported that the small size of their land has resulted in agricultural yields that are insufficient to feed their families.[66] Land having been parcelled up and divided between siblings upon inheritance was one explanation for small plot sizes.[67] Not receiving a share of the family's land was reported as another: "I don't have my own land. My family didn't give me my share. I was working on other people's land and we shared the profit equally. However, I didn't get enough harvest as the land was not suitable for farming."[68] A female interviewee reported that when her father, who would farm their land, passed away, the family was unable to take care of the land, and they let local men farm it, reducing their profit by half.[69] Another respondent reported that a land relocation scheme had reduced his family's plot size from being large enough to live off it, to not sustaining his family anymore,[70] while another had been relocated from his land to make way for an infrastructure project.[71]

Around 15 per cent of qualitative respondents reported that they or their family owned land but were not able to benefit from it due to poor soil fertility.[72] One migrant linked the problems his family was experiencing with their soil directly to his migration:

> *"I want to work and earn money because in our country you can't work and get better results. Like in our case due to infertile soil, we couldn't harvest enough produce […] yet our life depends on our land."*[73]

Several informants cited a lack of fertilizers as the core of their land problems:[74] "The land is not productive. We need to buy fertilizer to increase productivity of our land, but that also costs us extra money, like ETB 900 (27 USD) every three months. Even then, the land is not enough to feed my family."[75] Other respondents reported that they lacked an irrigation system, needed to improve soil quality: "My family has land but it is not enough to feed all of them since we have no irrigation and we can't grow vegetables […] as vegetables and other things need water."[76]

Both drought as well as heavy rainfall were cited as weather-related shocks that affected respondents' livelihoods and played a role in triggering their migration. Not having irrigation systems and depending on rainwater was most commonly cited.[77] While some reported that

65. Respondent 12; Respondent 17; Respondent 33; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 39; Respondent 41; Respondent 54; Respondent 6; Respondent 62; Respondent 63

66. Respondent 12; Respondent 17; Respondent 39; Respondent 41; Respondent 6; Respondent 62; Respondent 63; Respondent 7; Respondent 17

67. Respondent 54

68. Respondent 29

69. Respondent 53

70. Respondent 41

71. Respondent 48

72. Respondent 14; Respondent 17; Respondent 20; Respondent 3; Respondent 34; Respondent 38; Respondent 45; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 7

73. Respondent 45

74. Respondent 20; Respondent 3; Respondent 17

75. Respondent 17

76. Respondent 14

77. Respondent 10; Respondent 42; Respondent 25; Respondent 7

there had been rain but it had been insufficient,[78] others reported complete drought that had not only affected crops, but also livestock: "Even cattle are dying in the dry season."[79] Several linked their migration directly to the problems they were experiencing with their land and harvest: "There was drought. That's why I'm migrating. If there is no rain in the season you will not get a harvest that year."[80] Migrating due to unsuccessful harvests does not seem to be uncommon,[81] with several migrants explaining that individuals from their communities "migrate when life doesn't go well or the harvest is not well,"[82] while another migrant reported: "There is drought now. What do we eat? We believe we will work [in Saudi Arabia] and be self-sufficient after."[83] Several migrants demonstrated entrepreneurship in dealing with challenges posed by water shortages. A re-migrating respondent, for example, reported that upon returning to Ethiopia after his first migration he used the money he had earned in the KSA to buy a motorized pump to irrigate his land using ground water.[84]

Others reported that abnormally heavy rainfall had affected their crops.[85] The uncertainty of weather-related shocks can push young Ethiopians to migrate, so their households minimize their risk by diversifying their income sources: "When there is heavy rainfall the flood erodes all that we have produced. Since the produce we harvest is potentially not enough for my family of six, I decided to contribute my share by working in Saudi."[86]

5.5. EDUCATION

The data from the quantitative surveys show that respondents' educational background is generally low: over half have no education (24%) or have not gone further than primary school (33%) and only 10 migrants in the sample completed tertiary education (bachelor's degree or higher). Some scholars have concluded that the high prevalence of migration has reduced the perceived value of education. They argue that education is discredited in some areas where children need to support their families financially. In such contexts, leaving school and seeking employment at home or abroad through migration is seen as being more financially fruitful (Semela & Cochrane, 2019). This study found that rather than devaluing education, most participants held educational achievement in high regard. Although many respondents did drop out of school prematurely to help provide for their families, this was, in most cases, not because they perceived education as a poor way to build a future in Ethiopia but because of financial and other barriers preventing them from staying in school. Several respondents reported that they would like to continue their education once they have achieved their goals abroad,[87] or that they regretted leaving school:[88] "You can't pursue both education and money at the same time in Ethiopia. You'll either go after money or education, but I really regret leaving school."[89]

Over two thirds of qualitative respondents believed that education is a good way to build a

78. Respondent 7; Respondent 52; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 45; Respondent 65

79. Respondent 45

80. Respondent 10

81. Respondent 52; Respondent 50

82. Respondent 30

83. Respondent 42

84. Respondent 25

85. Respondent 53; Respondent 8; Respondent 28; Respondent 44

86. Respondent 33

87.Respondent 12; Respondent 17; Respondent 19; Respondent 28; Respondent 31; Respondent 32; Respondent 39; Respondent 41; Respondent 42; Respondent 44; Respondent 47; Respondent 50; Respondent 54; Respondent 56

88. Respondent 1; Respondent 2; Respondent 47; Respondent 54

89. Respondent 1

future in Ethiopia.[90] However, not being able to focus on education due to other commitments such as working to support the family was frequently reported as a barrier to education for those who wished they had been able to complete their education. Reported barriers to accessing education were a lack of money to pursue education:[91] "education is the best way to improve life […] but I have nothing for my survival,"[92] including the inability to buy school supplies.[93] Family structures following the death or separation of parents and caregivers were also linked to dropping out of school, due to the family losing a key income generator and respondents reporting that they had to take on additional financial responsibilities, which prevented them from continuing their education. In some cases, this may force young men and women to take on financial responsibility for siblings: "After our father died […] I was not able to go to school. I was instead forced to feed my starving sisters and help them attend school. They are attending school now. It is for their sake that I came this way, I wouldn't have migrated for my own sake."[94] Poor performance in school and failed exams were also cited as reasons why interviewees were not able to continue their education. This is in line with other studies that have also reported similar findings. School enrolment in Ethiopia decreases at secondary level, in part because some fail national-level qualifying exams at grade 8 or 10 – which determine if they can progress to secondary school or preparatory school (Schewel, 2018). In this study, seven respondents reported that they were not able to continue their education because they had failed their national exams.[95]

Although a positive relationship between the level of education and the likelihood of having a source of income was identified in the quantitative sample,[96] the effect of education on reported earnings seems to be very limited, and migrants with no or low education levels reported very similar average monthly incomes as those who are more educated. Likewise, although most qualitative interviewees valued education, not all of them believed that attaining high levels of education would help them meet their aspirations:[97] "I think education is just a useful tool but not something that changes life."[98] Another migrant observed:

> *"It may or may not change your life. There are so many people who have invested more than 10 years in education and graduated from university, who are still migrating with us."*[99]

90. Respondent 1; Respondent 10; Respondent 11; Respondent 12; Respondent 13; Respondent 14; Respondent 16; Respondent 17; Respondent 19; Respondent 2; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 27; Respondent 28; Respondent 29; Respondent 31; Respondent 32; Respondent 35; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 39; Respondent 41; Respondent 42; Respondent 44; Respondent 46; Respondent 47; Respondent 48; Respondent 49; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 52; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 55; Respondent 56; Respondent 57; Respondent 58; Respondent 6; Respondent 60; Respondent 61; Respondent 62; Respondent 63; Respondent 7; Respondent 8; Respondent 9

91. Respondent 62; Respondent 61; Respondent 50; Respondent 6; Respondent 33; Respondent 28; Respondent 24; Respondent 4

92. Respondent 31

93. Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 27

94. Respondent 25

95. Respondent 15; Respondent 3; Respondent 53; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 8; Respondent 64

96. Around 25 per cent of migrants who have no education or have completed primary or lower secondary school were working versus 30 per cent of those having completed upper secondary and 40 per cent of those holding a tertiary education degree.

97. Respondent 15; Respondent 18; Respondent 20; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 3; Respondent 30; Respondent 36; Respondent 40; Respondent 43; Respondent 45; Respondent 46; Respondent 63; Respondent 9

98. Respondent 15

99. Respondent 63

5.6. MIGRATION "TO CHANGE MY LIFE"

Whether they focused on unemployment, barriers to business, insufficient wages or land issues, study participants overwhelmingly described the economic landscape in their communities of origin as holding them back from achieving their goals and aspirations, and positioned themselves as economically vulnerable and lacking opportunities to aspire to. This perceived lack of viable alternatives at home coupled with high expectations and hopes of what can be attained abroad was evident in the almost 50 per cent of qualitative respondents who reported that they were migrating to "change [their] life."[100] The phrases "to change my life" or "to change myself" were the most commonly repeated answer in interviewees' accounts of why they were migrating. This aspirational driver, wherein migration is framed as an investment in the future, is key to understanding youth migration along the Eastern Corridor.

Underlying the wish for a "better life"[101, 102] was a sense of hopelessness, with several respondents emphasizing that their migration to the KSA stemmed out of necessity rather than a desire to leave their home: I felt sad. We can work here, we have a life here. It is not good to recklessly sacrifice your life by migrating [but] I am poor."[103] The lack of alternatives to migration was also expressed by female migrants: "As there are no jobs in Ethiopia and we're hopeless, there was no option left other than migration."[104]

For some migrants, their desire to thrive, prosper and deal with economic uncertainty is so strong that they are willing to take on great risk: "It is way better to take the risk of being in a capsizing boat than sitting idly in your country, as you will not change your life no matter how much effort you put into it."[105] Not even the possibility of death during the journey outweighed the lack of opportunity felt at home:

> *"I want to get rid of my poverty. My friends migrated and changed. It is now only I left in poverty. I want to change my life. There is no job to sustain life. I started the journey saying let me try this, whether I make it or die along the way."*[106]

5.7. THE BENEFITS OF MIGRATION TO THE KSA

In contrast to the difficult conditions most study participants reported at home, most quantitative participants, regardless of their characteristics, had high expectations of the outcome of their journey: between a third and half of interviewees deemed it 'likely' or 'very likely' that they would find a job in the KSA. Returning migrants were the least optimistic (36%) and internal migrants the most optimistic (55%). Except for females – who primarily seek employment as domestic workers (56%) – most plan on seeking employment as shepherds, gardeners, generic daily workers or in

100. Respondent 9; Respondent 63; Respondent 62; Respondent 60; Respondent 59; Respondent 54; Respondent 53; Respondent 50; Respondent 46; Respondent 43; Respondent 42; Respondent 40; Respondent 39; Respondent 38; Respondent 36; Respondent 35; Respondent 34; Respondent 31; Respondent 30; Respondent 28; Respondent 27; Respondent 26; Respondent 25; Respondent 24; Respondent 23; Respondent 20; Respondent 18; Respondent 15; Respondent 14; Respondent 13; Respondent 12; Respondent 65; Respondent 66

101. Respondent 20

102. Other studies have also identified the search for a 'better life' as a driver of Ethiopian, Eastern Route migration (EUTF Research & Evidence Facility, 2019; USAID, 2017).

103. Respondent 37

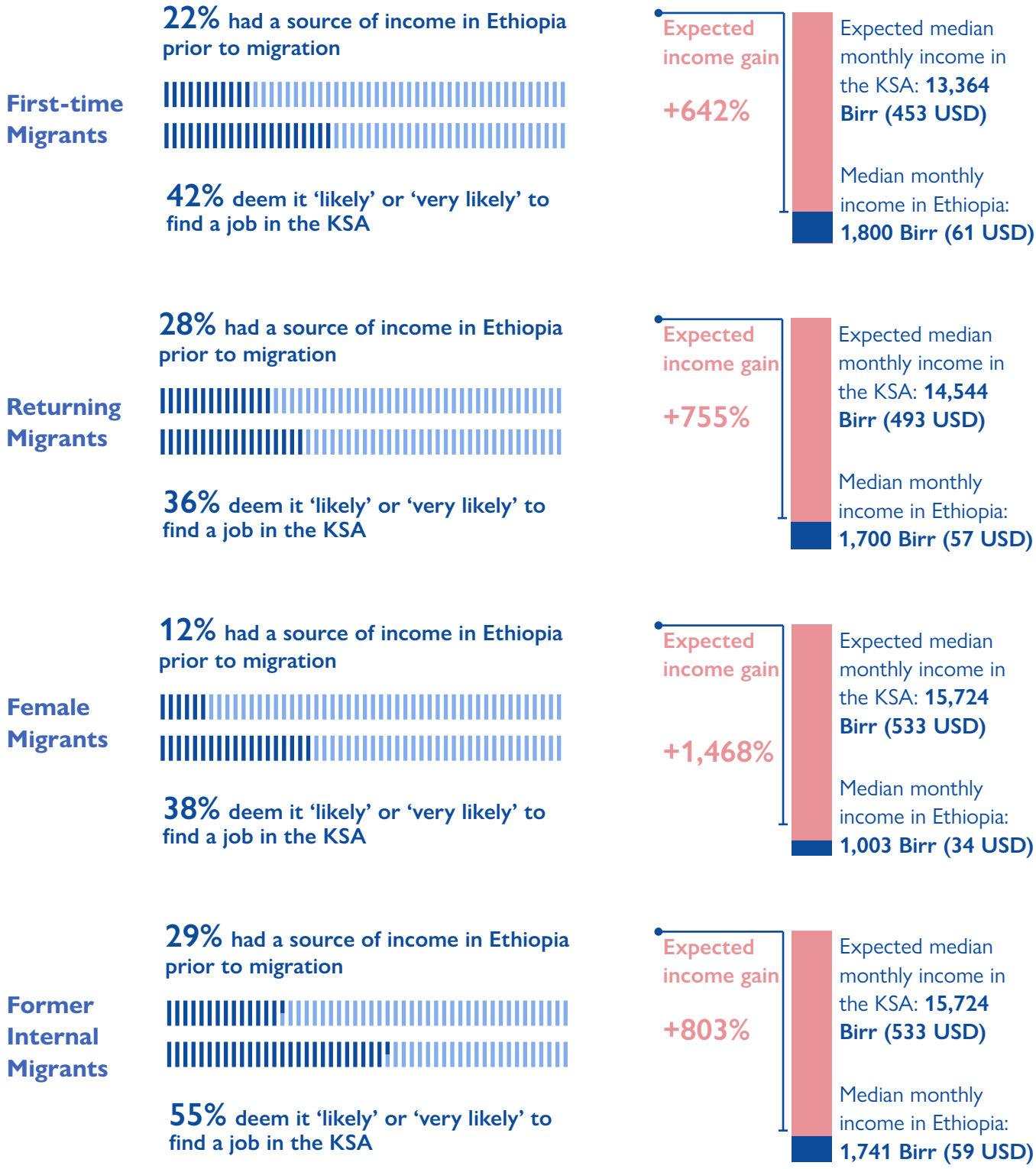
104. Respondent 9

105. Respondent 25

106. Respondent 53

agriculture. The expected monthly median income varies between 453 USD for first-time migrants and 533 USD for females and internal migrants, meaning that first-time migrants expect to earn more than seven times what they were earning in Ethiopia if they were employed at all, with the average wage differential between the median income in Ethiopia and the expected income in the KSA ranging between approximately 400 and 500 USD depending on migrant category. A full table of livelihoods before migration and expectations upon migration for all migrant categories can be found in Annex IX.

Figure 4: Livelihoods before migration and expectations upon migration by migrant category



The high expectations of the journey outcome were also visible in the qualitative interviews, during which most interviewees believed that finding a relatively well-paid job in the KSA was 'easy;' they were encouraged by the success stories they had witnessed amongst returnees at home. When asked about the benefits of migration to the KSA, respondents overwhelmingly reported 'to work', including the ease with which one can find well-paid employment, and 'money:'[107] "There is so much attractive work in Saudi. The exchange rate or Riyal to Birr is increasing. I want to send Riyal back home and make big money."[108] One respondent emphasized the wage differentials between what they were earning in Ethiopia and what they expect to earn in the KSA: "The money we get in a year in Ethiopia we can get monthly in Saudi."[109]

5.7.1. The Role of Migration Success Stories

Tales of success play an influencing role in promoting Eastern Corridor migration. Almost 50 per cent of qualitative respondents reported that they had felt drawn to migrate to the KSA after seeing the 'success stories' of their siblings, peers or other returned members of their communities.[110] Moreover, the remittances that are sent home become visible to community members, fuelling what the migration literature has labelled a sense of 'relative deprivation,' compared to others in the same social group. Many participants in this study expressed a sense of relative deprivation as they observe families with relatives in the KSA benefitting from remittances and improving their living standards: "I know people who have gone to Jeddah and now have bought cars and Bajaj's and built houses. I am migrating just to be successful like them."[111] By imagining their future in relation to successful community members, they engage in what Koikkalainen & Kyle (2015) refer to as 'cognitive migration', in which individuals visualize themselves in a future place and their minds start to form the idea of migration as a viable option. This is usually the first step in the migration decision-making process.

Although some are pushed by absolute deprivation, others' aspirations are better viewed in relative terms: "There are no jobs apart from daily labour and farming. We can also farm using irrigation but that is also not enough. We get a maximum of 200–300 Birr (6–9 USD) a day, which is nothing. When we see successes of those who went to Saudi and built houses and changed their lives, we couldn't work [at home] mediocrely. We knew that it's better to migrate."[112] Migrants in this study viewed migration as key to the development that they were witnessing in their communities and wanted to take part in: "Some [returnees] buy cattle, sheep or other livestock, others buy farmland. Some improve their family and some get married and raise children very

107. Respondent 57; Respondent 56; Respondent 50; Respondent 49; Respondent 34; Respondent 33; Respondent 31; Respondent 29; Respondent 28; Respondent 26; Respondent 22; Respondent 2; Respondent 19; Respondent 18; Respondent 17; Respondent 16; Respondent 15; Respondent 13; Respondent 12; Respondent 11; Respondent 10; Respondent 1

108. Respondent 8

109. Respondent 33

110. Respondent 63; Respondent 62; Respondent 59; Respondent 57; Respondent 53; Respondent 52; Respondent 49; Respondent 46; Respondent 44; Respondent 43; Respondent 4; Respondent 39; Respondent 35; Respondent 34; Respondent 33; Respondent 32; Respondent 30; Respondent 3; Respondent 29; Respondent 28; Respondent 24; Respondent 21; Respondent 2; Respondent 18; Respondent 17; Respondent 16; Respondent 15; Respondent 11; Respondent 10; Respondent 1

111. Respondent 10

112. Respondent 43

well […]. Most build beautiful house[s] and bought cars."[113] Interviewees reported that they were seeing people who had returned from the KSA "prospering"[114] and "changing their lives."[115] Conversely, some re-migrating individuals reported that their success had inspired others. A re-migrating person who had built a house between migration journeys reported that his success had 'initiated' others in his community to migrate.[116] One migrant reported that his peers had used 'success stories' to convince him to migrate: "They would say, you drive someone else's Bajaj, but they have their own. There are some who built houses. They kind of tried to push me by telling me positive stories."[117]

Although many Ethiopians return to Ethiopia 'unsuccessfully', in some cases having been deported before even entering the country or having entered the country but been deported prior to earning enough money, interviewees explained that such negative stories are downplayed while 'success stories' are emphasized. Respondent 24 explained that although the majority of returnees in his community had been unsuccessful, the small number of successful returnees "get more coverage." "People like to talk about success stories of migration rather than negative stories, I don't know why." Another respondent reported: "Young people see only success stories. They don't trust the negative stories, so they migrate. Not because the community expects them to; they migrate because they think it is a means of getting a high quality of life."[118]

5.8. MAIN DRIVERS OF RE-MIGRATION

Of the quantitative survey respondents, 309 individuals (15% of the sample) reported having already attempted or completed the journey to the KSA prior to their current migration attempt. Compared to other migrants, re-migrating individuals have slightly more dependents and have strong networks in the KSA (43% have at least one family member who has already migrated to the KSA). Nonetheless, the vast majority reported that they are migrating for economic reasons.

Previous migrations seem to not have increased their likelihood of having an income in Ethiopia (only 16% have a source of income compared to 21% before first migration). However, the occupational status and earnings of those who were working seem to have improved between journeys: daily labour is no longer their main source of income (from 43% to 20%), with farming (30%) and business and trade (20%) reported more frequently than amongst first-time migrants. Their average monthly income has increased from 2,687 to 5,913 ETB (90 to 200 USD). Consequently, around 15 per cent of working, re-migrating individuals were financing their current journey through savings (compared to 6 per cent before the first migration).[119] This finding is also confirmed by the fact that re-migrating individuals are the most likely to have paid for their current journey with their own funds (54% versus 48% of first-time migrants and 45% of returning migrants).

113. Respondent 29

114. Respondent 28

115. Respondent 39; Respondent 57; Respondent 30

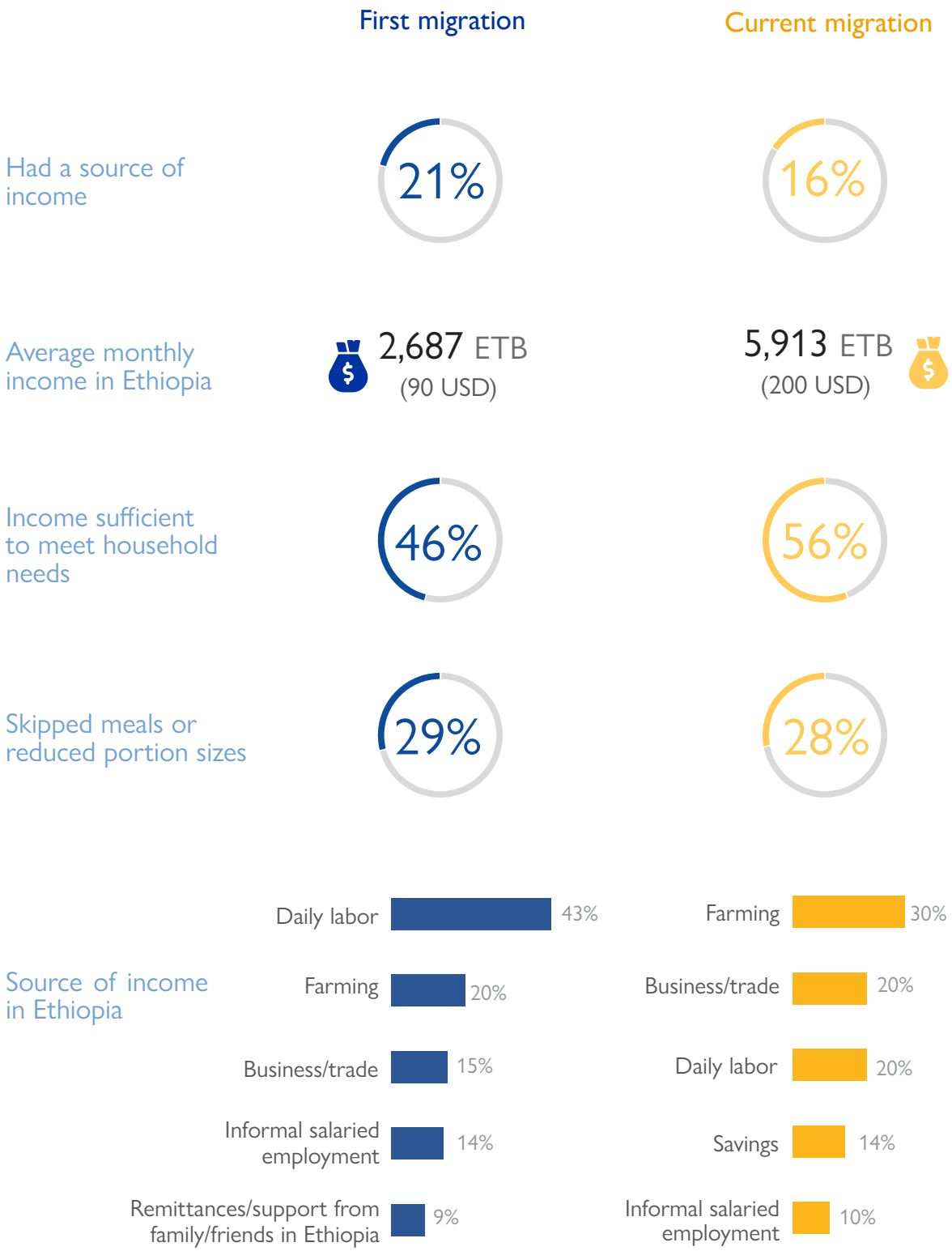
116. Respondent 16

117. Respondent 2

118. Respondent 1

119. According to a returnees needs assessment conducted by the ILO (2018), the average monthly income of the returnees improved while abroad compared to pre-migration by a significant proportion. However, within a short time post-return, the average income declined even when compared to the pre-migration level. The decline between pre and post migration was more prevalent in Tigray and in Addis Ababa.

Figure 5: Livelihoods at first migration versus livelihoods at current migration



5.8.1. Unsuccessful Migration Attempts and the Stigma of Returnees

Although most re-migrating individuals report migrating for economic reasons, negative return environments including difficulty to reintegrate upon return may also play a role in explaining why many returnees re-migrate again fairly rapidly. Both existing literature and the qualitative interviews reveal that some returnees may find themselves in a difficult return situation in which they can be isolated and stigmatized, whilst they may also be experiencing physical and mental health challenges and financial stress following migration. This observation indicates that the culture of migration amongst young Ethiopians (explored in Chapter 7 of this report) may not extend across all generations, and its presence and pervasiveness may vary between different communities and different stages of the migratory process. This culture of migration also seems to propagate positive migration narratives, while 'unsuccessful' returnees, who do not fit the image of the ideal, successful migrant, may be stigmatized or viewed as irrelevant.

The qualitative data confirms existing literature on migrants' reintegration in Ethiopia. Arduous and risky journeys, tight border controls, and the detention and deportation of irregular labourers in the KSA mean that not all migrants achieve their migration aspirations and goal of improving their living conditions before returning back to Ethiopia. Such unplanned departures are key to understanding returnees' return experiences and reception in their communities of origin. These returns can also leave migrants worse off than prior to migration due to the costs they themselves, and in some cases their families, have sunk into the project. The 'success' or 'failure' of a migration and how the migrant is evaluated are also deeply linked to whether an adequate amount of remittances was sent home (De Regt & Tafesse, 2016; Kuschminder et al., 2018). Forced returns may therefore not only put migrants and their households into precarious financial situations, when the investment of migration does not pay off, but even place those who were 'successful' for a period of time prior to return into a situation where they go from enjoying their families' respect as the breadwinner, to a situation where the families' well-being regresses due to their return.

While most qualitative respondents reported that they would be welcome at home if they returned without money, 11 reported that returning to their communities without money was not an option for them. Some respondents from both Tigray and Oromia reported that those who are deported before having earned money usually "stay away" after deportation.[120] In some cases, the pressure to return with money seems to be imposed on the migrant by his or her family: "It is the money you come back with that matters. I have seen my friend die on the journey, but I am migrating. Unsuccessful returnees and those who are deported usually migrate again even without going home. If I come back without money they do not welcome me. I will take my child and find a job in Addis."[121] Debts with families and the sunk costs that went into 'unsuccessful' migration journeys were also posited to explain why returnees may feel unwelcome: "If you have money you are loved and respected by everyone. If you don't have money you may live with your family, but you won't get along well with them. The returnees and families get bored of each other because the returnees don't have money and have wasted some already on migration."[122]

The nature of return seems to be key to understanding returnees' well-being. Those who are deported before at least partially achieving

120. Respondent 19

121. Respondent 36

122. Respondent 23

their goals and experiencing the benefits of migration were often framed as 'feeling unwell' or 'crazy' and mental illness was usually linked to running out of money or having returned without money: "They are hopeless. Some lose their mind. Some cause trouble with [the] police. They go [to the KSA] through borrowing money from their family. When they come back without any money to pay back, they get stressed. Having gone through those difficulties in those journeys, they get so angry when they profited nothing."[123] Of all qualitative interviewees, 50 per cent reported that many returnees in their communities migrate again rapidly after return, especially those who return without money or are 'unsuccessful' in achieving their aspirations of finding a 'better life.'[124] The quantitative surveys conducted with re-migrating individuals support this finding: around 65 per cent of surveyed re-migrating individuals had migrated at least three times and around 40 per cent had spent less than one month in Ethiopia before departing again.

Around half of the migrants interviewed reported that their communities had discriminatory terminologies such as nicknames for returnees including "xirriz,"[125] which was predominantly reported amongst migrants from the Amhara and Oromia regions and translates to 'deportees' and is a "negative word"[126] according to respondents: "They [the returnees] don't want to be called that."[127] Tigrayan respondents commonly reported that returnees were called "shirofeses,"[128] a term that translates to 'watery shiro'. Shiro is a very cheap Ethiopian dish. According to Hailu (2015) this nickname has several negative interpretations including that migrants "do not know how to save money", are "extravagant" and "cannot think for the future" (p. 32). An element of religious stigmatization of migrants returning from GCC countries was visible in several respondents reporting that returnees were given Muslim names by their community upon return such as: "Ibrahim and Mohammed"[129] and "Kedir"[130] for men and boys, "Hawa and Miriam" for girls and women and "Haj."[131,132] Other terminologies that were mentioned less frequently were "chanceless"[133] for those who returned unsuccessfully, "bozone" an Ethiopian term used for people who live carelessly without money,[134] "useless people who consume money for nothing,"[135] "Kumartegna,"[136] meaning 'gambler men' and "dim light"[137] for those who come back quickly.

123. Respondent 28

124. Respondent 63; Respondent 62; Respondent 60; Respondent 59; Respondent 57; Respondent 55; Respondent 54; Respondent 53; Respondent 52; Respondent 51; Respondent 50; Respondent 49; Respondent 48; Respondent 46; Respondent 45; Respondent 43; Respondent 42; Respondent 41; Respondent 40; Respondent 39; Respondent 37; Respondent 36; Respondent 35; Respondent 32; Respondent 31; Respondent 30; Respondent 27; Respondent 26; Respondent 25; Respondent 24; Respondent 23; Respondent 17; Respondent 15

125. Respondent 14; Respondent 25; Respondent 27; Respondent 29; Respondent 30; Respondent 31; Respondent 40; Respondent 41; Respondent 43; Respondent 46; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 56; Respondent 57; Respondent 63

126. Respondent 14

127. Respondent 25

128. Respondent 18; Respondent 3; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 43; Respondent 52

129. Respondent 10

130. Respondent 61

131. Respondent 33

132. The 'Haj' is the annual, Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca. Some migrants have been reported to enter the KSA regularly by attending the 'Haj' and then overstaying their visas.

133. Respondent 18

134. Respondent 2

135. Respondent 32

136. Respondent 18

137. Respondent 3

Migrants' return experiences are also linked to their experiences during the journey and in the destination country, including potential violations they may have experienced (De Regt & Tafesse, 2016). Several studies have measured a prevalence of mental health conditions amongst returnees in Ethiopia (Anebesse et al, 2009; Zeleke et al., 2015; Zewdu & Suleyiman, 2018; Fentaw, 2018). In addition to experiences of abuse abroad, negative welcomes at home have also been found to impact returnees' wellbeing (Atnafu & Adamek, 2016; Fentaw; 2018).[138] The notion of returnees as 'troubled' and/or 'trouble makers' was also evident in almost one third of interviewees' responses[139] and most commonly linked to frivolous spending[140] and/or addiction to khat, alcohol and gambling:[141] "Many get addicted to drinks, some get addicted to gambling […] when they could have done many great things with this money."[142] As a result, some are "rejected" by their communities as they "have behaviours that do not fit [the] community's standards."[143] This dissonance between returnees and their communities can lead to poor reintegration results and, not uncommonly, rapid re-migration. Another common theme that arose regarding returnees' positioning within communities was that they were described as having a mental illness.[144]

Shame and Religious Stigma

Respondent 37 is 22 years old and was migrating for the sixth time when he was interviewed. Four of his journeys were successful and he was able to find a job and send home remittances. One journey ended at the border to the KSA. He was able to support his family through remittances and even save some money for himself for "future migration" and to "get drunk, go to clubs and have fun with friends". Despite returning with money, he has experienced stigma and emotional distress: "You feel really ashamed when you are deported back to Ethiopia. Even how workers view us is very bad. They belittle us by saying you don't have mind, you are a fool; they consider us as dogs or animals." He reported that on several occasions he had felt so "ashamed" that he "couldn't even go and eat with [his] family." Stigma within his family is religious in nature. According to the respondent, his mother feels that by going to the KSA, a Muslim country, he has changed his religion, while his family is deeply Christian: "since my family is Christian and I came from an Islamic country I don't feel welcome. I can't normally join them until I get baptized again at church." He reports that he was baptized after his first two journeys; however, "baptism is only allowed thrice and after that one will be called Muslim in the community". This is the reason why he is currently re-migrating "without going home" in between journeys, because if he had returned home his family would have "forced [him] to get baptized and he will not be able to migrate to Saudi again."

138. For example, young women who have migrated to the Middle East are often seen as having been sexually abused and exploited and are thus not suitable marriage partners, while migrants of both sexes report negative, societal attitudes towards them including stigma and discrimination (De Regt & Tafesse, 2016). Despite the prevalence of mental health challenges amongst returnees, support and understanding of mental health challenges is not always guaranteed due to societal and cultural norms such as *gemena* that dictate that shameful events such as sexual abuse are not openly discussed, due to the stigma and distress it might cause the individual and the family (ODI, 2014) as well as the fact that in parts of Ethiopia "mental health issues are commonly believed to have supernatural causes such as possession by an evil spirit [… and], as a result, Ethiopians don't tend to seek professional help to address their psychological distress and mental health problems" (Zeleke et al, 2015, p.5).

139. Respondent 63; Respondent 60; Respondent 6; Respondent 58; Respondent 56; Respondent 53; Respondent 52; Respondent 38; Respondent 37; Respondent 36; Respondent 34; Respondent 31; Respondent 28; Respondent 25; Respondent 24; Respondent 23; Respondent 2; Respondent 18; Respondent 10

140.Respondent 2; Respondent 10; Respondent 52; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 28; Respondent 31; Respondent 34; Respondent 38

141. Respondent 18; Respondent 10; Respondent 2; Respondent 56; Respondent 36

142. Respondent 18

143. Respondent 2

144. Respondent 18; Respondent 63; Respondent 60; Respondent 6; Respondent 53; Respondent 38; Respondent 37; Respondent 36; Respondent 25; Respondent 24; Respondent 43; Respondent 46

Portrait of a local woman who sells bread to migrants in Fantehero, Djibouti.
© Alexander Bee/IOM

Migrants gathered outside Obock under a tree while waiting for a boat departure to Yemen. © Alexander Bee/IOM

06

How aware are young Ethiopian migrants of the risks of migrating to the Gulf and what expectations do they have of their journeys?

6.1. JOURNEY EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES EN ROUTE

6.1.1. Duration and Cost of Journey

The Eastern Route to the GCC countries via Djibouti (and Somalia) is considered to be one of the cheaper migration routes out of Ethiopia, but costs vary based on the 'package' migrants acquire (important considerations are the distance travelled, the level of safety granted, the means of travel and duration of time spent on foot versus in vehicles, and to what extent basic necessities such as food and water are provided) and depend on whether the migrant is using the services of brokers. According to the data collected from re-migrating individuals, a journey from Ethiopia to the KSA costs an average of 686 USD, with the median migrant paying 505 USD or less. The expected cost of the journey for first-time migrants was 795 USD on average. The higher expected cost of the journey between categories could be explained by the amount of time that has elapsed between journeys:

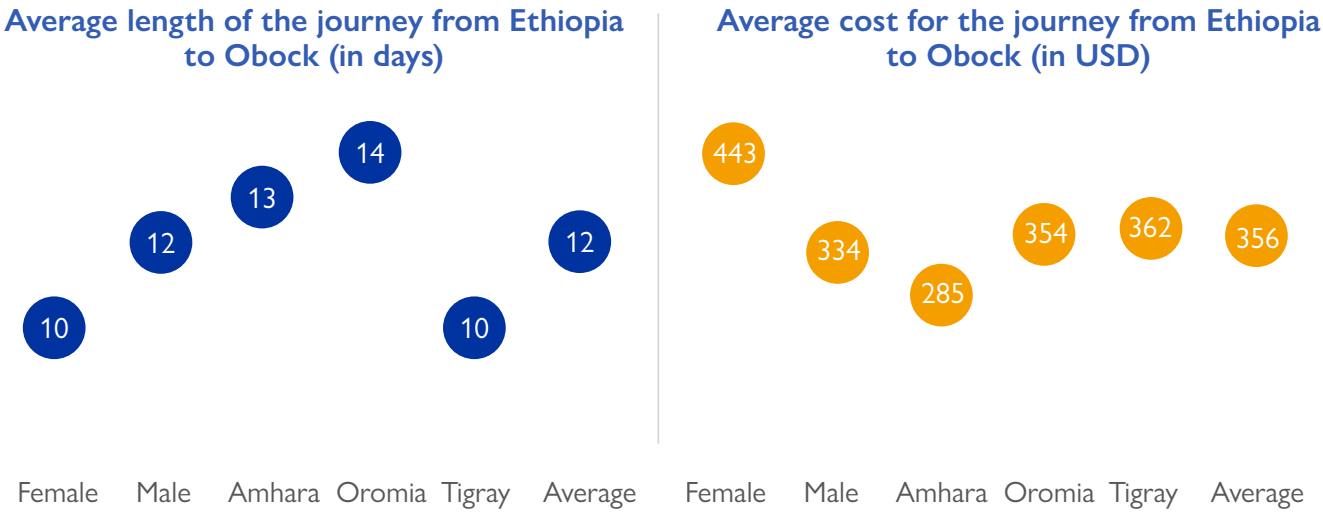
around 40 per cent of re-migrating individuals undertook their first journey over two years ago and it is not unlikely that the fee of brokers' services have increased since then. Moreover, it is not uncommon for re-migrating individuals to enter into agreements with brokers wherein they recruit others to migrate and travel for less themselves. The relationship between brokers and re-migrating individuals is discussed in depth in Chapter 7.

The first leg of the journey to Obock took migrants an average of 12 days and they paid an average of 365 USD. Females paid slightly more (443 USD on average) and travelled for a shorter period (10 days), possibly because they were paying more for their journey and are more likely to travel certain segments by car. The cost of the journey appears to be linked to the popularity of the route and the existence of established migration networks rather than geographical proximity. In general, migrants are not always aware of how much they will end up paying for their journey, with some reporting having been deceived about the cost of the journey by brokers prior to departure or being extorted to pay additional fees en route.

Many migrants also underestimate the additional costs of buying food and water en route and some travel without any money, thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to a multitude of protection risks such as dehydration, starvation and disease.

The average re-migrating individual reported it took 26 days to reach the KSA from Ethiopia, with half of them reporting that their journey took 20 days or less.[145] First-time migrants interviewed during the quantitative phase of the research seem to slightly underestimate the duration of the journey prior to departure, with most indicating that they expected the journey would last 'between 1 and 2 weeks' (38%) or '2 weeks to 1 month' (28%), while almost one in five first-time migrants thought the journey would take less than a week. The duration of the journey is also influenced by the inability to pay for the next leg of the journey once certain transit hubs are reached, and/or the need to work en route. Around one in five migrants, especially re-migrating individuals (24%), reported that they were 'working en route' to help finance their journey.

Figure 6: Average cost and length of the journey from Ethiopia to Obock



145. See box 'Re-migrating individuals and previous journeys' on page 76 for more information.

6.1.2. Risks and Hardships During the Journey

Migrants can face a range of challenges and hardships during their journey from Ethiopia to the KSA via Obock, including lack of access to basic services, shelter, medical care, food and water. They can be vulnerable to threats to their security such as extortion, trafficking, death by drowning, exhaustion and disease, and physical and psychological abuse, with women and girls most at risk of gender-based-violence (GBV) perpetrated by various actors including smugglers and other migrants. One of the main challenges experienced by migrants on their way to Obock are the harsh climatic conditions in Djibouti, where temperatures often exceed 40 degrees Celsius in the summer months. Migrants often endure long journeys on foot through the desert, where they are exposed to the extreme elements. The degree of hardship experienced depends on a variety of factors including migrants' agreements with their brokers, travel modalities and location, with conditions often the harshest on off-road routes outside of transit hubs like Tadjourah or Obock, where migrants are able to purchase food and water if they have the funds to do so and have access to medical support and other services provided by IOM at its Migration Response Centre (MRC).

Amongst quantitative respondents, around 60 per cent of migrants reported that they had suffered from lack of food and water before reaching Obock and nearly half had dealt with multiple brokers without knowing their journey would involve more than one broker prior to departure. Returning migrants were the most likely to have endured challenges during the first leg of their journey (76% reported that they had not received enough food and/or water). Similarly, almost all qualitative respondents reported having experienced challenges and hardships during their journey to Obock. The most commonly reported difficulties were hunger and/or thirst:[146] "There was hunger. We have no water. We haven't eaten nor drunk anything in the last three days. Some people we were travelling with have died."[147] Bearing witness to the death of other migrants travelling in the same group was reported by six respondents,[148] most commonly from dehydration and starvation, as well as disease. These risks are particularly exacerbated amongst migrants who are travelling without money, with four migrants explaining that they had faced severe dehydration and hunger due to the high cost of provisions en route:[149] "We paid lots of money for transport and only had a little left for food. A small loaf of bread costs 20–40 ETB (0.6–1.2 USD). So there was starvation and lack of water."[150]

Violent extortion was the second most commonly reported challenge, reported by over a third of qualitative respondents.[151] Most of these incidents occurred around the Galafi area, where migrants reported that their group had been stopped by bandits who threatened the group with gunfire unless each migrant handed over 100 ETB (3 USD). Several migrants reported that

146. Respondent 1; Respondent 10; Respondent 16; Respondent 17; Respondent 18; Respondent 19; Respondent 20; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 28; Respondent 3; Respondent 31; Respondent 34; Respondent 36; Respondent 37; Respondent 39; Respondent 4; Respondent 42; Respondent 43; Respondent 45; Respondent 46; Respondent 48; Respondent 49; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 7; Respondent 9; Respondent 54; Respondent 55; Respondent 56; Respondent 57; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 6; Respondent 60; Respondent 62

147. Respondent 1

148. Respondent 1; Respondent 21; Respondent 23; Respondent 52; Respondent 9; Respondent 1

149. Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 50; Respondent 53

150. Respondent 25

151. Respondent 13; Respondent 18; Respondent 22; Respondent 26; Respondent 28; Respondent 29; Respondent 30; Respondent 3; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 36; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 4; Respondent 40; Respondent 42; Respondent 43; Respondent 44; Respondent 45; Respondent 46

members of their group had been wounded, and in some cases killed by gunshots: "There were bandits who wore police uniforms, pretending to be policemen, on our way. They killed many men, even women, and took our money."[152]

Exhaustion and fatigue from walking long distances on foot, often wearing inadequate clothes and shoes, under the "intense heat during daytime,"[153] with little access to food and water, was another commonly cited challenge:[154] "Tiredness. It's very sunny. There was no food, no water. It is very difficult, especially for women. There were no cars, much of the journey done was walking on foot."[155] Although traveling by car was reportedly preferable to traveling on foot, vehicle accidents resulting in injuries were reported by two respondents migrating in different groups,[156] indicating that road travel may not always be carried out in a safe manner: "There was a car accident around the border, no one died but many were injured."[157] Evidence of human trafficking was also found, with one migrant interviewed at the MRC reporting: "I was too afraid when the broker sold us. There was a dallala [broker] who always buys people from other brokers. My friends told us that we have been sold and advised us to flee to IOM, so we are here now."[158]

Qualitative interviews conducted for this research indicate that instances of SGBV seem to be fairly prevalent along the route, with most female respondents reporting sexual harassment and/or violence had been perpetrated against themselves or other women in their group.[159] Instances of SGBV ranged from verbal harassment to rape. One respondent reported: "Women are usually stolen. I lost three of my girlfriends for this reason and when we asked where they went, the brokers threatened us too."[160] Sexual violence and rape were also reported amongst problems female respondents had anticipated prior to departure, with one respondent reporting that she had heard about so many instances of rape along the journey that she had gotten a contraceptive injection prior to departure.[161]

Despite the severe and in some cases life-threatening challenges migrants in this study reported experiencing en route, social networks and solidarity between travel companions were not uncommon, with several migrants reporting that they were able to rely on other migrants' support in times of need:

> *"There were so many problems. We had nothing to eat, there were many days when we didn't eat the whole day. One bottle of water cost 50 ETB (1.5 USD) and the journey is in the wilderness, where you need water badly. If you have no money you will die in the wilderness. I am only here with the help of my friends who have travelled this route before and had taken enough money with them."*[162]

152. Respondent 3

153. Respondent 4

154. Respondent 15; Respondent 18; Respondent 20; Respondent 28; Respondent 3; Respondent 36; Respondent 4; Respondent 41; Respondent 53; Respondent 55; Respondent 58; Respondent 62; Respondent 8

155. Respondent 15

156. Respondent 13; Respondent 63

157. Respondent 13

158. Respondent 56

159. Respondent 3; Respondent 47; Respondent 36; Respondent 9; Respondent 40; Respondent 31

160. Respondent 3

161. Respondent 54

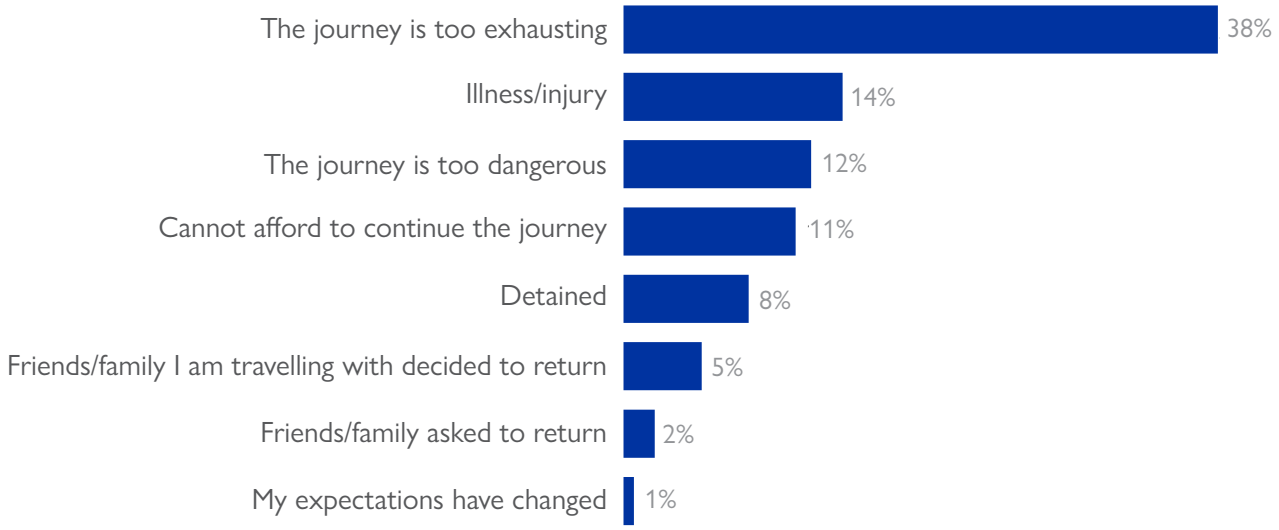
162. Respondent 14

Female migrants in particular reported having received support from others travelling with them and, in some cases, also protection: "I had feared that I would be raped, but the people I am travelling with have seen many problems themselves and have experience along this route. They have been like brothers and protected me."[163]

6.1.3. Returning Migrants

Of the quantitative respondents, 264 migrants (12% of the sample) decided to stop their journey and return to Ethiopia with the help of IOM's AVR programme at the MRC Obock. In most cases, the decision to return appears to be based on their experiences of the journey (38% exhausting, 12% dangerous). As one qualitative respondent explained: "Migration is ugly. It is full of tribulations. You face starvation and even death. I prefer to live with my family back home. I feel like it is not like others told me before I left. Now I feel migration is so dangerous."[164] Around one in ten migrants reported that they had been detained and offered the choice between arrest or return (8%), did not have enough funds to continue their journey (11%) and/or got sick (14%). Both disease and lack of funds were more frequently reported by younger migrants (those aged 15 to 19 years) and migrants originating from Amhara and Oromia.[165] Family and friends, either at home or travelling with the migrant, pushed for return in around 10 per cent of the cases.

Figure 7: Reasons to return home



Nearly all migrants are planning on returning to their habitual residence (87%). However, only half of them reported having informed their family of their imminent return (46%).[166] Reactions to the news of migrants' return were mostly positive. Nevertheless, only few migrants reported that their family 'wants them to stay' (19%), with some of the informed families expressing disappointment (13%), anger (7%) and the desire that the returning individual migrates again (8%). Nearly none reported that they are planning on migrating again to the KSA or another destination, with most aiming to find

163. Respondent 27

164. Respondent 57

165. Data collectors reported that migrants from Oromia were more likely to visit the MRC in Obock due to higher incidences of disease, whereas migrants from Tigray and Amhara benefit from better kept congregation sites (better hygiene and more access to food and water).

166. Some migrants travel without knowing their families' contact information, which may partially account for the low percentage.

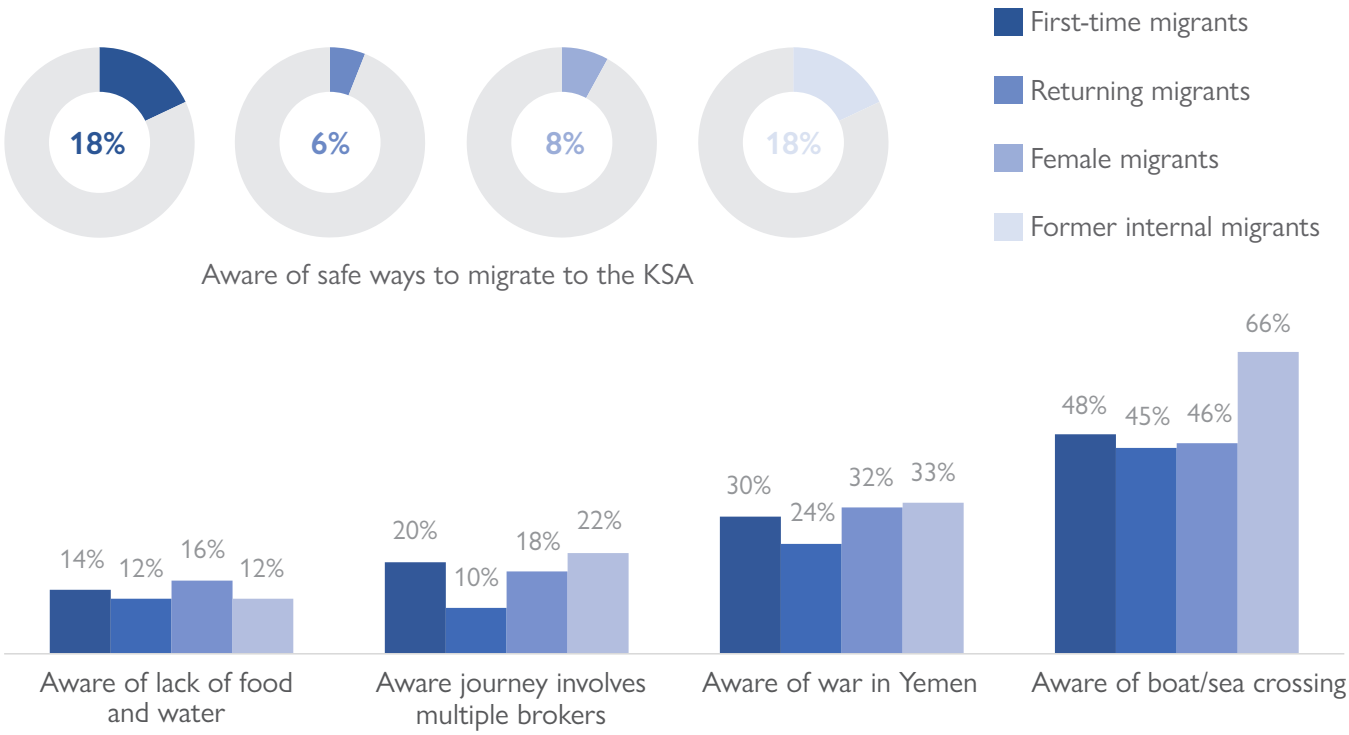
employment at home (62%) or go back to school (19%). However, only 32 per cent of these migrants consider it 'likely' or 'very likely' that they will find a job in Ethiopia, a figure that is lower than that of those who deem it 'likely' or 'very likely' that they will find a job in the KSA (36%), indicating that there is likely some potential for re-migration within this group.

6.2. RISK AWARENESS

While the journey to the KSA can be fraught with challenges, first-time migrants interviewed during the quantitative phase of this study displayed very low levels of awareness of the problems they might encounter during their journey. Very few migrants indicated that they had been aware of the lack of food and water (around 15%) prior to departure. Only one in five reported that they knew that their journey would involve multiple brokers (around 20%) and less than one third reported knowing about the war in Yemen (around 30%). First-time and returning migrants were most commonly aware of the sea crossing (around 50%). Amongst qualitative respondents, women and girls were overrepresented amongst interviewees who reported that they had not anticipated having any problems during their journey prior to departure.[167]

Although migrants demonstrated very low awareness of specific risks, the fact that the majority of both qualitative and quantitative respondents reported not having informed their families that they were migrating, most commonly because they believed their family 'would have prevented [them] from going because the journey is dangerous' (71%) or they 'did not want to worry them' (22%), does indicate that although migrants may have limited awareness of specific challenges they may encounter, there does seem to be widespread awareness that the journey can be dangerous.

Figure 8: Risk awareness



167. Respondent 13; Respondent 3; Respondent 31; Respondent 32; Respondent 33; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 40; Respondent 43; Respondent 47; Respondent 50; Respondent 59; Respondent 9

Levels of awareness are also likely to increase as migrants' journeys progress, with pre-departure knowledge mostly limited to word-of-mouth information (from friends, peers, returnees and brokers) and often incomplete and/or inaccurate. Hence, it is not uncommon for migrants to leave their communities believing they have sufficient information, only to find out en route that their knowledge of the challenges they would face was insufficient. Risk-awareness can evolve over the course of a journey and current migrants benefitting from hindsight may come to realize that what they had deemed sufficient knowledge was in fact incomplete. For example, 25 per cent of migrants who were aware of the war in Yemen reported that they had become aware of it during their journey. Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, both brokers and returnees may contribute to false narratives of the journey to the KSA or fail to depict a complete picture of the migration experience.

Despite most migrants reporting having endured problems during their journey to Obock, such as a lack of food and water en route, only around 15 per cent of quantitative respondents reported that they expect challenges during the next phase of their migration through Yemen. According to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa's Research & Evidence Facility (2017) Yemen is the 'focal point' for much of the abuse occurring along the Eastern Corridor. There have been reports of incidents of forced disembarkation at sea resulting in deaths of those who could not swim to land as well as systematic kidnapping of migrants upon arrival to extort money from migrants (or their families). Migrants are oftentimes tortured and not released unless they or their families are able to pay ransom. In its sixth year of conflict, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has seen a further deterioration of vital infrastructure including the health-care system, which is collapsing under the additional pressure of the COVID-19 outbreak, while access to other basic services such as food, water and shelter are also severely limited, with little access to life-saving assistance for migrants in areas devastated by conflict (Ibid.).

Around one third of qualitative respondents reported anticipating challenges in Yemen,[168] in particular extortion and kidnapping upon arrival, by what they referred to as the 'torture groups.'[169] Almost all migrants who reported that they were worried about their journey through Yemen had either had bad experiences there during previous migration journeys, or heard stories of migrants who had been abused: "I know someone whose spine does not function due to torture in Yemen."[170] Although reportedly oftentimes the perpetrators of abuse and extortion, brokers also seem to play a pivotal role in facilitating safe passage through Yemen, with several re-migrating individuals emphasizing how important a 'good' broker is in moving through Yemen safely.[171] Even migrants who reported that they had not used the services of a broker until Obock reported that they were in contact with a broker in Yemen: "If you have money to pay someone [brokers] to receive you in Yemen, you will make it successfully to Saudi. You will wait as long as it takes you to finish the payment. If you have no money or no one to receive you, you will wait more than four months and they might burn you alive or throw you into the sea or they will drive you to the desert and leave you there. Therefore, it depends on money."[172] Only three migrants reported

168. Respondent 1; Respondent 10; Respondent 11; Respondent 14; Respondent 17; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 3; Respondent 30; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 4; Respondent 40; Respondent 46; Respondent 49; Respondent 52; Respondent 56; Respondent 58; Respondent 61; Respondent 63; Respondent 9

169. Respondent 49

170. Respondent 56

171. Respondent 38; Respondent 30; Respondent 25; Respondent 1

172. Respondent 38

worrying about the war:[173] "I may get hurt in Yemen as there is unrest and chaos due to war."[174] Migrants also reported worrying that they would not receive sufficient amounts of food and water while traveling through Yemen.[175]

6.3. RISK PREFERENCE

Reasons for not engaging with, or not being influenced by risk information, were investigated during the qualitative interviews, and ranged from the perceived benefits of migration far outweighing the perceived risks to migrant determination and resilience in the face of hardship, migrant optimism and very strong deterministic beliefs in fate and/or faith.

6.3.1. Perceived Benefits Outweigh the Perceived Risks

Although some migrants did indicate pre-departure awareness of some of the risks they might face en route, they were not dissuaded by the dangers of the journey, as the risks do not seem to outweigh the perceived benefits of successful migration:

> *"The news and the things I heard were very worrisome. We have faced many difficulties during our journey. We are also worried about the problems we may face after crossing the sea. However, the benefit you will get in Saudi outweighs these difficulties we are facing during the journey."*[176]

Similar studies have also found evidence that migrants who receive risk information may discredit this information when they have strong assumptions about the outcome (benefits) of migration (van Bemmel, 2020).

The high tolerance to hardship and risk can also be linked to the very strong drivers of migration along this route; some migrants reported that for them, migration was more of a necessity than a choice. Commonly repeated phrases in this context were 'migrate or die' and "I decided on my life,"[177] with one migrant explaining that "at least here you die trying to change your life."[178] Others reported that they knew about the dangers but "had no other option"[179] or that they were forced by their circumstances: "Had I had a little money, I wouldn't have started this journey. My conditions forced me."[180]

6.3.2. Migrant Resilience

Despite the multitude of risks and hardships migrants reported facing en route, only eight migrants reported that they were 'regretting' their decision to migrate,[181] indicating a profound resilience amongst migrants as well as a high tolerance to hardship: "I am going there for my family. I am going there because I need to earn money. It does not benefit me personally, I may even catch a disease or I may lose my mind. Our journey has been very difficult. Bandits threatened us and took money from us. It has been two weeks since we set out. There have been other difficulties too such as exposure to the sun, hunger, thirst and tiredness and we are

173. Respondent 46; Respondent 30; Respondent 23
174. Respondent 46
175. Respondent 10; Respondent 22; Respondent 46; Respondent 49; Respondent 52
176. Respondent 24
177. Respondent 18; Respondent 22; Respondent 43; Respondent 57
178. Respondent 38
179. Respondent 22
180. Respondent 1
181. Respondent 62; Respondent 61; Respondent 58; Respondent 57; Respondent 54; Respondent 53; Respondent 52; Respondent 10

going to start the journey on the sea and I am not sure if we will make it to the other side of the sea alive or not. However, I believe if I can stand these challenges and reach Saudi, I will help my family out by getting my brother a job, good clothing for my child and enough food for my family."[182] Other migrants made statements such as "the only thing I can do is face it,"[183] "I can tolerate such problems."[184] They reported actively having convinced themselves that they will withstand the dangers they will face: "I didn't fear, but I worried a bit until I was at the Ethiopian border. After I left Ethiopia I became courageous to continue my journey. I convinced myself to withstand all the difficulties."[185] These examples underline the migrants' strong determination to move despite the risks and costs associated with migration.

6.3.3. Migrant Optimism

Data collected in this study suggest a high degree of optimism amongst migrants, in particular as they set out on their journeys. While some migrants reported that they had not been deterred by risk information, since they were pushed to migrate by their circumstances, others reported that they had felt very optimistic about their own migration, demonstrating a certain 'optimism bias':[186]

> *"Only some are successful, but everyone thinks as if he is in that successful group. Everyone migrates having this in mind."*[187]

The quantitative data collected in this study also suggest that most migrants are relatively optimistic about successfully reaching the KSA, with only one in ten migrants reporting that they deem it 'unlikely' or 'impossible' that they will enter the KSA and find a job, while around 45 per cent believe it to be 'likely' or 'very likely'. Migrant optimism seems to be rooted in the success of others who migrated before them, with most (60%) migrants reporting that they know at least one person from their community who has successfully entered the KSA, and 54 per cent reporting that they know at least one person who successfully entered the KSA and found a job. Most respondents interviewed in this study come from communities of high emigration in Ethiopia, where the 'success stories' of returnees are circulated by brokers, family, friends and returnees themselves and visible to migrants in the socio-economic transformations of their communities. These positive narratives about the benefits of migration are paramount in fuelling migrant optimism and sparking the decision to migrate.

On average, migrant optimism seems to wane during the journey, with only around one third of migrants reporting that they feel equally or more optimistic about the outcome of their migration at time of interview (in Obock) as they did prior to departure: "Because we always hear only positive stories, we set out optimistic. We started to fear after starting the journey".[188]

A recurring theme amongst qualitative respondents who reported that they had either received risk information that they had not fully believed, or provided risk information that was discredited by others (in the case of re-migrating individuals), was the importance of witnessing the

182. Respondent 36

183. Respondent 16

184. Respondent 33

185. Respondent 34

186. An 'optimism bias' refers to the tendency of some people to believe that they themselves are less likely to have a certain negative experience than others.

187. Respondent 24

188. Respondent 9

Figure 9: Migrants' networks and attitudes

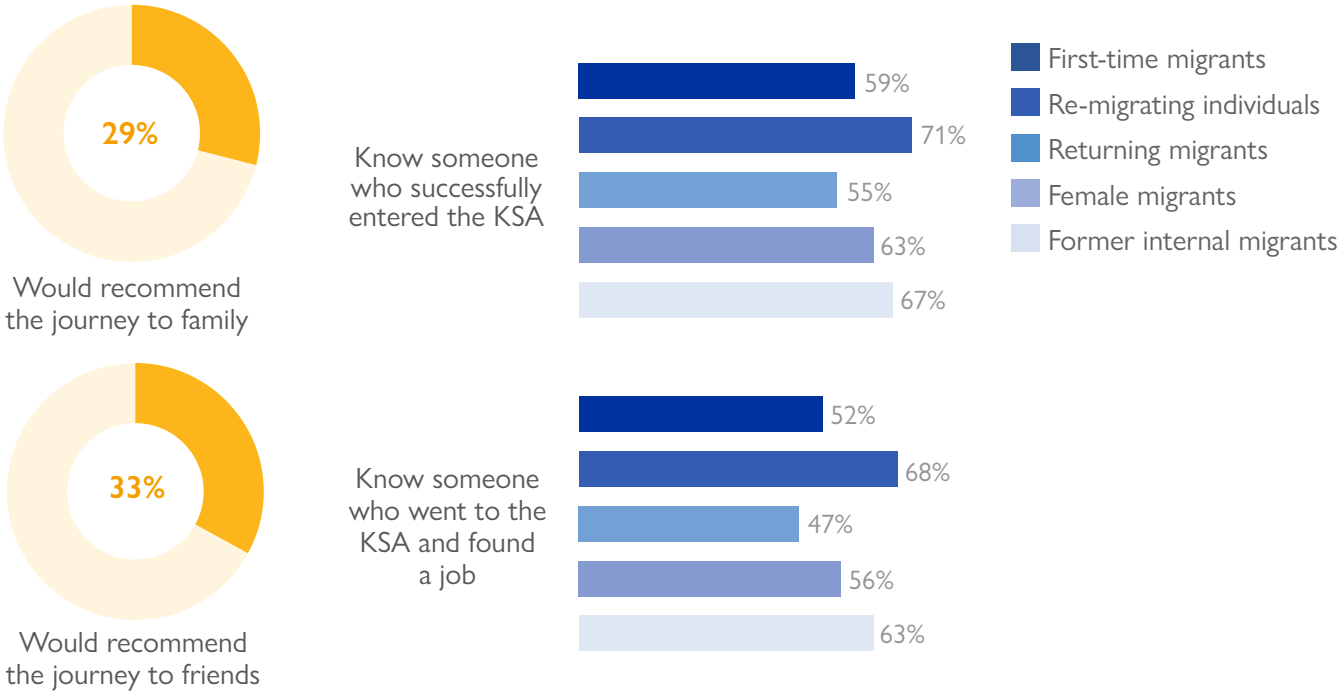
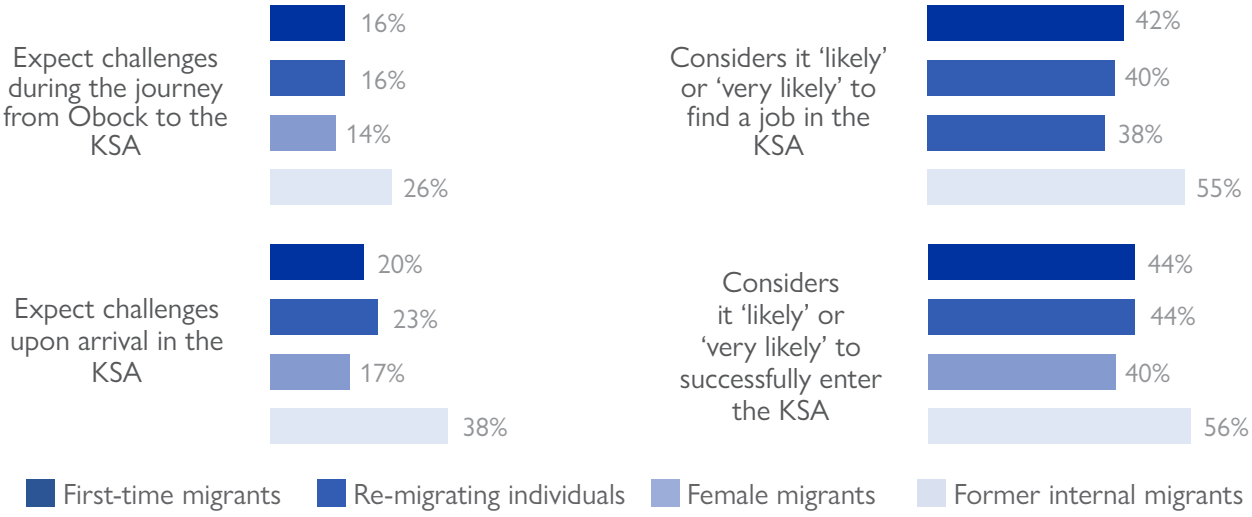


Figure 10: Migrants' risk awareness and expectations



dangers with one's own eyes and/or experiencing these dangers in order to believe the risks are real:[189] "They don't believe us when we tell them. They don't trust us until they come and see it."[190] Respondent 58 reported that although his friends had told him how challenging the journey is, he "didn't take them seriously" and decided to "try the journey himself to check if the journey really is as challenging as they are saying." It is therefore also possible for migrants to believe the risk information they received is accurate in general, but irrelevant to them personally.

189. Respondent 9; Respondent 63; Respondent 61; Respondent 58; Respondent 54; Respondent 52; Respondent 48; Respondent 43; Respondent 40; Respondent 4; Respondent 39; Respondent 37; Respondent 36; Respondent 3; Respondent 23; Respondent 18; Respondent 16; Respondent 1

190. Respondent 1

6.3.4. Faith, Determinism and Luck

Another explanation posited by over half of the qualitative respondents to explain why they were migrating despite the dangers and risks they might face, was a strong and deterministic belief in fate, a strong faith in God or a belief in 'luck'/'chance' resulting in the notion that they were unable to control the challenges they will or will not face [191]: "I left deciding on my life, whether I live or die. I believe in fate. God knows if any good or bad things will happen to me."[192] The fatalistic belief that they will not experience severe challenges and possibly even death unless it is their destiny to do so, "what God destines happens,"[193] is not necessarily religious in nature, with both Christian and Muslim migrants making similar statements. Migrants who expressed strong, fatalistic beliefs in God determining their future seemed more willing to discredit or dismiss 'risk' as the notion of risk itself is challenged by faith in destiny, and lived experiences are perceived as outside one's control.

Interestingly, most migrants who reported that they were relying on God to determine the course of their journey expressed optimism that they would have a positive experience and be protected by God. A strong belief in God also seems to comfort migrants in the face of adversity and give them the strength to keep moving: "I knew I would withstand all these problems with the help of God and make it to Saudi in the end."[194] Faith in God was also mentioned as a way to influence risk and reduce adverse outcomes: "You will have a good journey if you have self-confidence and faith in God. I have heard stories of girls being raped, but thanks to God we're safe."[195] It is not uncommon for individuals who lack the capabilities to influence risk to re-establish a sense of control over their lives by relying on faith or other beliefs, and several other studies also identified a link between high-risk migration and faith (van Bemmel, 2020; Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012; ODI, 2014; Minaye & Zeleke, 2017).

Others expressed the belief that whether someone has a relatively 'good' or 'bad' migration depends on migrants' 'luck' or 'chance':[196] "When you leave your country, you have confidence in everything. However, during the journey or after arriving to Yemen you realize that it is luck that makes it good or bad."[197] Similarly to those who expressed a strong belief in fate and/or God, migrants who believed in 'chance' or 'luck' reported that influencing risks was outside their control: "I think it is the luck of the people. I don't think this is a matter of behaviour because everyone travels keeping low, knowing that they are not in their country."[198] In her analogy comparing migrants to gamblers, Belloni (2016) found that it is not uncommon for migrants to frame their migration as a bet where the lucky ones reach their destination safely. Migrants are not necessarily fully aware of the odds of making it to their destination, but may be encouraged to take the chance simply by knowing someone who 'won their bet' and made it to their destination safely.

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191. Respondent 10; Respondent 11; Respondent 12; Respondent 14; Respondent 15; Respondent 18; Respondent 19; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 27; Respondent 28; Respondent 29; Respondent 30; Respondent 32; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 36; Respondent 4; Respondent 40; Respondent 42; Respondent 43; Respondent 46; Respondent 49; Respondent 51; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 55; Respondent 56; Respondent 59; Respondent 61; Respondent 62; Respondent 63

192. Respondent 43

193. Respondent 29

194. Respondent 23

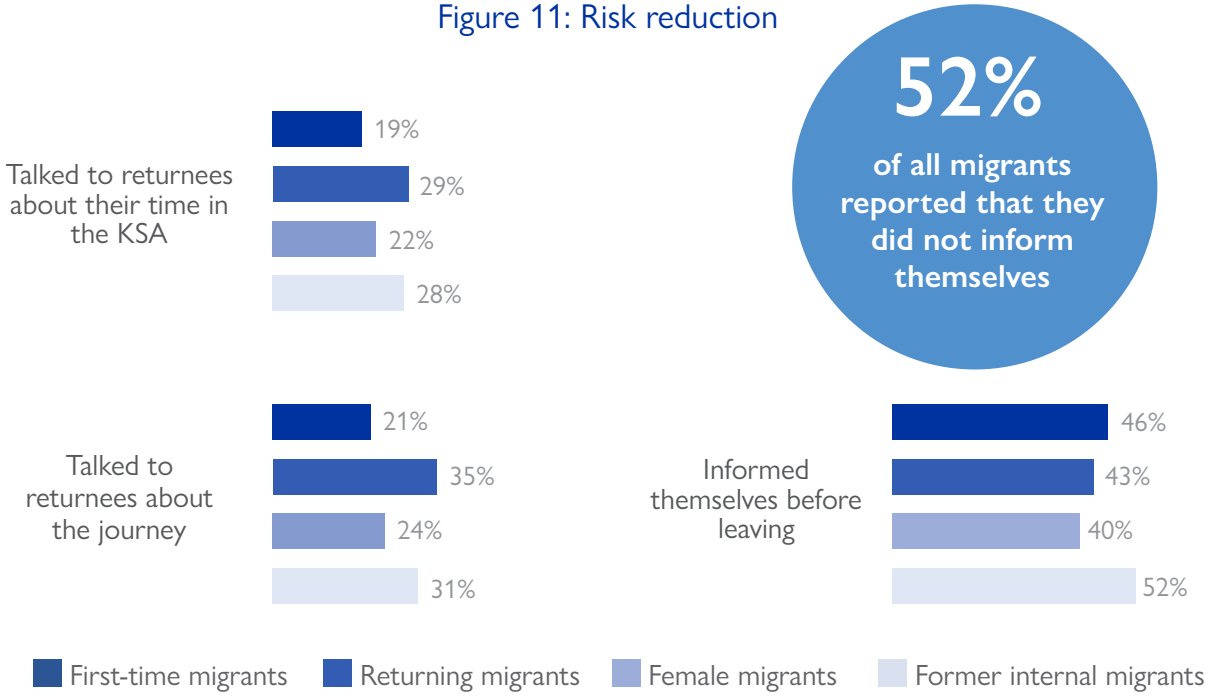
195. Respondent 42

196.Respondent 11; Respondent 18; Respondent 19; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 24; Respondent 30; Respondent 32; Respondent 35; Respondent 49; Respondent 54; Respondent 56; Respondent 61; Respondent 63

197. Respondent 11

198. Respondent 24

Figure 11: Risk reduction



6.4. RISK REDUCTION

Although even migrants who are aware of the risks and dangers of migration seem to not be deterred by these risks, awareness may encourage migrants to adjust their behaviour and take precautionary measures that can lead to risk reduction. To mitigate against risk, around 40 per cent of survey respondents reported that they had informed themselves about the journey prior to departure, around 20 per cent of whom talked to returnees about their journey and time in the KSA. Travelling in a group with family or friends was also commonly reported (62%), although it is unclear whether this is a deliberate risk-reduction strategy or the result of a group arrangement with the broker. Nonetheless, travelling in groups offers migrants a support system while en route, with solidarity between travel companions quite commonly reported (such as sharing food and water, lending money, providing protection from sexual harassment), particularly for women and girls travelling alone. Former internal migrants displayed higher risk awareness, on average, than other migrant categories.

The qualitative interviews gave further insight into the risk reduction strategies of migrants on this route, with one precautionary action standing out as paramount: the importance of traveling with sufficient money. When asked about why some migrants have 'better' journeys than others and how migrants can make their journeys safer, almost half of the qualitative respondents[199] stressed that "you can ease the problems of the journey using money."[200] Travelling with money is crucial as it allows the migrant to buy food and water in villages along the route: "You can

199. Respondent 1; Respondent 10; Respondent 11; Respondent 14; Respondent 18; Respondent 2; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 27; Respondent 3; Respondent 31; Respondent 36; Respondent 40; Respondent 41; Respondent 43; Respondent 49; Respondent 50; Respondent 52; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 57; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 6; Respondent 60; Respondent 62; Respondent 34; Respondent 45

200. Respondent 23

get enough water and food if you have enough money."[201] Journeys will also proceed far more rapidly if onward travel can be afforded at each transit point: "If one's family has no money to support one on the journey and one works along the journey to pay for food and transportation, it may take three to four months to get to Saudi. However, if you have someone to send you money for the journey you get to Saudi in a short time."[202]

Migrants travelling without money are far more vulnerable to abuse by brokers and other actors and may also adopt dangerous coping strategies such as drinking contaminated ground water. Brokers use deceptive practices, particularly about securing funds for the journey: "The broker told us we don't need money for the journey, but all the way from Shewa Robit to here we spent a lot of money. I had 1,000 ETB (30 USD) and one meal is 50 ETB (1.5 USD). I have also paid an additional 300 ETB (9 USD) for transport. Now I cry with regret for leaving home."[203] Another respondent explained that the treatment received depends on the arrangement you have with the broker: "You have to agree with the broker. And that depends on the money you have. If you have money you will succeed. If you pay less money they play with you."[204] One of the ways that brokers reportedly use to deal with migrants traveling without money is through extortion of family members at home: "Our fathers have suffered a lot to get us this money. We called them and told them that we need this money. The brokers frustrated them a lot. That's why they borrowed the money and sent it to us."[205] Another migrant reported that she had been abandoned by her broker when she ran out of money:

> *"You finish your money and you die of hunger and thirst. It all depends on whether you have money or not. We faced so many problems. The brokers would leave us alone in the wilderness with no food and water. They would go away saying they would bring us food, but they wouldn't return. He is with you only if you have money."*[206]

Disseminating information on the true costs of the journey could be key in raising awareness on the importance of travelling with sufficient funds and mitigating some of the risks migrants face en route: "Had we known the journey we could have prepared. But it is all about information from the broker. He misled us. He told us to have 1000 ETB (30 USD) in our pocket. But 1000 wasn't sufficient for even three days of the journey. That's why we suffered a lot."[207]

Another reported risk reduction strategy was departing with food and water to mitigate starvation and dehydration.[208] One female migrant also reported that she had taken a birth control injection prior to departure as she was worried about rape and pregnancy.[209] Other studies (ODI, 2014; EUTF Research & Evidence Facility, 2017) in this context also found that female migrants had taken family planning precautions prior to migration to avoid pregnancies from unwanted sexual encounters en route and/or with employers at destination.

201. Respondent 24
202. Respondent 25
203. Respondent 53
204. Respondent 26
205. Respondent 6
206. Respondent 3
207. Respondent 34
208. Respondent 28; Respondent 29
209. Respondent 54

Migrant washing in a stream in Alat Ela, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Ethiopian migrant in Fantehero, Djibouti.
© Alexander Bee/IOM

07

How do young Ethiopians make their decision to migrate?

Even though most respondents indicated that they made their decision to migrate by themselves, the experience of migration encompasses a wider system of ties and networks, through which resources and knowledge are acquired, accumulated and shared between different actors including family members, peers, other migrants, returnees and brokers.

7.1. MIGRATION CULTURE

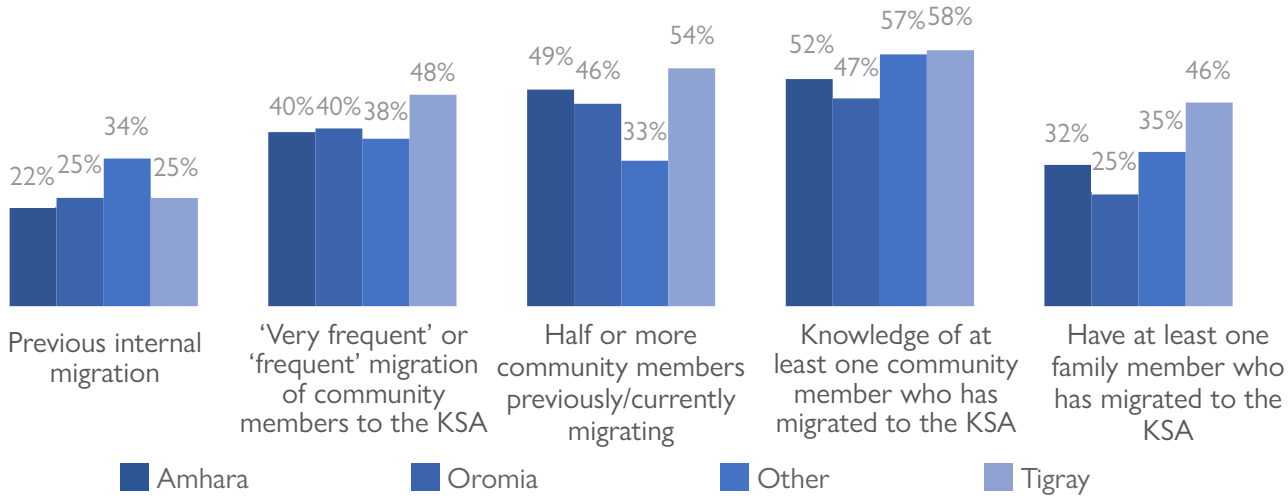
A "culture of migration", defined as 'a context where migration is common in society, socially accepted, based on historical precedent and migration decisions are part of everyday experiences that are seen as a legitimate means to social and economic well-being' (Cohen, 2004), was evident across all regions of origin and most communities included in this study. This migration culture seems to be particularly prominent with young Ethiopians, amongst whom migration to the Middle East is most common. Strong networks between origin and destination facilitate the flow of information, money and migrants, creating an enabling environment in which migration is culturally endorsed and accepted within society as a feasible and 'normal' strategy to pursue one's aspirations. In the context of this study, migration seems to be accepted as a livelihood decision, particularly by young members of society.

According to the survey data collected in this study, migration as a livelihood strategy appears to be deeply rooted in Ethiopia. As indicated in Chapter 5, around one in four respondents have undertaken

internal migration within Ethiopia prior to their current journey (25%) and nearly one in two reported that migration of community members to the KSA from their community is either 'frequent' or 'very frequent' (43%). Transnational links with Saudi Arabia are also strong: over half of the quantitative respondents know at least one community member (53%) and over one third have at least one family member who has migrated to the KSA (35%) before them. Re-migrating individuals tend to exhibit the strongest transnational linkages with the KSA.

Planning a migration journey was described as "very easy" by multiple qualitative respondents.[210] Not only is information shared between prospective migrants and those who have returned or have family in the KSA, but brokers are also generally known within the community and it is reportedly very easy to get the local broker's contact number. Over two thirds of qualitative respondents reported that they had contacted the broker themselves, while three fourths reported that migration was common in their communities, in particular amongst young people:[211] "Almost all those older than 15 years migrate."[212] Although the reported common age for migration varies between communities, it was young in the majority of cases (18–25 years old) and younger than 18 years in several:[213] "Most are youth. I know migrants as young as 10 years old". Respondents explained that older individuals do not migrate as commonly as "they don't have the stamina and they also have some assets like land to depend on."[214] Movement itself was described as common, as was the ambition to migrate: "Every young man and woman wants to migrate."[215] Hence, migration is prevalent amongst the younger generation in the areas studied, and something many young Ethiopians seem to aspire to.

Figure 12: Culture of migration by region of origin



210. Respondent 8; Respondent 15; Respondent 14; Respondent 1

211. Respondent 8; Respondent 7; Respondent 63; Respondent 62; Respondent 61; Respondent 60; Respondent 59; Respondent 58; Respondent 56; Respondent 55; Respondent 52; Respondent 51; Respondent 50; Respondent 49; Respondent 46; Respondent 45; Respondent 44; Respondent 43; Respondent 42; Respondent 41; Respondent 40; Respondent 4; Respondent 38; Respondent 37; Respondent 36; Respondent 35; Respondent 34; Respondent 33; Respondent 31; Respondent 30; Respondent 29; Respondent 28; Respondent 27; Respondent 26; Respondent 25; Respondent 24; Respondent 23; Respondent 21; Respondent 20; Respondent 2; Respondent 19; Respondent 18; Respondent 17; Respondent 16; Respondent 15; Respondent 14; Respondent 13; Respondent 11; Respondent 10; Respondent 1

212. Respondent 1

213. Respondent 8; Respondent 60; Respondent 58; Respondent 44; Respondent 43; Respondent 25

214. Respondent 25

215. Respondent 55

Although all qualitative respondents younger than 18 considered themselves children, some explained that migration was a step towards adulthood:[216] "I am a child but I considered myself a young adult when I started migration."[217] The more recent literature on child migration tends to emphasize the agency in which children try to shape their own futures, emphasizing that childhood is socially constructed and considering that in contexts of poverty, child labour may be framed more positively and be culturally sanctioned due to economic realities (Jones et al., 2018).

7.2. COMMUNITY ROOTEDNESS

In all phases of the Obock study, migrants displayed a very strong attachment to their communities of origin: "I love my country. I want to change my life and live in Ethiopia."[218] Of the quantitative interviewees, only 10 per cent of migrants (202 individuals) are planning on 'not returning home,' one quarter of whom are thinking of 'never returning'. The question of return appears to be dependent on having earned sufficient money to afford an improved lifestyle at home: one third of those who plan to return mentioned the desire to start a business (19%), build a house (10%), buy a car/vehicle (3%) or buy/farm land (1%). An additional 15 per cent linked their return to the achievement of their 'goal abroad' (whether work, money or a better life). The desire to see (18%) or help (6%) family as well as homesickness (13%) were also cited as reasons why migrants looked forward to returning home in the future. Negative push-factors related to the journey (6%) or life in the KSA (2%) were only rarely mentioned except by returning migrants, many of whom reported 'a difficult journey' or expressed fears related to their migration experience.

All qualitative interviewees reported seeing their future in Ethiopia: "Always. There is none like my country."[219] During the interviews, migrants were asked what their goals for the future are and how much money they think they would have to earn in the KSA to be able to return to Ethiopia and fulfil their goal. Although all migrants expressed clear goals of how they would like their future to be once they have earned enough money to achieve their ambitions, some struggled to articulate how much money they would have to earn to be able to return to do that. The amount of money deemed necessary to reach their goals for the future varied greatly, with a median amount of 500,000 ETB (15,000 USD).[220] Overall, expectations and future plans varied, the most common goals being 'building a house', 'opening a business' and 'buying a car'. Several migrants also reported needing money to get married. A table capturing all respondents who reported plans for the future and necessary earnings to achieve these plans can be found in Annex VII.

216.Respondent 63; Respondent 62; Respondent 61; Respondent 56; Respondent 51

217. Respondent 63

218. Respondent 27

219. Respondent 2

220. Survey data from the 309 re-migrating individuals show that median monthly earnings in the KSA are around 10,500 ETB (320 USD) for men and 13,200 ETB (400 USD) for women, with greater variation in salaries for male occupations. This amounts to median earnings of less than 140,000 ETB (4,250 USD) per year for men and around 170,000 ETB (5,100 USD) for women, meaning that migrants can expect to spend around three years working in the KSA to earn 500,000 ETB (15,000 USD).

7.3. THE DECISION TO MIGRATE

7.3.1. Funding of the Journey

Most survey respondents reported funding their migration expenses from a combination of sources, ranging from personal savings (49%), selling household assets (15%), borrowing money (22%), contributions from family (23%) and/or friends (4%), loans from a bank (1%) and farm activities (6%).[221] The more their personal resources are scarce, the more migrants tend to discuss and/or 'negotiate' their decision with other actors – including family, friends, other migrants and brokers. Migrants whose families were involved in the migration decision were the most likely to receive contributions from them, whereas migrants who made the decision alone were more likely to be self-reliant and rely on savings, funds owned at departure (55%) or money earned from working en route (22%). When brokers were involved in the decision, migrants were more likely to borrow money from non-family members (31%), sell personal assets (25%) and/or smuggle products (25%) to pay for the journey.

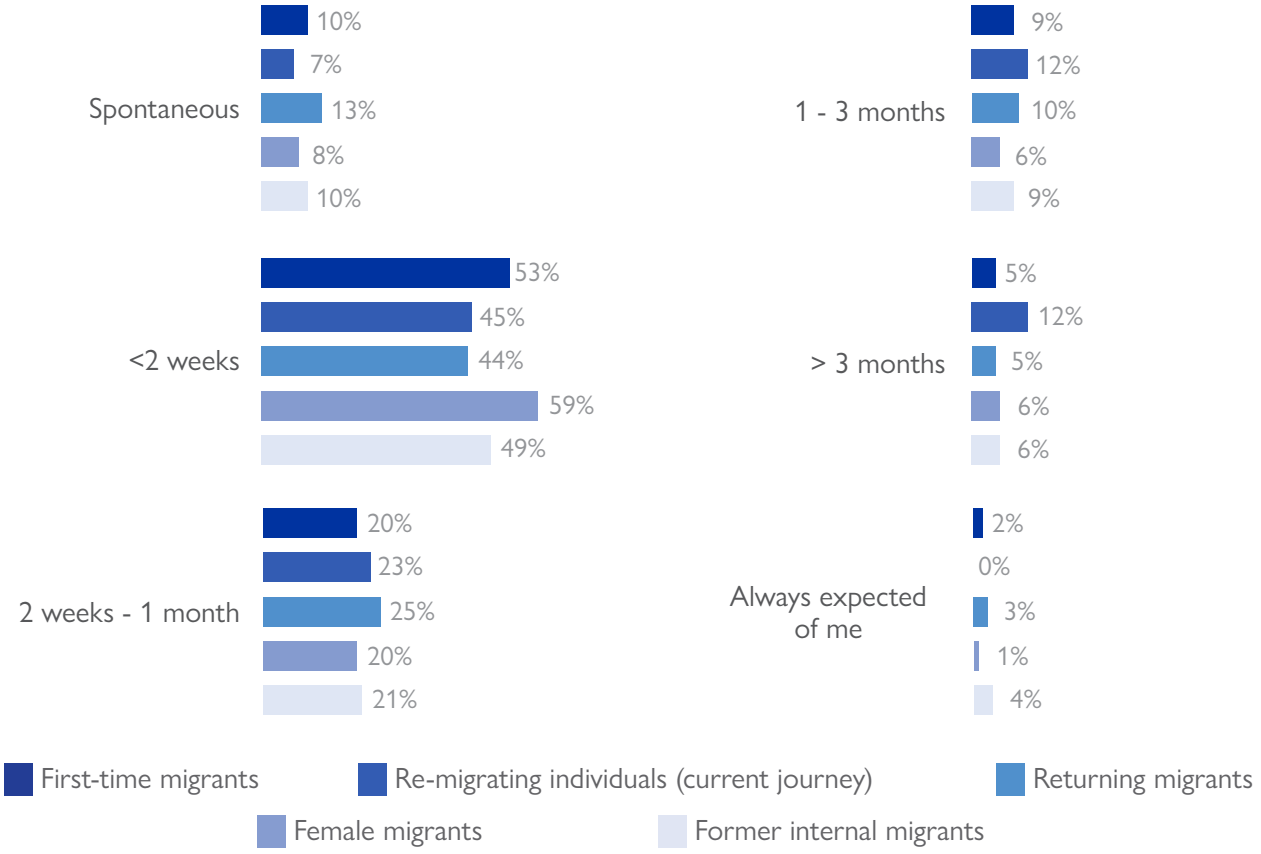
Migrants sharing a meal at Fantehero congregation point in Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

221. Communities that have observed the benefits of migration for some years often do not hesitate to provide loans for future migrants, either through private borrowing, local institutions and banks (Zewdu, 2018).

7.3.2. Timing of the Migration Decision

In contrast to other contexts where migration aspirations may be pondered over for long periods of time, this study's sample of young Ethiopians found that, in general, very little time passed between migrants starting to think about migration and them actually starting their journeys. Over half of the quantitative survey respondents left within two weeks of contemplating migration (52%) and an additional 20 per cent left between two weeks and a month after first considering migration. Figures are similar across groups, with only re-migrating individuals spending slightly more time between thinking about migration and departure, on average, than other migrant categories, with 25 per cent having thought about migration for several months before leaving. This only holds true for the journey during which they were interviewed.

Figure 13: The timing of the decision



A phenomenon among young Ethiopian migrants along the Eastern Route is that some migrate 'spontaneously' or on a whim, with very little to no preparation or prior knowledge about the journey, most commonly in groups with their friends. Around 10 per cent of the quantitative sample (213 individuals) reported that they were migrating spontaneously. Some qualitative respondents also reported having migrated 'suddenly,'[222] for example Respondent 44 who explained: "I spontaneously decided to go to Saudi when I saw my friend was going. He asked me if I was willing to go with him." Spontaneous journeys can be particularly challenging as the migrant often leaves without gathering necessary information and securing adequate resources, thereby putting him or her at heightened risk of abuse and danger en route. This may explain why returning migrants are more represented amongst those who reported having left their communities 'spontaneously' than other migrant groups.

222. Respondent 52; Respondent 2

7.3.3. Weighing Alternatives: Choosing Irregular Migration

To shed light on why migrants choose to migrate irregularly despite the existence of regular migration channels out of Ethiopia, qualitative respondents were asked whether they had considered regular migration options and, if so, why they had opted for irregular migration instead. Several barriers to regular migration stood out, in particular the lack of money to afford the regular migration recruitment process.[223] While the reported costs associated with regular migration ranged from the cost of getting a passport to the fee of the recruitment agency, all migrants who reported prohibitive costs to regular migration as the reason why they were migrating irregularly agreed that irregular migration was the cheaper alternative. This finding echoes findings from another RDH research study that is currently being conducted along the Southern Route, where many migrants who are crossing the Ethiopian-Kenyan border do so irregularly, despite free movement agreements between the two countries, as the costs and bureaucratic hurdles associated with acquiring a passport for regular travel to Kenya are deemed to be higher than the cost of moving irregularly. Thus, while regular migration may have been preferred by many of the migrants in this study, the process of migrating regularly was seen by some as too cumbersome, time consuming and expensive.

Education was also linked to not having the option of regular migration. Low levels of education were cited by several respondents as the reason why they had not been able to migrate regularly:[224] "I don't have education. My first migration was illegal, like this one, because legal migration requires having an educational background and we don't have that. Education is mandatory to get a passport."[225] Another migrant also reported a similar obstacle: "I tried to get a passport but I was asked grade 8 exam certificate which I didn't have. That's why I went migrating this way."[226]

For re-migrating individuals who have been deported from the KSA, regular migration is not an option either. Two migrants explained that upon deportation, KSA authorities take migrants' finger prints and record them in a system, and regular migration within five years of deportation is prohibited by law.[227] Another reported obstacle was the cyclical nature of documented migration programmes to the Gulf countries:[228] "It is now closed. It was open for women six months ago. They open and close occasionally. We don't know the schedule."[229] Moreover, when discussing regular migration via recruitment agencies, male migrants expressed the gendered nature of regular migration, saying that they "feel it is allowed only for women."[230, 231]

What stands out across qualitative interviews is that although a few migrants reported not having considered regular migration as they didn't have

223. Respondent 6; Respondent 9; Respondent 53; Respondent 49; Respondent 48; Respondent 43; Respondent 45; Respondent 39; Respondent 38; Respondent 34; Respondent 33; Respondent 32; Respondent 31; Respondent 30; Respondent 28; Respondent 27; Respondent 26; Respondent 24; Respondent 22; Respondent 21; Respondent 20; Respondent 19; Respondent 13; Respondent 65; Respondent 64; Respondent 66

224. Respondent 23; Respondent 25; Respondent 36; Respondent 40; Respondent 51; Respondent 35

225. Respondent 25

226. Respondent 40

227. Respondent 30; Respondent 37

228. Respondent 12; Respondent 15; Respondent 36; Respondent 46; Respondent 54

229. Respondent 15

230. Respondent 57

231. According to estimates, women are indeed far more likely than men to migrate to the Middle East through regular channels. Women who are migrating through regular channels via private employment agencies tend to have far less arduous journeys to their destinations, as they fly directly (or via Kenya due to the ban on domestic worker migration in Ethiopia), whereas men most commonly travel irregularly by land via Djibouti and Somali and sea across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen (Kuschminder & Siegel, 2014; Fernandez, 2017).

any information on how the process works,[232] the vast majority seem to have considered and, in many cases, preferred the option of migrating regularly, only turning to irregular migration as a last resort when the attempt to migrate regularly failed. Several migrants responded that they had succeeded in obtaining a passport, but were not able to acquire a visa or were frustrated by bureaucratic hurdles.[233] Disillusionment with regular migration procedures was also cited by all qualitative respondents who had migrated legally during previous journeys, but were re-migrating irregularly at the time of interview.

7.3.4. The Decision to Migrate to the KSA in Particular

Migration out of Ethiopia occurs along three main corridors, with migrant flows observed to the GCC countries (Eastern Route), Southern Africa (Southern Route) and Northern Africa/Europe (Northern Route). In the qualitative phase of the study, migrants were asked why they had chosen to migrate to the KSA in particular. For most migrants in the study, the choice of destination seems to have been guided by several factors other than the perceived job opportunities and high wages discussed earlier in this report, in particular 'access.' Access is an important determinant of migration decisions and the popularity of certain routes. It relates to a number of factors including established migration networks and information flows, geographic proximity, the anticipated cost of the journey, the perceived ease of the journey (this can also include migration management efforts of authorities such as interceptions and detention) and the nature of the terrain (EUTF Research & Evidence Facility, 2017).

In this study, the most commonly reported factors were the communities' history of migration, leading to strong cross-border networks between Ethiopia and the KSA, the perceived relative ease of migrating to the KSA compared to the longer journeys south or north, and geographic proximity. Ethiopians have been migrating to the KSA for decades, establishing strong networks between the two countries. Several migrants reported that they had chosen to migrate to the KSA because they have friends and family living there already who could help facilitate their journeys and integration into the informal labour market,[234] while others simply reported that "Saudi is most common."[235] Migrants commonly indicated that they were following in the footsteps of friends and family who have migrated before them, using the same route and brokers and often receiving assistance from those already residing in the KSA. As this social capital grows over time, it helps perpetuate the popularity of certain routes over others, encouraging others to follow, and giving migrants a sense that particular routes and brokers are more trustworthy than others (EUTF Research & Evidence Facility, 2017).

Some migrants reported that they had weighed different destinations and chosen the KSA because it costs less money to migrate there than to Libya or South Africa,[236] but also because they perceived the journey and terrain to the KSA as 'easier' and 'less dangerous' than other routes, especially the Northern Route which was described as very dangerous, long and expensive.[237] Others reported that they had chosen to migrate to the KSA due to geographic proximity.[238]

232. Respondent 29; Respondent 58; Respondent 59

233. Respondent 42; Respondent 41; Respondent 47; Respondent 21

234. Respondent 27; Respondent 53; Respondent 55; Respondent 61

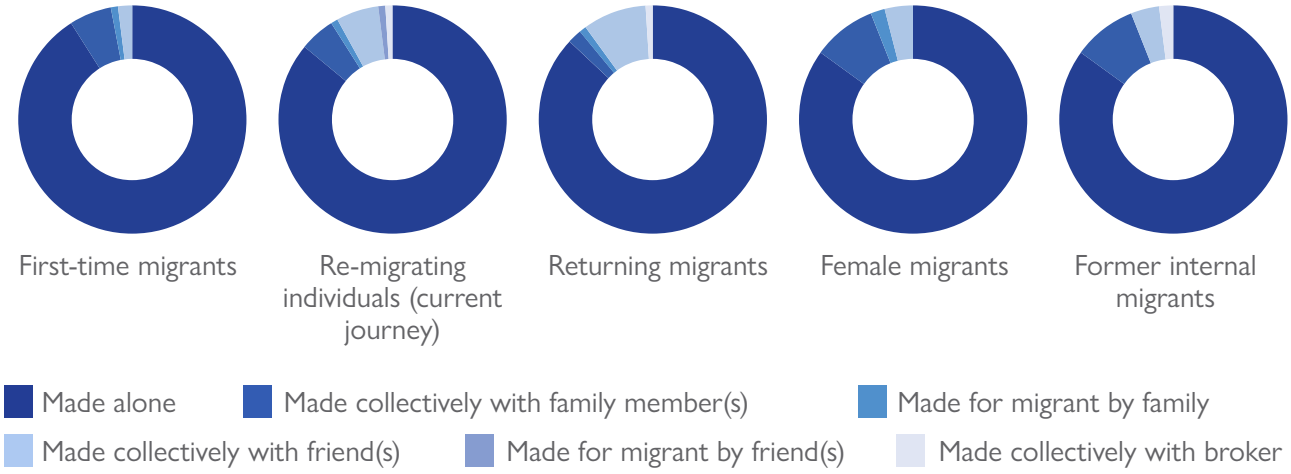
235. Respondent 1; Respondent 47; Respondent 56; Respondent 57

236. Respondent 1; Respondent 18; Respondent 41

237. Respondent 54; Respondent 45; Respondent 41; Respondent 18

238. Respondent 49; Respondent 51; Respondent 66

Figure 14: The influence of family, peers and brokers on the decision to migrate



7.4. WHO IS INVOLVED?

The surveys conducted with migrants indicate that migrants exercise a large degree of agency in the decision-making process, and migration tends to be mostly self-initiated. The vast majority of migrants across migrant categories (90%) took the migration decision alone, with females, former internal migrants and re-migrating individuals only slightly more likely to have made their decisions collectively with their family. In fact, only 1 per cent of migrants (19 individuals) reported that the decision was 'made for them,' with females more commonly reporting being pushed by family, and males more commonly pushed by friends. Parents and siblings were the family members most involved in the migration decision.

7.4.1. The Role of the Family

Relatives can actively put pressure on family members and motivate migration to improve income streams, but also help discourage young people from migrating. Data collected for this study show that most families are not actively involved in the initial decision to migrate (although they may become more involved as journeys progress, in particular financially) and many seem to initially disapprove of the migration of their young relatives and may even play an active role in trying to deter them from leaving. Indeed, only around 5 per cent of quantitative respondents reported that their families were actively involved in the decision to migrate and even fewer indicated that they were pushed to migrate by their families (1%). A total of seven qualitative respondents (11%), mostly female, reported that their families had pushed them to migrate.[239]

Although in most cases the final decision to migrate was the migrant's, around 35 per cent of migrants in both the quantitative and qualitative phase reported that they did consult and/or inform their families prior to departure, indicating that families do play a role during the decision-making process. Of the quantitative respondents who informed their families, less than half (42%) reported that their families approved of their decision, while others reported that their family had not wanted them to migrate or had only approved as they saw no other choice (17%, respectively).

Around half of all qualitative respondents reported that migration (of family members, neighbours and friends, or just in general) is something their

239. Respondent 13; Respondent 20; Respondent 36; Respondent 38; Respondent 4; Respondent 40; Respondent 9

Pushed to Migrate

Respondent 36 is a divorced mother of one who was pushed to migrate by her family: "I was worried. I couldn't stand leaving my girl child. I cried. She is a very clever student. She always stands first in her class. I still have her photo with me. Look at her, she is so beautiful! She was the only one who didn't want me to go. My family used to provoke me by telling me about the success stories of my friends who have moved to towns; built house etc. I haven't been married since the Ethiopian Millennium. They encouraged me to go because we lack money and things to eat. They see migration as positive because of the money. In the end they managed to push me by telling me success stories of my friends whose lives have changed."

family talks about and discusses at home.[240] Many of these migrants reported that they discussed migration success stories with their relatives, such as the stories of neighbours who are "constructing houses and buying cars."[241] Although it seems fairly common to discuss the benefits of migration, only nine qualitative respondents reported that their parents felt positive about them migrating,[242] while most others reported that their parents felt the dangerous journey outweighed the benefits of working in the KSA: "They say that Saudi is very nice and a better place to live, but they say that migration is very bad."[243] Some migrants also reported that their families purposefully avoided discussing positive migration stories to avoid encouraging them from migrating:

> *"We do talk about negative stories about migration, but not the positive ones. If they talk about that they think I will want to migrate too."*[244]

Overall, family reactions to the news of their relative's plan to migrate were mostly negative according to qualitative respondents who reported having told their family of their plan to migrate prior to departure. Many of these respondents reported that their families had tried to prevent them from leaving.[245] The most common reason offered for family members trying to persuade respondents not to migrate was that the journey is very dangerous: "They hear a lot about people dying on the journey and they don't expect I will come back safe;"[246] and may even end in death: "They don't think we will make it to Saudi alive."[247]

The families' negative reaction may partially explain why the majority of migrants in both the quantitative (63%) and qualitative phases (56%) did not inform their families that they were migrating prior to departure and chose to migrate independently without their families' approval. Of

240. Respondent 10; Respondent 14; Respondent 15; Respondent 16; Respondent 17; Respondent 18; Respondent 19; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 3; Respondent 30; Respondent 33; Respondent 34; Respondent 39; Respondent 4; Respondent 41; Respondent 42; Respondent 45; Respondent 47; Respondent 55; Respondent 56; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 63; Respondent 8; Respondent 9

241. Respondent 14; Respondent 16; Respondent 17; Respondent 19; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 26; Respondent 3; Respondent 34; Respondent 39; Respondent 42; Respondent 45; Respondent 55; Respondent 63; Respondent 8; Respondent 9

242. Respondent 9; Respondent 8; Respondent 34; Respondent 33; Respondent 30; Respondent 28; Respondent 20; Respondent 17; Respondent 19

243. Respondent 56

244. Respondent 58

245. Respondent 10; Respondent 14; Respondent 15; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 26; Respondent 29; Respondent 34; Respondent 37; Respondent 4; Respondent 42; Respondent 54; Respondent 50; Respondent 46; Respondent 45 ; Respondent 48; Respondent 4; Respondent 25

246. Respondent 18

247. Respondent 46

the quantitative respondents who did not inform their families, 71 per cent left without telling their families, as they believed their family 'would have prevented [them] from going because the journey is dangerous' and 22 per cent did not inform their families as they 'did not want to worry them.' Seven per cent of migrants, and in particular female migrants (15% of all female migrants) did not inform their families as they were 'ashamed of their decision.'

Almost all qualitative respondents who did not inform their families explained they had been 'afraid' and/or 'worried' to do so 'because they would/might not let me leave' or 'they would stop me.'[248] Concern for their families' emotional wellbeing was also expressed as a reason why some had not informed their family, ranging from "I did not want them to feel terrible;"[249] "They're scared I'll get hurt;"[250] "They would suffer from shock;"[251] to "I know they feel like I am going to die on the way so I left without telling them."[252] Although the majority of respondents did not inform their families that they were migrating prior to departure, around one third reported that they had informed their families en route once it was too late for their families to prevent them from leaving and/or when they needed financial support for their journey.[253]

Relatives' support was most common in planning the journey (48%), followed by financial support whilst en route (30%). Females and former internal migrants were the most likely to inform families and receive support from them. A full table showing the of role of family for all migrant categories can be found in Annex X.

248. Respondent 10; Respondent 1; Respondent 11; Respondent 12; Respondent 14; Respondent 15; Respondent 16; Respondent 17; Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 24; Respondent 27; Respondent 3; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 40; Respondent 43; Respondent 44; Respondent 46; Respondent 51; Respondent 54; Respondent 56; Respondent 57; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 6; Respondent 60; Respondent 62; Respondent 63; Respondent 7; Respondent 9; Respondent 66

249. Respondent 52

250. Respondent 44

251. Respondent 41

252. Respondent 21

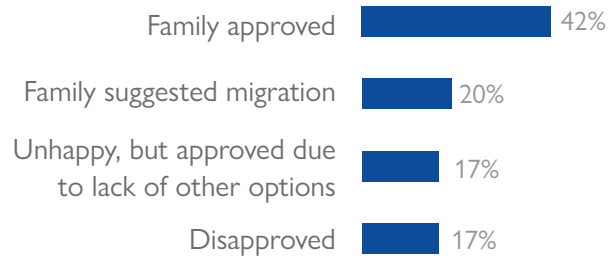
253. Respondent 6; Respondent 46; Respondent 44; Respondent 40; Respondent 32; Respondent 3; Respondent 16; Respondent 14; Respondent 12

Ethiopian migrants in Adogolo, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Figure 15: The role of family

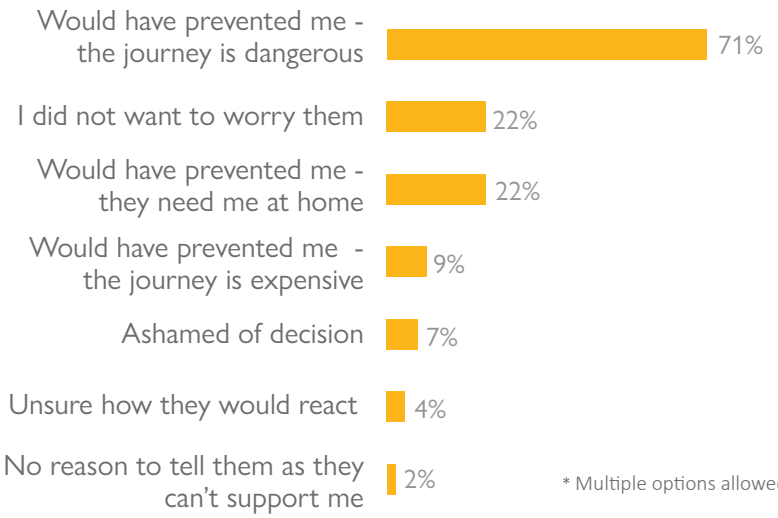
35%
informed their family before departure

"How did they react?"



63%
did not inform their family before departure

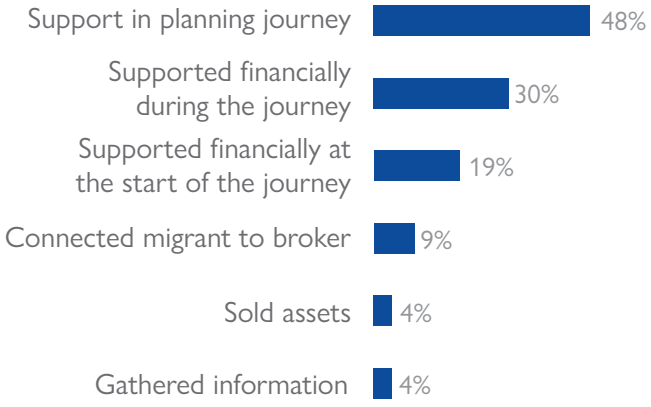
"Why not?"*



* Multiple options allowed.

27%
received support from their families

"What?"



3%
travelled with family

7.4.2. Support From Family Living in the KSA

Just under half (31) of all qualitative respondents indicated that members of their family were already working in the KSA.[254] Most migrants reported receiving different forms of support from family members in the KSA, in particular financial support and information. Of the 31 migrants, 15 had already received financial support from relatives in the KSA,[255] seven were expecting to receive support once they reach Yemen[256] and three were anticipating financial support upon arrival in the KSA until they find employment.[257] Having relatives in the KSA who contribute to financing migration does not only seem to be common amongst migrants in the study, but in many cases also something that is expected of family members abroad with one migrant explaining it is "their responsibility"[258] to help those who migrate after them. In some cases, migration seems to be a family strategy to improve the household's well-being, with two migrants explaining that the majority of their family lives in the KSA:[259] "Most of the members of my family are in Saudi, three of my brothers and two of my sisters."[260]

7.4.3. The Role of Friends and Peers

Although friends and peers seem to be less involved than family in shaping migration decisions, friends do play a role in shaping opinions and attitudes about migration. Interestingly, most migrants interviewed in the quantitative phase of the research reported that they had not informed their friends that they were migrating prior to departure (61%), most commonly because they believed their friends would try to prevent them from leaving because the journey is dangerous (46%) and/or because they believed there was not much point in informing their friends as 'they cannot help anyway' (34%). Only 16 per cent of informed friends were able to support migrants' journeys – most commonly with planning (57%), financially upon departure (15%) or by helping set the migrant up with brokers (14%). Of those migrants who did inform their friends of their migration, almost a quarter reported that their friends suggested migration to them, thereby indicating that friends may play a role in shaping the desire to migrate.

Just under 10 per cent of qualitative respondents reported having been influenced by friends to migrate,[261] half of whom were younger than 18 years, which could indicate that very young migrants

254. Respondent 11; Respondent 13; Respondent 15; Respondent 18; Respondent 20; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 28; Respondent 3; Respondent 30; Respondent 32; Respondent 33; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 39; Respondent 4; Respondent 41; Respondent 44; Respondent 46; Respondent 47; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 52; Respondent 55; Respondent 6; Respondent 61; Respondent 8; Respondent 65

255. Respondent 11; Respondent 20; Respondent 24; Respondent 28; Respondent 32; Respondent 33; Respondent 37; Respondent 4; Respondent 41; Respondent 44; Respondent 47; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 55; Respondent 61

256. Respondent 13; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 46; Respondent 8

257. Respondent 15; Respondent 23; Respondent 3

258. Respondent 11

259. Respondent 55; Respondent 24

260. Respondent 24

261. Respondent 63; Respondent 56; Respondent 44; Respondent 43; Respondent 31; Respondent 2

are particularly vulnerable to migrating due to peer pressure. What ties all migrants who reported migrating due to their friends' influence together is the fact that they left their homes without any information on the journey, in many cases more or less blindly following their peers: "I didn't know a thing. I started to migrate with my friends. They told me to migrate and I agreed and left school."[262] The influence that friends' narratives can have on migration decisions can also be seen in the answer of Respondent 44:

> *"I came because my friend was coming. I didn't have any information, but everyone was talking about going there."*[263]

Another migrant explained how his friend had been deceived to migrate by a broker, and had convinced him to migrate with him: "I quit school to migrate because I was influenced by my friend. He too was influenced by other people, but now he has returned home with the help of IOM. He told me he was migrating and he said that they [the brokers] would give us money. He too was tricked."[264]

7.4.4. The Role of Brokers and the Migration Industry

Brokers play a crucial role in organizing and sustaining irregular migration from Ethiopia to the KSA and using their services seems to be the norm, with only 10 per cent of quantitative respondents reporting that they were travelling without a broker.[265] In addition to most migrants relying on brokers to assist with movement, brokers also seem to be relied on heavily for information about the journey. In fact, brokers were the main source of information amongst respondents who reported that they had tried to inform themselves about the journey prior to departure, and more commonly consulted than family, friends and even returnees. Of those migrants who reported that they did not try and get information about the journey prior to leaving, around one in five (22%, 476 individuals) chose not to inform themselves before leaving because 'the broker seemed informed' and a similar share (18%, 377 individuals) went directly to the broker when seeking information.

Despite the trust that migrants put in them, brokers do not always seem to be a reliable source of information: around half of the migrants who reached Obock travelled with more than one broker – although most were unaware before departure that they would be passed on to other brokers (81%). Moreover, migrants who informed themselves through brokers displayed a lower awareness of risks, on average, compared to those who gathered information through the media, from returnees and/or family or friends in Ethiopia. For example, only around one third of migrants who sought out information from brokers were aware of the war in Yemen, versus around half of those who informed themselves through friends or family members in Ethiopia, returnees and/or social media, and 68 per cent of those who did so through traditional media such as the television or radio. On the other hand, relatively few quantitative respondents reported having had serious problems with brokers, with only around 10 per cent of migrants reporting that they were asked for additional and unanticipated payments during their journey.

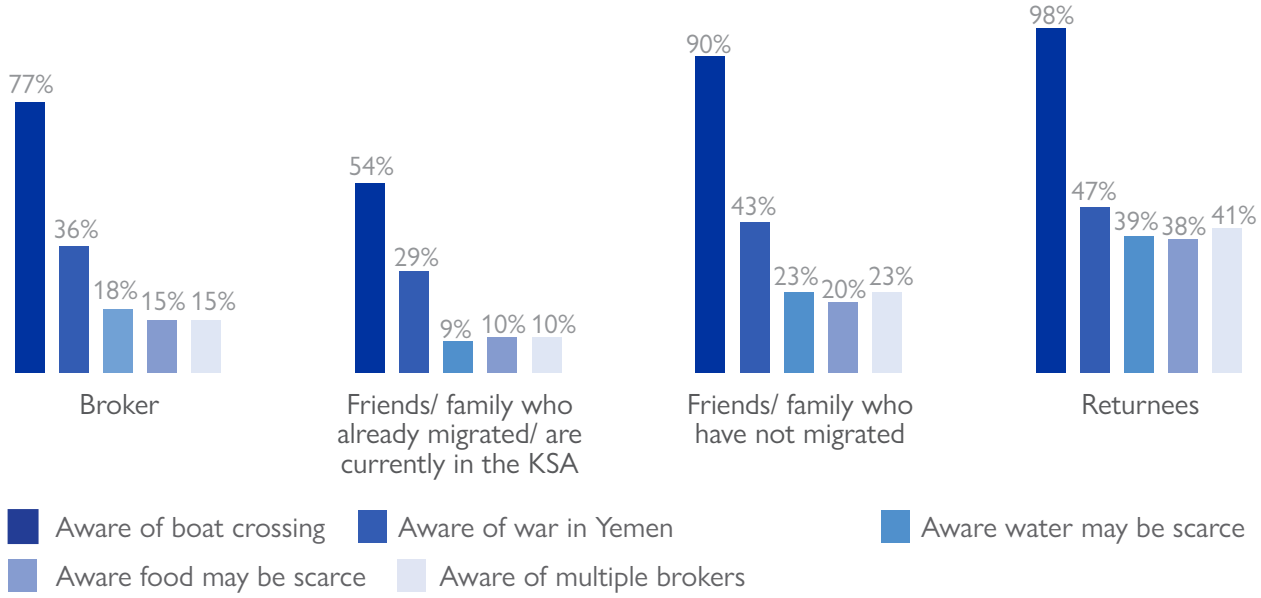
262. Respondent 63

263. Respondent 44

264. Respondent 56

265. Brokers are considered the main 'door openers' of irregular migration: they assist migrants in circumventing layers of migration control and navigate the complex, risky mobility landscape in the context of governments' campaign to stop irregular migration (Adugna et al., 2019).

Figure 16: Sources of word-of-mouth information by migrant risk awareness of specific risks



The qualitative interviews offer further insight into the intricate dynamics between brokers and migrants. Only three migrants reported that they were migrating without a broker.[266] These migrants indicated that due to the large number of migrants using this route, it is easy to "gather information along the way" on what roads to take and where to buy basic provisions. The majority of migrants who reported having used the services of brokers had contacted their brokers themselves, by phone, most commonly using contact details that had been provided to them by friends and/or returnees.[267] Some migrants reported that they had not met their broker in person,[268] as "the dallalas [brokers] are forbidden in Ethiopia and they therefore live fearfully by keeping low and not speaking much."[269] In the case of re-migrating migrants, most contacted their previous brokers, as was also the case in the quantitative interviews when nearly all re-migrating individuals reported that they were travelling with the same broker as the one they had used during their past journey(s).

Migrants do not always contact a broker based in Ethiopia, nor do they necessarily use the same broker for the whole journey. Several migrants reported that the broker they had called was based in Yemen or the KSA.[270] Some migrants reported that the brokers in their community were returnees who had migrated to the KSA in the past.[271] After contacting the broker, the migrant is moved from leg to leg, usually engaging with a new broker for each segment of the journey, while the initial broker in Ethiopia uses his regional network of facilitators to ensure the migrants reach their next destination, also known as 'pre-organized stage-to-stage smuggling' (RMMS, 2017). While the main logistical hubs such as Obock are fixed, the routes chosen between hubs may shift in response to dynamics on the ground. By the time they had reached Obock, respondents reported having interacted with up to six different brokers.

Around 10 per cent of qualitative respondents reported that rather than looking for a broker,

266. Respondent 62; Respondent 27; Respondent 16

267. Respondent 1; Respondent 11; Respondent 12; Respondent 14; Respondent 2; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 28; Respondent 29; Respondent 3; Respondent 30; Respondent 33; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 36; Respondent 37; Respondent 39; Respondent 40; Respondent 41; Respondent 42; Respondent 43; Respondent 44; Respondent 45; Respondent 46; Respondent 48; Respondent 49; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 55; Respondent 57; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 6; Respondent 63; Respondent 8

268. Respondent 1; Respondent 36; Respondent 50; Respondent 55; Respondent 58

269. Respondent 1

270. Respondent 11; Respondent 23; Respondent 54; Respondent

271. Respondent 41; Respondent 38; Respondent 37; Respondent 25; Respondent 1

the broker had recruited them either by calling them or coming to their house to convince them to migrate.[272] All but two of these migrants reported that they had been lured by the success stories the broker had told them about previous migrants he had sent abroad: "He told me all good things, he also told me that Yemen is peaceful. After we started the journey the broker started threatening us at one scary place. The place had a very deep rift valley and he threatened to push us down. So, I had to call and tell my father to send me money."[273] All migrants who were recruited by brokers reported that they had not been informed about the dangers of migration or the difficulties of the journey.

As was the case with the quantitative interviews, most migrants interviewed in the qualitative phase of the research reported that based on their experiences until reaching Obock, they would evaluate the information the broker had given them as mostly inaccurate.[274] The misinformation migrants reported receiving included: false information on the duration of the journey, saying it would take around four to five days;[275] that there would be 'no problems' or 'dangers' on the road and/or the 'journey is easy;'[276] incorrect information on the cost of the journey and/or not informing the migrant of additional payments that would be required later on during the journey;[277] that they wouldn't need any money during the journey[278] or "would get pocket money for food and water;"[279] that "they would be travelling safely by train;"[280] that "Yemen is now peaceful;"[281] and that they would travel by car and there would be no walking.[282]

Very few migrants reported that their broker had mentioned any of the challenges they might face during migration, while many reported that that the broker had emphasized the stories of those who had successfully and safely reached the KSA. While there are some exceptions, it seems that many brokers propagate false and misleading narratives about migration to the KSA that help shape migration decisions by underplaying risks and failures and overstating the perks of migration. Such false information can be life-threatening for migrants, who often depart without knowing many of the risks of migration along this route and are therefore ill-prepared to mitigate the dangers they will face.

Although most migrants reported not trusting their brokers, they still migrate with them due to lack of alternatives and the territorial nature of the industry. One re-migrating individual explained that although he had had a bad experience with his broker during his first migration, he was migrating with the same broker to keep the peace within

272. Respondent 9; Respondent 60; Respondent 47; Respondent 31; Respondent 21; Respondent 20

273. Respondent 21

274.Respondent 14; Respondent 18; Respondent 20; Respondent 21; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 26; Respondent 29; Respondent 3; Respondent 30; Respondent 31; Respondent 34; Respondent 35; Respondent 37; Respondent 38; Respondent 39; Respondent 40; Respondent 41; Respondent 45; Respondent 48; Respondent 49; Respondent 50; Respondent 51; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 56; Respondent 57; Respondent 58; Respondent 59; Respondent 6; Respondent 60; Respondent 61; Respondent 63; Respondent 9

275. Respondent 14; Respondent 18; Respondent 63; Respondent 61; Respondent 53; Respondent 51; Respondent 35; Respondent 34; Respondent 24; Respondent 3

276. Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 63; Respondent 60; Respondent 6; Respondent 56; Respondent 54; Respondent 48; Respondent 41; Respondent 40; Respondent 38; Respondent 35; Respondent 34; Respondent 31

277. Respondent 23; Respondent 61; Respondent 50; Respondent 37; Respondent 35; Respondent 26

278. Respondent 53; Respondent 35; Respondent 31

279. Respondent 14

280. Respondent 20

281. Respondent 21

282. Respondent 9; Respondent 38; Respondent 29

his community: "I couldn't change the first broker I made a deal with because if I went to another, they would fight each other. The dallala [broker] I spoke with first would think that the other dallala took me by advertising and they would start to talk ill of each other to and the tension would exacerbate."[283] Others reported that although they didn't trust their broker, they saw no point in seeking out another, as "they are all the same"[284] and there is "no broker that can be trusted."[285]

Although some migrants report exploitative and abusive treatment by brokers and many do not trust them, not all migrants perceive brokers negatively and some may perceive them more positively as 'facilitators' or 'helpers' providing much needed services. A recent study by the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium (Adugna et al., 2019) conducted in Southern Ethiopia found that in Hadiya brokering is a "socio-culturally embedded business," where brokers live and worship with the community, abide by local norms and are generally trusted and well-regarded, as can be evidenced by their nickname, "Berri Kefach," which translates to 'door openers'. Although most migrants in this study report that they had received false information from their brokers and did not trust them, around 15 per cent of qualitative respondents indicated that they did trust their brokers and 10 per cent reported that they had received accurate information. Overall, migrants who reported personally knowing their broker were more likely to report trusting him compared to migrants who had only spoken to their broker on the phone, indicating that community proximity could be a key factor in understanding the complicated relationship between migrants and their brokers.

7.5. INFORMATION PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

7.5.1. Why Migrants Depart Without Informing Themselves

The data collected in this study suggest that migrants do not always analyse all information available to them before making the decision to migrate. More than one in two interviewees during the quantitative phase of the research reported that they did not inform themselves about the journey prior to departure (52%), the main reason being that 'the broker seemed informed' (43%).[286] The short amount of time between making the decision to migrate and leaving, with nearly three quarters of migrants taking less than a month to arrange their journey,[287] might also explain the low tendency to collect information, despite the existence of strong transnational networks and the presence of returnees in most communities. Around one in five migrants reported that their 'decision to leave was spontaneous' (17%), with little to no time to properly organize the journey. Around 14 per cent of migrants reported that although they had not collected information prior to leaving, they had planned to inform themselves during the journey. Re-migrating individuals were the least likely to inform themselves (24%), mostly commonly because they felt they did not need any new information, as they had already experienced at least one other migration journey to the KSA. Amongst returning migrants, around 10 per cent reported having felt 'no need to inform' themselves, a relatively high figure compared to other groups, which may also partially explain their higher likelihood of experiencing hardships during the journey[288] and their decision to end their migration in Obock.

283. Respondent 24

284. Respondent 57

285. Respondent 58

286. See 'The role of brokers and the migration industry' on page 67.

287. See Figure 14 'The timing of the decision' on page 59.

288. See 'Risks and hardships'.

Table 1: Information prior to departure

	Not informed	Main reasons for not informing	Informed	Main sources of information
First time	**50%**	Broker seems informed (41%) Spontaneous decision (16%) Informing en route (16%)	**46%**	Broker (39%) Family/friend already migrated/ currently in the KSA (38%) Returnees (31%)
Re-migrating (first migration)	**58%**	Broker seems informed (49%) Spontaneous decision (16%) Friends/family travelling with me informed themselves (11%)	**39%**	Broker (43%) Family/friend already migrated/ currently in the KSA (34%) Returnees (33%)
Returning	**54%**	Broker seems informed (48%) Spontaneous decision (20%) No need to inform (10%)	**43%**	Returnees (40%) Broker (37%) Family/friend already migrated/ currently in the KSA (22%)
Female	**57%**	Broker seems informed (55%) Spontaneous decision (14%) Informing en route (11%)	**39%**	Returnees (41%) Broker (40%) Family/friend already migrated/ currently in the KSA (27%)
Internal migrant	**45%**	Broker seems informed (36%) Informing en route (22%) No need to inform (16%) Spontaneous decision (16%)	**51%**	Family/friend already migrated/ currently in the KSA (44%) Broker (39%) Returnees (21%)
Re-migrating (current migration)	**72%**	Done this journey before (56%) Broker seems informed (15%) Spontaneous decision (14%)	**24%**	Family/friend already migrated/ currently in the KSA (48%) Broker (37%) Returnees (26%)

7.6. MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

7.6.1. Traditional and New Media as a Source of Information

Exposure to mass media and internet usage are comparatively low in Ethiopia according to the 2016 Demographic Health Surveys: 74 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men aged 15–49 years have no access to radio, television or newspapers on a weekly basis; and only 5 per cent of women and 12 per cent of men have ever used the internet. Figures are below average for the region of Amhara, which accounts for 17 per cent of interviewed migrants.[289]

289. In Amhara, 85 per cent of women and 64 per cent of men aged 15–49 in Amhara have no access to radio, television, or newspapers on a weekly basis; and only 3 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men have ever used the Internet (Central Statistical Agency, 2016).

Among the qualitative respondents, around 40 per cent reported receiving information about migration from traditional and/or new media sources,[290] while all others reported not having access to media outlets such as televisions or the internet. Most of these migrants indicated that although traditional media did not cover topics related to migration regularly, they had occasionally seen media reports on specific tragedies, in particular boat accidents and casualties of the war in Yemen:[291] "The media doesn't talk much about migration. However, sometimes when shocking things such as boats of migrants capsizing or people dying in the war at the borders occur, they talk about it as news."[292] Respondents had also received information on deportations through the media,[293] and the risk of rape.[294] Almost all migrants reported that they had trusted the information they had seen in the media.

Quantitative respondents who reported having seen/heard information in the media displayed, on average, a greater awareness of risks, especially about the sea crossing and the war in Yemen. One in four first-time and returning migrants who knew about the war in Yemen reported that they became aware of it through online or offline media content (26%, 138 individuals), thereby indicating that the media can be a powerful source of information. Qualitative interviewees also reported using social media to gather information about the journey, in particular Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp and IMO.[295] Social media seems to be a particularly common source of information amongst re-migrating individuals who use social media to stay in contact with friends met in the KSA. These friends can provide them with real-time information on the dynamics on the ground: "I get information from my friends' Facebook. For example, when Ragu[296] was being attacked. We didn't hear this from media, only from Facebook."[297] Thus, online social networks play a vital role in connecting migrants in sending communities to those in receiving communities and seem to be key for transmitting more in-depth information on the dynamics on the ground for those who have access to such sources.

7.6.2. The Role of Returnees

Returnees (30%) are one of the main sources of word-of-mouth information for migrants willing to inform themselves prior to departure, together with brokers (39%) and/or friends and family (38%). Data show that quantitative respondents' optimism[298] on the outcome of migration is linked to the widespread knowledge of success stories and interactions with returnees who increase awareness of lifestyle and opportunities elsewhere. Around 60 per cent of migrants reported that they know at least one individual who successfully entered the KSA (figures range from 55% of returning migrants to 71% of re-migrating individuals) and around 55 per cent reported knowing at least one individual who has

290. Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 23; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 27; Respondent 28; Respondent 30; Respondent 32; Respondent 33; Respondent 36; Respondent 38; Respondent 40; Respondent 41; Respondent 45; Respondent 46; Respondent 49; Respondent 50; Respondent 52; Respondent 53; Respondent 54; Respondent 55; Respondent 61; Respondent 62; Respondent 63; Respondent 66

291. Respondent 21; Respondent 22; Respondent 24; Respondent 25; Respondent 28; Respondent 36; Respondent 40; Respondent 41; Respondent 45; Respondent 52; Respondent 53; Respondent 54

292. Respondent 24

293. Respondent 46

294. Respondent 55

295. Respondent 49; Respondent 38; Respondent 33; Respondent 30; Respondent 25

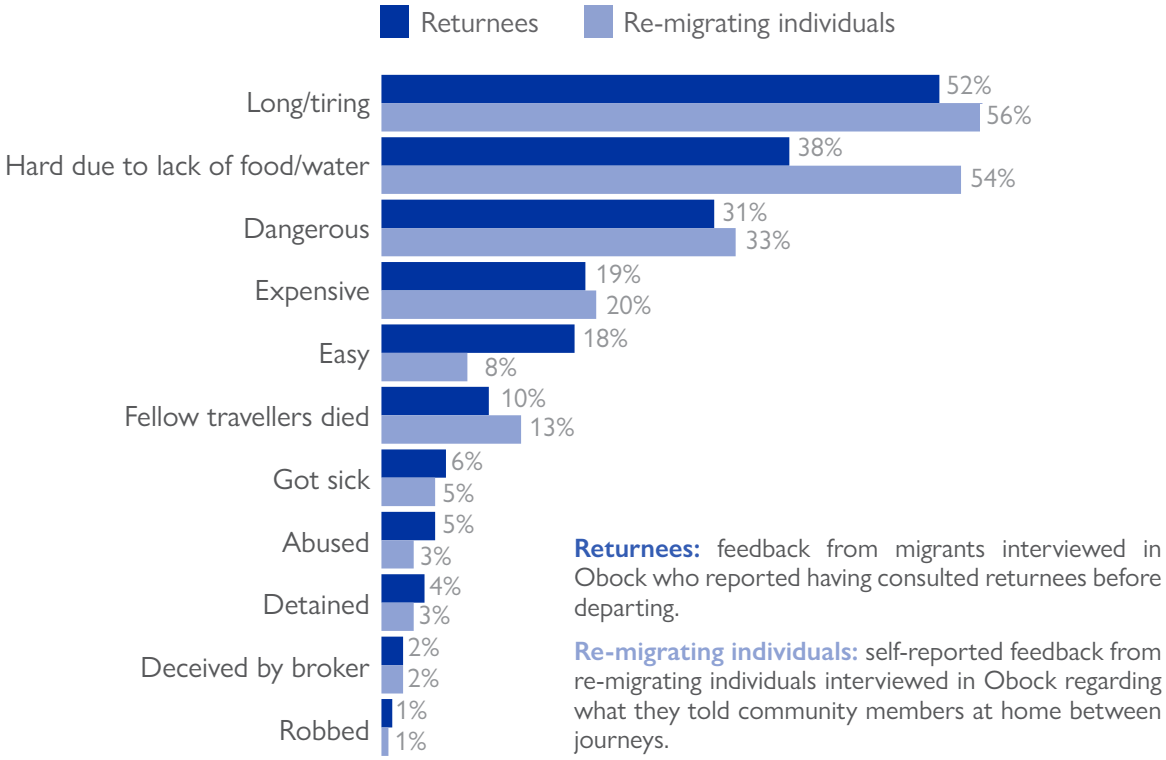
296. Ragu is on the border between Yemen and the KSA.

297. Respondent 38

298. See box: 'Migrants' optimism'.

entered and successfully found a job in the KSA (figures range from 47% of returning migrants to 68% of re-migrating individuals). Moreover, around 40 per cent of re-migrating individuals indicated that they were asked to provide information on their migration experience upon their return to Ethiopia. Returnees who had been consulted by study participants as well as re-migrating individuals participating in the study[299] seem to mostly emphasize the physical challenges of the journey: over 50 percent of those who were asked to provide information about the journey described it as being 'long and tiring', followed by 'hard due to the lack of food and water' (54% of re-migrating individuals) and and/or 'dangerous' (33% of re-migrating individuals). Around 15 per cent of re-migrating individuals recalled 'people dying', around 5 per cent were detained and/or abused and 2 per cent told others that they had been deceived by their broker.

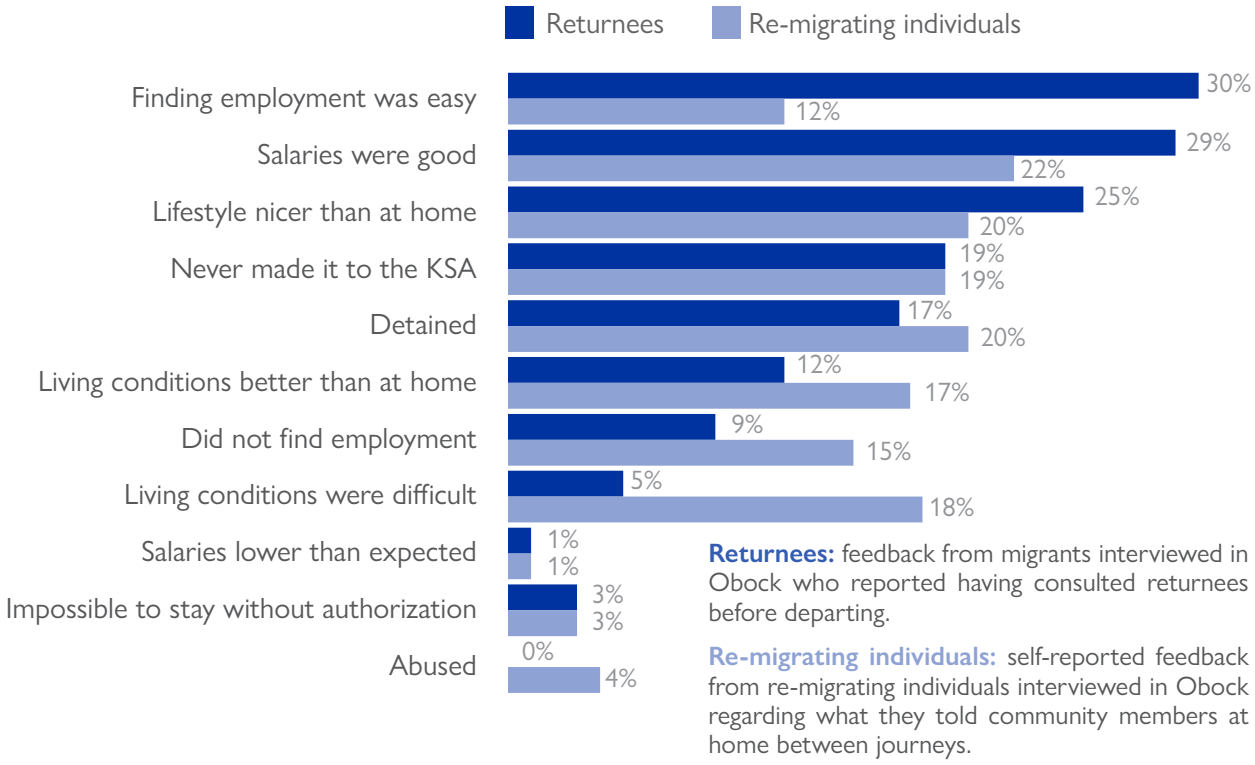
Figure 17: The journey: feedback by re-migrating individuals and returnees



In contrast to the mostly negative narratives that re-migrating individuals and returnees reported spreading about the journey, they seem to paint a more positive image of life in the KSA. This is particularly evident amongst migrants who reported having consulted returnees prior to departure, 30 per cent of whom reported that they had been told that 'finding a job is easy' (30%), followed by 'salaries are good' (29%), 'lifestyle is nicer than at home' (25%) and 'better living conditions than at home' (12%). Re-migrating individuals seem to have been slightly more critical in recalling their experiences in the KSA, with many reporting that they had told others about their time in detention (20%), 'difficult living conditions' (18%) and that they had been 'unable to find employment' (15%). Only 12 per cent of re-migrating individuals reported that they had told others that 'finding employment was easy'.

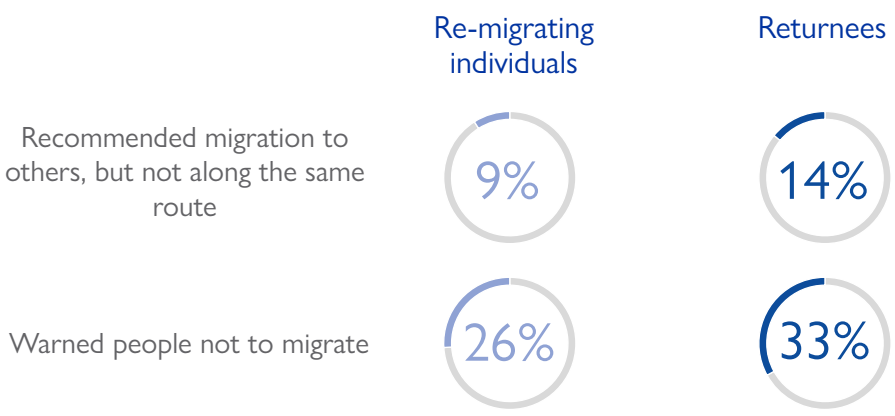
299. Feedback from returnees is indirect and recalled through the interviewed migrants who informed themselves by speaking with returnees – while feedback from re-migrating individuals is direct and related to their personal experience. This may account for the differential in opinions, as direct information could to be more affected by recollection bias.

Figure 18: Feedback by re-migrating individuals and returnees on their time spent in the KSA



Despite the more positive narratives spread by returnees regarding their time in the KSA, slightly less than half of returnees and re-migrating individuals who were asked by others in their community to share their experiences reportedly recommended migration, either along the same route (30% of returnees and 33% of re-migrating individuals) or along a different route (9% of re-migrating individuals and 14% of returnees).

Figure 19: Time spent in the KSA: feedback by re-migrating individuals and returnees



Amongst qualitative respondents, the vast majority reported that they had heard returnees share their migration experiences; as well, re-migrating individuals shared their migration experiences with others. Around 57 per cent of all qualitative respondents reported that the information shared by returnees/themselves was negative and geared towards deterring others from migrating: "I would always tell them only negative stories. I always warned them not to migrate. I didn't even tell my friends that I was migrating so that they wouldn't think of migrating with me."[300] Only a small number of migrants reported that although there were returnees in their communities, they did not want to share their experiences.[301] Respondents believed this was the case for a variety of reasons, ranging from deterrence to social status.

When asked about how the information they offered was received, several re-migrating individuals reported that their community members in Ethiopia did not believe or trust the negative information they were providing:[302]

> *"People in my community are used to hearing such stories, but they don't believe them. They think we lie to them. They are inclined to only believe positive stories because they see successful people with their own eyes while they only hear about negative stories."*[303,304]

One returning migrant interviewed at the MRC in Obock explained that he had underestimated the warnings he had received: "They talk about the negative sides of migration. They persuade us not to migrate and say that the journey is very difficult and that many people die. I didn't believe them as there were many people migrating from my community."[305]

In addition to disbelieving negative information due to a certain optimism bias and the need to witness information to validate it, jealousy was also posited as an explanation as to why negative stories about migration are sometimes disregarded: "They thought that I was jealous and didn't want them being successful."[306] Other studies examining migrant risk perception found that some migrants dismiss risk information as unreliable when they believe the source of the information is offering a biased narrative and deliberately overstating risks to stop others from achieving success through migration (van Bemmel, 2020). Furthermore, strong beliefs and perceptions about the outcome of migration and widespread migration success narratives may further undermine the credibility of risk information. Migrants reported hearing information from returnees at work;[307] at a café or restaurant;[308] while chewing khat;[309] at home,[310] or while taking walks with friends.[311] Especially khat chewing ceremonies seem to be an arena where migration success is propagated.

While the majority of qualitative respondents

300. Respondent 1

301.Respondent 3; Respondent 51; Respondent 53; Respondent 60; Respondent 63; Respondent 50; Respondent 3

302. Respondent 1; Respondent 23; Respondent 46; Respondent 58

303. Respondent 1

304. More information on the importance of 'witnessing' the dangers of migration with one's own eyes can be found in section 6.3.3 on page 49.

305. Respondent 63

306. Respondent 23; Respondent 53

307. Respondent 15

308. Respondent 23; Respondent 1; Respondent 35; Respondent 38; Respondent 41; Respondent 8

309. Respondent 49; Respondent 51; Respondent 59; Respondent 17; Respondent 59

310. Respondent 18

311. Respondent 24

reported having heard negative information from returnees, 36 per cent indicated that the information they had received from returnees was mostly or entirely positive.[312] Positive narratives tend to revolve around time spent in the KSA and migration 'success stories': "They talk about working, earning money and building a home."[313] The most common explanation given by migrants as to why the returnees they had spoken to had not informed them about the dangers of the journey was that they themselves were part of the migration industry and working with brokers to recruit new migrants.[314] This may also explain why 18 per cent of quantitative respondents who had spoken to returnees before migrating reported that they were told the journey is 'easy'. Returnee brokers can be very persuasive as they are 'living proof' of successful migration.

According to study participants, it is not uncommon for brokers to recruit returnees who are planning on returning to the KSA to advertise migration and "motivate prospective migrants for them"[315] in return for cheaper journeys: "Returnees usually don't tell us the challenges of the journey as they cooperate with the broker to help him get more migrants. They do this to get a discount for their journey. We are paying 13,000 ETB (390 USD), but if the returnees get two or three more migrants they will get a discount and only pay 9,000 or 10,000 ETB (270 to 300 USD). Based on the number of migrants they get, they may even travel for free or at half price."[316] Three re-migrating individuals reported that they had been approached by brokers to advertise migration to others: "There is something called '***majjan***' [translates to 'for free' in Arabic]. If you get it you will pay only for food, you don't pay for transportation. You talk with your broker and take young children with you. You'll get to Saudi directly, but the children might die of thirst and hunger or on the sea […]. This ***majjan*** is very terrible."[317] Another re-migrating individual explained that although he wanted to warn people in his community of the dangers of migration when asked about his journey, he refrained from doing so out of fear that the broker would not assist him in future migration endeavours: "He wants to get money. If I stand against him there he wouldn't take me again."[318] These examples illustrate the complex relationships between migrants, returnees and brokers.

7.7. RE-MIGRATING INDIVIDUALS AND PREVIOUS JOURNEYS[319]

Representing 15 per cent of the quantitative sample (309 migrants), re-migrating individuals are predominantly male (92%) and 44 per cent are older than 24 years (versus 20% for first-time migrants). At the time of interview, most of them had already attempted the journey to the KSA at least twice, with as many as 10 per cent reporting having migrated to the KSA at least four times. In general, re-migrating individuals reported that

312. Respondent 12; Respondent 15; Respondent 17; Respondent 2; Respondent 22; Respondent 25; Respondent 26; Respondent 29; Respondent 32; Respondent 33; Respondent 4; Respondent 42; Respondent 43; Respondent 47; Respondent 48; Respondent 50; Respondent 54; Respondent 55; Respondent 57; Respondent 59; Respondent 6; Respondent 62; Respondent 7; Respondent 8; Respondent 66

313. Respondent 32

314. Respondent 57; Respondent 55; Respondent 41; Respondent 38; Respondent 37; Respondent 25; Respondent 2; Respondent 15; Respondent 12

315. Respondent 25

316. Respondent 25

317. Respondent 37

318. Respondent 41

319. Note that all information on previous journeys may be affected by a recall bias due to the fact that individuals might not remember previous events or experiences accurately or omit details. The accuracy and volume of memories may also be influenced by subsequent events and experiences.

they were traveling along the same route as they had taken during previous migrations (77%). Those who were not using the same route had most commonly travelled via Bossaso, Puntland (47%) or taken other routes through Djibouti (53%). Other differences between journeys included changing broker and working en route, although both were mentioned very rarely. In fact, 97 per cent of migrants are using the same broker they travelled with during their previous journey.

The heavy dependence on brokers and the fact that most re-migrating migrants tend to use the same broker means that most re-migrating individuals were using the same route they took during their previous journey(s) and the likelihood of changing routes does not seem to be linked to their rate of successfully having reached the KSA in the past. One or more unsuccessful attempt(s) to enter the KSA during previous journeys does not seem to increase the likelihood of changing route and almost 90 per cent of re-migrating individuals travelling through Obock who did not enter the KSA are migrating along the same route they took during previous, unsuccessful journeys.

Figure 20: Re-migrating individuals' number of previous journeys to the KSA

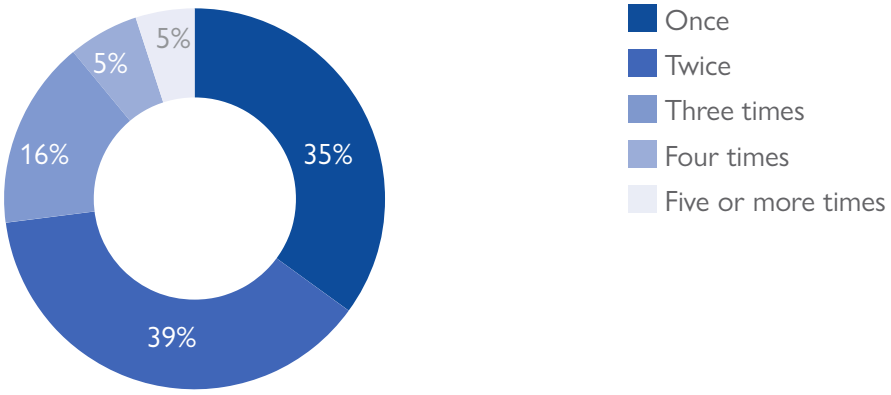
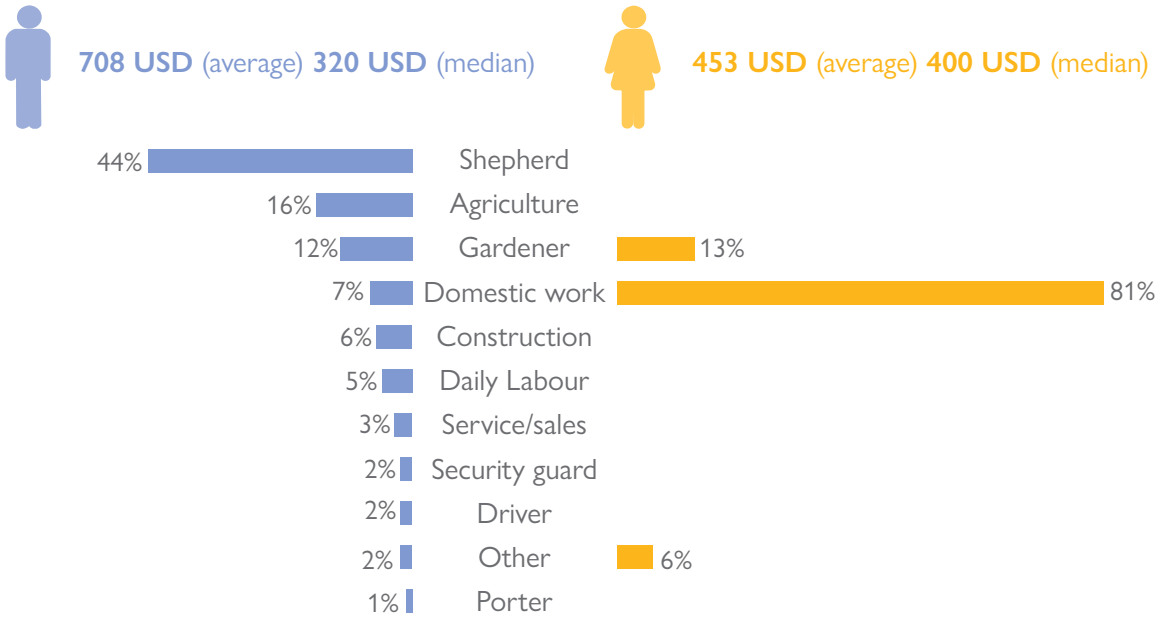


Figure 21: Re-migrating individuals' employment in the KSA, income and occupation



Nonetheless, the outcome of previous journeys was successful for most migrants: between 80 and 90 per cent managed to enter the KSA and find a job on at least one of their migration journeys. Most migrants were employed in agriculture and herding, with 41 per cent working as shepherds. Domestic work was the main source of employment for women and girls (81%, with the remaining migrants employed mainly as gardeners). Only 4 per cent of migrants found work in services or sales. Men and boys earned an average of 708 USD monthly (compared to 453 USD for women and girls), although half of them earned 320 USD or less per month (400 USD for females), reflecting the heterogeneity of jobs among male migrants. Around one quarter of migrants spent at least one year in the KSA (26%) and nearly 90 per cent returned to Ethiopia because they were deported.

7.8. GENDER DYNAMICS IN DECISION-MAKING[320]

Nearly all young women reported that they were the primary decision-maker when making the decision to migrate (85%), although families were more involved in the decision-making process than is the case with male respondents, with 11 per cent of women and girls reporting that the decision to migrate was taken by or with their family, compared to 5 per cent for men and boys. These results echo the findings of other studies carried out in the Ethiopian context, which also found that migrants are the primary decision-maker across both sexes, but parents and family members are more involved in decision-making amongst female respondents (Tsegay & Litchfield, 2019). Females were also more likely to inform their families that they were migrating (39% compared to 34% for males) and relied on them more heavily than males did to help plan and pay for their journeys (36% compared to 21% for males), resulting in females being less likely to report having used their 'own funds' to finance the journey (41% compared to 50% for males). Nearly 70 per cent of informed families approved of or even suggested migration, compared to around 60 per cent for males, indicating that females are, in general, slightly more supported by their families before and during migration than males. Women and girls were four times as likely as men and boys to be travelling with at least one family member. For more information on gender dynamics amongst young Ethiopians along the Eastern Route, please consult the following briefing paper: *Gendered Patterns of Women and Girls' Migration along the Eastern Corridor*.

320. For more information see 'Young women on the move' section in "The Desire to Thrive Regardless of the Risk: Background Analysis by Migrant Category Obock, Djibouti".

Migrant at Fantehero congregation point in Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Ethiopian migrants praying in Adogolo, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

08

Conclusion

Migration along the Eastern Corridor through Djibouti to the KSA has been taking place for many years, and although the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reduced the volume of movements recorded along this route in the first half of 2020, Ethiopians are likely to resume migrating along this route in large numbers in the near future. This study examined who these migrants are, as well as how they make their decisions to migrate, how aware they are of the risks of migrating along the Eastern Route and what drives them to embark on such high-risk migration. Migration between the Horn of Africa and the KSA is dangerous, with migrants facing a multitude of protections risks and abuses, including lack of access to basic services, shelter, medical care, food and water. They can be vulnerable to threats to their security such as extortion, trafficking, death by drowning, exhaustion and disease, and physical and psychological abuse, with women and girls most at risk of GBV perpetrated by various actors, including brokers and other migrants. On their way to Obock, migrants cross dangerous terrain where harsh climatic conditions, with temperatures often exceeding 40 degrees Celsius in the summer months, are often endured on foot during long treks through the desert.

Migration along the Eastern Corridor is fueled by a variety of economic drivers including unemployment, intermittent or insufficient wages, and land-related factors such as climatic shocks and land depletion resulting in economic vulnerability in agrarian communities. Additionally, in some cases, basic needs such as adequate nutrition are not being met. In contrast to the oftentimes dire conditions migrants report at home, stand high salary expectations in the KSA and the success stories migrants witness amongst returnees in their communities, sparking migration aspirations and positioning migration as the driver of development they see in their communities. This study also found a strong culture of migration amongst young Ethiopians across regions of origin, with migration as a livelihood strategy deeply rooted in society, and strong networks between origin and destination facilitating the flow of information, money and migrants. The decision to migrate to the KSA in particular seems to be guided by communities' historical patterns of migration, the perceived, the relative ease of migrating to the KSA compared to the longer journeys south or north, and geographic proximity.

Migrants exercise a large degree of agency in the decision-making process, and migration tends to be mostly self-initiated. Their decision to migrate is often made rapidly, with over half of the survey respondents leaving within two weeks of first contemplating migration. A variety of actors play a role in shaping migration decisions and journeys, including family members, friends and peers, brokers and returnees. Data show that many families are not actively involved in the initial decision to migrate (although they may become more involved as journeys progress), with only 35 per cent of migrants informing their families of their departure. Friends and peers are most influential in shaping opinions and attitudes about migration, while very young migrants seem to be particularly vulnerable to migrating due to peer pressure. Brokers play a crucial role in organizing and sustaining irregular migration from Ethiopia to the KSA, and using their services seems to be the norm. Brokers are also heavily relied on for information about the journey, although brokers do not seem to be a reliable source of information and most migrants reported that the information they had received from brokers prior to departure was mostly inaccurate. Returnees are another key source of word-of-mouth information prior to departure and the presence of returnees in communities contributes to the migration success stories fueling migration aspirations. It seems to be common for brokers to recruit returnees to advertise migration to others and travel back to the KSA for less. Returnees can be very persuasive influencers as they are 'living proof' of successful migration.

Migrants do not always analyse all information available to them before making the decision to migrate, with more than one in two interviewees reporting that they did not inform themselves about the journey prior to departure (52%). First-time migrants interviewed during the quantitative phase of this study also displayed very low levels of awareness of the problems they might encounter during their journey. Very few migrants indicated that they had been aware of the lack of food and water (around 15%) prior to departure, only one in five reported that they knew that their journey would involve multiple brokers (around 20%), and less than one third reported knowing about the war in Yemen (around 30%). Migrants are also not always aware of how much their journeys will cost, with some reporting having been deceived by brokers about the cost of the journey prior to departure or being extorted to pay additional fees en route. Many migrants also underestimate the additional costs of buying food and water en route and some travel without any money, thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to a multitude of protection risks such as abuse by brokers, dehydration, starvation and disease.

Migrants who did receive information on the dangers of migration prior to departure seem to be selective about what information they believe. Strong perceptions about the high potential rewards of migration and widespread migration success narratives seem to undermine the credibility of risk information. Risk awareness is largely acquired by experience and likely to increase as journeys progress, with pre-departure knowledge mostly limited to word-of-mouth information (from friends, peers, returnees and brokers) and often incomplete and/or inaccurate as both brokers and returnees may contribute to false narratives of the journey to the KSA and often fail to depict a complete picture of the migration experience. Reasons for not engaging with, or not being influenced by information on risk ranged from the perceived benefits of migration far outweighing the perceived risks, migrant determination and a general tolerance of hardship, migrant optimism and very strong deterministic beliefs in fate and/or faith. Migrants in this study displayed a strong determination to move and 'change their lives', irrespective of the risks and costs associated with migration. Although risk awareness may not deter them from migrating, it may encourage migrants to adjust their behaviour and take precautionary measures that can lead to risk reduction, such as securing sufficient funds for travel.

Migrant sleeping on the beach in Obock, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

Migrants posing in Fantahero, Djibouti. © Alexander Bee/IOM

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

IOM internal and external datasets, reports, factsheets and other relevant material were reviewed to gather essential secondary data to supplement this study's findings from sources including government institutions, international and national organizations, universities and research institutes. The complete reference list can be found in Annex XI. Furthermore, an extensive literature review of existing decision-making and risk literature was carried out to better contextualize and explain the research findings.

Young People's Decision to Migrate

In an attempt to acknowledge the complexities of young peoples' decision-making and migratory experiences, the analytical framework used in this report draws on multiple theories and models that recognize migrants' agency. Rather than isolated individuals who simply react to policies and economic stimuli, migrants are social actors seeking better outcomes for themselves, their families and their communities by actively engaging in decision-making surrounding the migratory process (Castles, 2004).

Migration decisions can be thought of as weighing the expected costs and benefits of remaining in a location versus attempting to move to another. One of the earliest mentions of this principle in the context of migration is by Ravenstein (1889) and is closely linked to how Adam Smith (1776) thought about decision-making in the economic realm more generally in "The Wealth of Nations". In the 20th century, under the impression of the large

influence that neoclassical theory had on many social sciences, migration theory increasingly modelled individuals' decision to move or stay as one of maximizing individuals' expected utility based on cost–benefit calculations (Castles, 2004). According to early neoclassical models, wage differentials between countries determine migration, as people living in low-wage regions are likely to migrate to high-wage areas. In the 1970s, the model was expanded by Harris and Todaro (1970) to adjust wage expectations by the probability of finding employment in the destination region, meaning that rather than being explained solely by wage differential, migration can be explained by ***expected*** wage differential. We therefore assessed wage expectations and differentials in the quantitative surveys alongside the perceived probability of finding employment.

In the 1980s, De Jong and Fawcett (1981) put forward the value-expectancy model, in which individuals weigh their goals such as status, wealth, stimulation and comfort when deciding whether to migrate (Koikkalainen & Kyle, 2015). It is important to note that while neoclassical theory is a reasonable starting point for thinking about how migration decisions are made, many of its fundamental assumptions do not apply to the context of migration and, as discussed below, our survey was designed paying special attention to these differences. In particular, we cannot assume that migrants have all the information they need at hand and many are neither driven by pure self-regard nor do they necessarily recognize their own agency in the decision-making process.

In the 1990s, Massey (1990) introduced social networks into the migration decision-making model. The networks model states that the first migrants to a certain destination are faced with high costs and risks, while the financial and social costs of migration reduce substantially for relatives and friends. Existing network ties lower the risks associated with migration to a foreign place as individuals receive assistance from those who have already migrated. Reduced costs and risks lead to a greater expected net return of migration and therefore a higher migration probability from the original location (Bauer and Zimmerman as cited in Neto & Mullet, 1998).

Many subsequent studies have reiterated the importance of migration networks and cultures[321] in migration decision-making (Connell, 2008; Haug 2008; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2007; Mallet & Hagen-Zanker, 2018; Kuschminder, de Bresser, & Siegel, 2015; Schapendonk & van Moppes, 2007; Cohen, 2004; Bakewell et al., 2011) as well as the role of the migration industry[322] in facilitating mobility (Kyle & Goldstein, 2011; Castles, 2004; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013; de Haas, 2010). Migration networks do not only provide information, but also financial capital through remittances as well as en route through solidarity between migrants (Mallet & Hagen-Zanker, 2018). The migration industry is made up of service providers who facilitate migration, such as brokers who provide the infrastructural resources and expertise to facilitate movements across the different stages of migration from mobilizing departures from regions of origin, to facilitating transit during the journey to assisting in integration, particularly economic, in destination countries (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Sorensen, 2013). This research accounts for the influence of migration networks and cultures by assessing individual exposure to returnees, brokers and friends/family already in the KSA.

321. A 'culture of migration' refers to a context where migration is pervasive in society, socially accepted, based on historical precedent and migration decisions are part of everyday experiences that are seen as a legitimate means to social and economic well-being (Cohen, 2004).

322. "The migration industry develops out of migration networks. Once a migration gets underway, needs arise for a variety of special services. The migration industry includes travel agents, lawyers, bankers, labor recruiters, brokers, interpreters, and housing agents. The agents have an interest in the continuation of migration and may go on organizing it even when governments try to restrict movements" (Castles, 2004, p. 859).

Families, friends and the wider community have also been found to be key determinants in migrants' decisions. Family linkages can offer the financial capital necessary for migration as well as cultural capital including information (Castles, 2004). One model that takes the role of households into account is the household strategies model. This model advances the idea that families are critical to understanding migration decisions and that migration decisions are often made at the household level with individuals migrating for the benefit of the household (Haug, 2008). Although many respondents in this study made their decisions without the knowledge of their families, this theory is useful for understanding migration in cases where migrants are pushed to migrate by their families as well as cases where migration becomes a family strategy to deal with specific stressors.

Expectations of the outcome of a migration journey (such as expected employment opportunities, salaries, living conditions etc.) can also play a significant role in shaping migration decisions. Rather than being the outcome of mere cost–benefit analyses, migration decisions should also be understood as subjective hopes, goals and aspirations. Aspirations are 'fundamentally social' and shaped by individuals' observations of the achievements of others within social and cultural contexts (Schewel & Fransen, 2018). A decision-making model that incorporates expectations and is widely used in the migration-decision making literature is the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). The theory suggests that expectations of the outcome of a behaviour (in this case migration) are core predictors for the intention to carry out the behaviour (Hoppe & Fujishiro, 2014; Kley, 2017). De Jong (2000) believes that these outcome expectations are established by individual evaluation of attaining the expected goal by moving to another country in comparison with staying in the origin community, whereby strong expectations of achieving the goal by moving elsewhere will foster migration. Migrants' expectations regarding their journey as well as conditions and employment at their destination, the KSA, were assessed in this research, as was the cultural context in which they make their decisions and the 'success stories' they have witnessed.

Migration decisions are not only made prior to departure but continuously throughout the journey as migrants' expectations, risk perceptions and the constraints they experience may change over time and with experience. A model that provides a holistic focus on decision-making throughout the whole migration journey is van der Nelde and van Naerssen's (2011) threshold approach. The authors assume that international immobility is the norm, as there are various 'thresholds' (physical and psychological barriers) that prevent individuals from migrating. Such barriers can include social belonging and individual notions of identity and attachment to certain geographic spaces. For migration to occur, the individual must cross what is labelled the 'indifference threshold', in other words stop feeling indifferent to the idea of migration and see migration as a feasible option. Factors that may compel an individual to cross this mental threshold can include conflict, human rights abuses, climatic conditions and a lack of economic opportunity and vary from migrant to migrant (Mallet & Hagen-Zanker, 2018). In addition to the 'indifference threshold', two further cognitive thresholds must be crossed before migration occurs: the 'locational threshold' (decision where to go) and the 'trajectory threshold' (how to get there). Migration only occurs when all three thresholds have been overcome; hence, if the route is perceived as too risky or the destination is perceived as too similar to the place of residence, migration will not occur

(Mallet & Hagen-Zanker, 2018). These cognitive thresholds may be revisited at any point during a migration journey and preferences may shift, as can be seen in the sample of migrants who have decided to end their journey in Obock and return to Ethiopia.

Lastly, it is important to take note of the broader, structural dynamics in which individuals are immersed whilst making their decisions, by examining migration as a response to external stressors/ push factors that are experienced by individuals, their households and communities. Migrants do not make their decisions in isolation from the conditions they live in and stressors such as climate change, lack of economic opportunities and livelihood issues, education and conflict can all play into individual and household migration decisions.[323]

Risk perception, risk preference and risk mitigation

A long-held assumption in migration policy and information awareness campaigns in particular is that the decision to migrate is directly linked to the availability of risk information. It is therefore assumed that individuals partake in risky migration projects because they lack information on the risks associated with that particular migration or are lured by false promises of brokers and other actors. Conversely, such campaigns also assume that if the migrants were fully informed of the hardships that await them, they would not migrate (Optekamp & Schans, 2016). Several recent studies have shown, however, that risk awareness does not necessarily deter potential migrants as migrants can employ a variety of strategies to avoid such information, including discrediting its validity and dismissing the information as not applicable to their own situation (Alepes & Sorenson, 2015; van Bemmel, 2019; Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2012). The relationship between risk awareness and behaviour was assessed in this study to examine whether young Ethiopians migrate because they are unaware of the risks, willingly choose to avoid risk information or have some risk awareness yet choose to accept the risk and migrate anyway.

Conventional risk theory believes that individuals will engage in risky behaviour if they perceive the benefits as being more valuable than the danger associated with the anticipated risk (van Bemmel, 2019). However, studies have shown that economic vulnerability and in particular relative economic deprivation can increase risk acceptance and hence individuals' willingness to engage in high-risk behaviour (Adam, 1995; Hyunjung Mo, 2014). High risk-taking behaviour can also have a social dimension and may even be seen as a rite of passage in some societies (van Bemmel, 2020). Hayenhjelm (2006) challenges the common view that risks are taken due to lack of understanding of the possible negative outcome, pointing to a different kind of risk, namely 'risks from vulnerability'. Such risks are taken "because there are no positive alternatives to them, and the choice is perceived as having an element of hope" (p. 1). Such hope for change may push individuals who perceive themselves as caught in a vulnerable situation with no viable alternatives to engage in high-risk behaviour. A common justification for migration among the population studied in this research is "to change my life," coupled with narratives of not being able to improve their living standards due to severe economic vulnerability. Although risk information may not necessarily deter prospective migrants from commencing on dangerous journeys due to strong economic drivers making migration seem like the only alternative, information is still key to preparing for migration and mitigating risk.

323. See the "Research Context" and "What Drives Young Ethiopians to Migrate Abroad" chapters for more information on migration push factors from Ethiopia.

ANNEX II: TABLE OF QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

Migrants' characteristics	Age; Sex; Region, Zone and Woreda of Origin; Destination in the KSA; Highest level of education completed; Internal Displacement; Marital status; Dependents
Migration drivers and level of integration prior to migration	Main reason for leaving origin (including forced migration); Pre-migration income (source, earnings, sufficiency, remittances); Pre-migration food security; Pre-migration availability of and access to healthcare services; Pre-migration availability of and access to education services; Community rootedness
Subjective and social norms – community & family perceptions/ actions	Informed family of decision (family reaction; why not informed); Family role in planning and financing the journey; Informed friends of decision (Friends' reaction; why not informed); Friends' role in planning and financing the journey; How common is migration to the KSA in community (family in the KSA, # of community members migrant knows who have migrated to the KSA, estimated proportion of community members who have migrated
Decision making prior to migration	How migrant paid for migration; Individual or collective decision (and with whom); Travelling with; Timeframe between starting thinking about migration and departure; Sought out information prior to departure (sources; why did not seek out information; accuracy and completeness of information received); Role of returnees in providing information (type of information provided on journey and time in the KSA, do returnees recommend migration)
Expectations & awareness prior to migration	Expectations regarding the duration of the journey; Expectations regarding the cost of the journey; Awareness of dangers en route (war in Yemen; boat journey; lack of food and water; multiple brokers); Likelihood of entering the KSA; Likelihood of entering the KSA and finding a job; Job and salary expectations in the KSA; Change in attitudes towards migration between departure and current transit point (Obock)
Migration experiences/ challenges at point of interview	Duration of trip to Obock; Cost of trip until Obock; Additional payments to broker; Sufficiency of food and water en route; Accuracy of information collected prior to departure
Additional indicators for re-migrating individuals	Number of migrations to the KSA; Time since first migration; Successfully entered the KSA at least once (duration of stay; employment type; salaries); Reason for return to Ethiopia; Time spent in Ethiopia between journeys; Current migration along same route as first migration; Differences between migration journeys for most migration driver, social norms and decision-making indicators
Additional indicators for returning migrants	Main reason for return; returning to habitual residence; plans for the future (re-migrate; how evaluate prospects of finding employment in Ethiopia); Informed family of return (including reaction); Informed friends of return (including reaction); recommend similar migration to friend or family member

ANNEX III: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF QUANTITATIVE RESPONDENTS

		First-time migrant	Re-migrating individual	Returning migrant	Total
Gender	Female	18%	8%	2%	15%
	Male	82%	92%	98%	85%
Age group	15-19	31%	13%	34%	29%
	20-24	50%	43%	49%	49%
	25-29	20%	44%	16%	23%
	Average age	*21*	*24*	*21*	22
Marital status	Married	12%	32%	11%	15%
	Separated/divorced	2%	5%	1%	2%
	Single	86%	63%	88%	83%
Have dependents	Yes	26%	36%	28%	28%
	Average # of dependents	2.6	3	3.6	2.8
Region of origin	Addis Ababa	0%	1%	2%	1%
	Afar	2%	2%	2%	2%
	Amhara	13%	14%	44%	17%
	Benishangul Gumuz	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Dire Dawa	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Gambella	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Harari	2%	1%	3%	2%
	Oromia	40%	28%	36%	38%
	Somali	0%	0%	0%	0%
	SNNPR	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Tigray	41%	51%	13%	39%
Highest level of education completed	None	23%	31%	19%	24%
	Primary (5-6 years at school)	33%	30%	40%	33%
	Lower Secondary (8 years at school)	27%	21%	30%	26%
	Upper Secondary (10-12 years at school)	16%	16%	10%	16%
	Tertiary (Bachelors/Masters)	1%	0%	0%	0%
	Religious schools	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Others	0%	0%	0%	0%
Previously migrated within Ethiopia	No	76%	66%	78%	75%
	Prefer not to answer	0%	1%	0%	0%
	Yes	24%	33%	22%	25%

ANNEX IV: MAIN DRIVERS OF MIGRATION BY MIGRANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

		Economic motivations	Natural disaster or environmental conditions	Requested/ pushed by family/spouse/ other	Political, ethnic, or religious persecution	Family re-unification	Earn a higher social status	Other	Total
Type of migrant	First time	96%	0.7%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%	1.1%	100%
	Re-migrating	94%	1.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%	1.3%	100%
	Returning	94%	0.8%	1.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	2.7%	100%
Age (in age groups)	15-19	97%	1.0%	1.0%	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	100%
	20-24	95%	0.6%	1.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	1.4%	100%
	25-29	94%	1.4%	0.6%	0.8%	0.8%	0.4%	2.2%	100%
Gender	Female	93%	0.9%	1.6%	0.0%	1.3%	1.9%	1.6%	100%
	Male	96%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	1.3%	100%
Have dependents?	No	97%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.7%	100%
	Yes	90%	1.8%	2.3%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	3.0%	100%
Main regions of origin	Amhara	92%	2.5%	1.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	2.5%	100%
	Oromia	97%	0.4%	0.7%	0.2%	0.4%	0.1%	0.9%	100%
	Other	94%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	100%
	Tigray	95%	0.7%	0.8%	1.0%	0.5%	0.6%	1.3%	100%
Education	No education	94%	1.4%	1.4%	0.4%	1.0%	0.4%	1.0%	100%
	Some education	96%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	1.5%	100%
Former internal migration	No	96%	0.8%	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	1.3%	100%
	Yes	93%	1.3%	1.5%	1.1%	0.2%	0.8%	1.7%	100%
Total		95%	0.9%	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	1.3%	100%

ANNEX V: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESPONDENTS

Respondent	Region of Origin	Sex	Age	Education	Income in Ethiopia	Married	Household size	Migrated in Ethiopia	Re-migrating	Destination	Interview Location
Respondent 1	Tigray	Male	22-25	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	YES	3	YES	YES (KSA)	Souq al-Ragu (Yemeni-KSA border)	Alat Ela en Haut
Respondent 2	Amhara	Male	25+	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Anywhere	Obock City Centre
Respondent 3	Tigray	Female	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	Yes (Elsewhere in the Middle East)	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 4	Tigray	Male	25+	Primary (5-6)	NO	YES	3	NO	YES (KSA)	Jizan	Fantehero
Respondent 5	Oromia	Male	18-21	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Unsure	Alat Ela
Respondent 6	Oromia	Female	18-21	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Alat Ela
Respondent 7	Oromia	Male	25+	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	YES	10+	NO	NO	Riyadh	Alat Ela
Respondent 8	Oromia	Male	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Al Kharj	Alat Ela
Respondent 9	Amhara	Female	22-25	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	YES	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 10	Amhara	Male	25+	None	YES	YES	5-9	NO	NO	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 11	Tigray	Male	22-25	University	NO	NO	4	NO	YES (KSA)	Jizan	Fantehero
Respondent 12	Oromia	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Adogolo
Respondent 13	Amhara	Female	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	YES	5-9	NO	NO	Kilo Samanya	Fantehero
Respondent 14	Amhara	Male	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 15	Amhara	Male	22-25	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	YES	5-9	NO	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 16	Oromia	Male	25+	None	YES	YES	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 17	Oromia	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	YES	5-9	NO	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 18	Tigray	Male	25+	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	YES	4	YES	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 19	Oromia	Female	15-17	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Alat Ela
Respondent 20	Oromia	Male	15-17	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Alat Ela
Respondent 21	Oromia	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Riyadh	Alat Ela
Respondent 22	Oromia	Male	25+	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	YES	10+	YES	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Alat Ela
Respondent 23	Amhara	Male	25+	None	NO	YES	10+	NO	YES (KSA)	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 24	Amhara	Male	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	10+	NO	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero

Respondent 25	Afar	Male	18-21	None	YES	NO	5-9	YES	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 26	Tigray	Male	25+	Primary (5-6)	YES	YES	5-9	YES	YES (KSA)	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 27	Amhara	Female	25+	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	Yes (Elsewhere in the Middle East)	Medina	Fantehero
Respondent 28	Oromia	Male	18-21	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Khamis Mushait	Fantehero
Respondent 29	Oromia	Male	25+	None	NO	YES	3	NO	NO	Khamis Mushait	Fantehero
Respondent 30	Amhara	Male	22-25	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Medina	Fantehero
Respondent 31	Oromia	Female	15-17	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	3	NO	NO	Yemen	Fantehero
Respondent 32	Oromia	Female	15-17	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	4	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 33	Oromia	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 34	Oromia	Male	15-17	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 35	Oromia	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 36	Tigray	Female	25+	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	10+	NO	YES (KSA)	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 37	Tigray	Male	22-25	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	YES (KSA)	Souq al-Ragu (Yemeni-KSA border)	Fantehero
Respondent 38	Tigray	Male	22-25	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	YES	3	YES	YES (KSA)	Souq al-Ragu (Yemeni-KSA border)	Fantehero
Respondent 39	Oromia	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 40	Oromia	Female	18-21	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 41	Oromia	Male	22-25	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 42	Tigray	Female	22-25	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 43	Tigray	Male	22-25	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 44	Tigray	Male	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	4	NO	YES (KSA)	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 45	Oromia	Male	22-25	None	YES	YES	10+	NO	YES (KSA)	Anywhere in the KSA	Obock City Centre
Respondent 46	Amhara	Male	18-21	University	NO	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 47	Oromia	Female	25+	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 48	Oromia	Male	22-25	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 49	Oromia	Male	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	NO	4	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 50	Oromia	Male	15-17	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	10+	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero

Respondent 51	Oromia	Male	15-17	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 52	Tigray	Male	25+	Upper Secondary (10-12)	YES	YES	3	YES	YES (KSA)	Souq al-Ragu (Yemeni-KSA border)	Fantehero
Respondent 53	Amhara	Female	25+	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero
Respondent 54	Amhara	Female	18-21	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Anywhere in the KSA	Fantehero
Respondent 55	Amhara	Female	22-25	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	YES	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 56	Amhara	Male	15-17	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	NO	4	NO	NO	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 57	Amhara	Male	15-17	None	YES	NO	3	YES	YES (KSA)	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 58	Amhara	Male	18-21	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 59	Oromia	Male	15-17	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 60	Oromia	Male	15-17	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 61	Oromia	Male	15-17	Primary (5-6)	YES	NO	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 62	Oromia	Male	15-17	Primary (5-6)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 63	Tigray	Male	15-17	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	NO	NO	Returning Migrant	MRC Obock
Respondent 64	Tigray	Male	18-21	Lower Secondary (8)	NO	YES	5-9	NO	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 65	Tigray	Male	22-25	Upper Secondary (10-12)	NO	NO	5-9	YES	YES (KSA)	Jeddah	Fantehero
Respondent 66	Amhara	Male	25+	Lower Secondary (8)	YES	NO	5-9	YES	NO	Riyadh	Fantehero

ANNEX VI: SELF-REPORTED MONTHLY SALARIES BY OCCUPATION (QUALITATIVE RESPONDENTS)

Respondent	Region of Origin	Sex	Occupation	Self-reported Salary/Earnings in ETB per month	Self-reported Salary/Earnings in USD per month
Respondent 1	Tigray	Male	Conductor on a bus	1,500	45
Respondent 2	Amhara	Male	Bajaj[324] driver	12,000 – 15,000	264-455
Respondent 2	Amhara	Male	Construction worker	7,500 – 9,000	227-273
Respondent 3	Tigray	Female	Mother works as nurse Sister works as domestic worker	4,000 600	121 18
Respondent 5	Oromo	Male	Café owner	48,000	1,455
Respondent 7	Oromo	Male	Cafeteria owner	1,000	30
Respondent 8	Oromo	Male	Family owns a farm	2,500	76
Respondent 9	Amhara	Female	Waitress	1,200	36
Respondent 10	Amhara	Male	Family owns a farm	800	24
Respondent 14	Amhara	Male	Carpenter	300	9
Respondent 15	Amhara	Male	Barber	6,000 – 7,500	182-227
Respondent 21	Oromo	Male	Construction worker	2,100	64
Respondent 25	Afar	Male	Family owns a farm	20,000	606
Respondent 26	Tigray	Male	Construction worker	8,000	242
Respondent 27	Amhara	Female	Beauty Salon	2,500	76
Respondent 28	Oromo	Male	Shepherd and selling goats	12,000-15,000	264-455
Respondent 29	Oromo	Male	Farmer (shared farm)	15,000 – 18,000	455-545
Respondent 32	Oromo	Female	Working in a restaurant	1,500	45
Respondent 33	Oromo	Male	Farm aid	800	24
Respondent 35	Oromo	Male	Farm aid	500	15
Respondent 37	Tigray	Male	Street vendor (Kollo[325]) Mining stones	10,500-12,000 1,600 – 2,000	318-364 48-61
Respondent 42	Tigray	Female	Family owns a farm	800 – 1,600	24-48
Respondent 43	Tigray	Male	Mining Salt	3,000	91
Respondent 47	Oromo	Female	Street vendor (coffee and tea)	1,400	42
Respondent 48	Oromo	Male	Conductor on a bus	2,100	64
Respondent 49	Oromo	Male	Construction (excavator operator)	3,000	91
Respondent 50	Oromo	Male	Bread vendor	1,500	45
Respondent 52	Tigray	Male	Taxi driver	3,000	91
Respondent 56	Amhara	Male	Family owns a farm	1,700	52
Respondent 59	Oromo	Male	Family owns a farm Dish washer in a hotel	3,500-5,000 600-700	106-152 18-21
Respondent 62	Oromo	Male	Family owns a 'little shop'	30,000	909
Respondent 64	Tigray	Male	Construction worker	600	18
Respondent 66	Amhara	Male	Cook	4500	136

324. A 'bajaj' is a three-wheeled auto rickshaw, also known as a 'tuktuk'.

325. Kollo is an Ethiopian snack that is commonly sold on the street and in small shops. It is made of roasted barley and sometimes other local grains like chickpeas.

ANNEX VII: SELF-REPORTED PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND AMOUNT OF MONEY REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE DESIRED PLANS (QUALITATIVE RESPONDENTS)

Respondent	Region of Origin	Sex	Plans/goals for the future	Amount of ETB (USD) needed to earn in KSA to achieve goal
Respondent 1	Tigray	Male	Open a boutique or other small business	200,000 – 300,000 (6,000-9,000 USD)
Respondent 2	Amhara	Male	Help his family 'overcome life's challenges' and get married	200,000-250,000 (6,000 – 7,500 USD)
Respondent 3	Tigray	Female	Build a house and open a coffee house	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 4	Tigray	Male	Build a house; enough food to feed himself and his family	3,000,000 – 4,000,000 (90,000-120,000 USD)
Respondent 6	Oromia	Female	Help her mother; buy a car and build a house	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 7	Oromia	Male	Buy a 'bajaj'	300,000 (9,000 USD)
Respondent 8	Oromia	Male	Open a cafeteria	80,000 (2,400 USD)
Respondent 9	Amhara	Female	Start a business	300,000 (9,000 USD)
Respondent 10	Amhara	Male	Start a water irrigation business	100,000 – 200,000 (3,000-6,000 USD)
Respondent 11	Tigray	Male	Work in construction	100,000 (3,000 USD)
Respondent 12	Oromia	Male	Study and become an engineer (after working and earning money)	5,000,000 (150,000 USD)
Respondent 13	Amhara	Female	Continue education (university)	Unsure
Respondent 14	Amhara	Male	Open a business	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 15	Amhara	Male	Learn a new profession and start a business or a bigger barbershop; build a house	1,500,000 (45,000 USD)
Respondent 16	Oromia	Male	Buy cattle and goats; maybe buy land	600,000 (18,000 USD)
Respondent 17	Oromia	Male	Buy a car, buy a house, improve living status	7,000 (200 USD)
Respondent 18	Tigray	Male	Improve his small shop; 'good life' for his family and raise his children well	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 19	Oromia	Female	Open a restaurant	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 20	Oromia	Male	Start a business and buy a car	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 21	Oromia	Male	Build a house	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 22	Oromia	Male	Build a house and 'live peacefully'	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 23	Amhara	Male	Own a large-scale dairy farm and do agriculture of vegetables	1,500,000 (45,000 USD)
Respondent 25	Afar	Male	Build a house; a 'beautiful marriage'; buy a minibus	2,000,000 (60,000 USD)
Respondent 26	Tigray	Male	Open a business and live 'a good life'	200,000-400,000 (6,000 – 12,000 USD)
Respondent 27	Amhara	Female	Buy a house and 'live a good life'	Unsure
Respondent 28	Oromia	Male	Build a house and start a family (needs money to marry); buy cattle	800,000 (24,000 USD)
Respondent 29	Oromia	Male	Open a shop and buy a car	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 30	Amhara	Male	Open a business like a small shop; build a house; earn enough money to marry	500,000-600,000 (15,000 – 18,000 USD)
Respondent 32	Oromia	Female	Improve family's living status	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 33	Oromia	Male	Build a house; buy a car	10,000,000 (300,000 USD)

Respondent 34	Oromia	Male	Build a house for his mother; buy a 'bajaj', complete his education	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 35	Oromia	Male	Build a house; buy a car	7,000,000 (200,000 USD)
Respondent 36	Tigray	Female	Build a house; work as a crafts maker	400,000 (12,000 USD)
Respondent 37	Tigray	Male	Build a house that is large enough for his family and his mother	1,500,000 (45,000 USD)
Respondent 38	Tigray	Male	Start a business such as a supermarket	100,000 (3,000 USD)
Respondent 39	Oromia	Male	Build a house and improve family's life; continue education	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 40	Oromia	Female	Open a restaurant, marry and have a family	Unsure
Respondent 41	Oromia	Male	Continue education to become a doctor	100,000 (3,000 USD)
Respondent 42	Tigray	Female	A better life; live in Addis Ababa	1,000,000 (30,000 USD)
Respondent 43	Tigray	Male	Build a house; marry and have children	10,000,000 (300,000 USD)
Respondent 44	Tigray	Male	Build a house; marry and have children	200,000 (6,000 USD)
Respondent 45	Oromia	Male	Open a restaurant or shop	Unsure
Respondent 46	Amhara	Male	Work as a teacher	100,000-200,000 (3,000 – 6,000 USD)
Respondent 47	Oromia	Female	Build a house	34,000 (1,000 USD)
Respondent 48	Oromia	Male	Create jobs in his community	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 49	Oromia	Male	Migrate legally to Europe	100,000 (3,000 USD)
Respondent 50	Oromia	Male	Better life and continue education	100,000 (3,000 USD)
Respondent 51	Oromia	Male	Build a house	300,000 (9,000 USD)
Respondent 52	Tigray	Male	Drive a taxi	200,000 (6,000 USD)
Respondent 53	Amhara	Female	Build a house and 'shape' her children's lives	150,000 (4,500 USD)
Respondent 54	Amhara	Female	Build a house and buy a car	Unsure
Respondent 55	Amhara	Female	Start a business	500,000 (15,000 USD)
Respondent 59	Oromia	Male	Start a business with the help of his family; buy a car or 'bajaj'	Returning migrants
Respondent 60	Oromia	Male	Continue education (if his family helps him pay for it)	Returning migrant
Respondent 61	Oromia	Male	Continue education and work on farm	Returning migrant
Respondent 62	Oromia	Male	Buy a motorcycle; open a shop; continue education	Returning migrant
Respondent 63	Tigray	Male	Continue education	Returning migrant

ANNEX VIII: INCOME SUFFICIENCY, COPING STRATEGIES AND NEEDS

		Income sufficient to meet basic needs	Skipped meals	Needed health care	Able to access health care	Wanted education	Able to access education
Type of migrant	First time	33%	35%	31%	67%	44%	30%
	Returning	46%	29%	38%	57%	44%	18%
	Re-migrating	56%	28%	33%	73%	36%	15%
Age (in age groups)	15–19	36%	36%	29%	61%	45%	26%
	20–24	38%	35%	35%	68%	45%	28%
	25–29	33%	32%	29%	64%	39%	33%
Gender	Female	31%	31%	33%	76%	39%	23%
	Male	37%	35%	32%	63%	45%	29%
Have dependents?	No	35%	28%	30%	64%	39%	18%
	Yes	43%	52%	39%	69%	57%	47%
Main regions of origin	Amhara	37%	31%	30%	55%	37%	30%
	Oromia	34%	39%	33%	61%	44%	29%
	Tigray	36%	31%	31%	76%	44%	29%
	Other	58%	37%	39%	62%	60%	19%
Education	No education	50%	30%	28%	73%	30%	27%
	Some level of education	32%	36%	33%	63%	48%	28%
Former internal migration	No	35%	34%	27%	71%	38%	34%
	Yes	40%	35%	48%	55%	62%	17%
Total		37%	34%	32%	65%	44%	28%

ANNEX IX: LIVELIHOODS BEFORE MIGRATION AND EXPECTATIONS UPON MIGRATION

	Have a source of income	Deem it 'likely' or 'very likely' to find a job in the KSA	Median income in Ethiopia	Expected median income in the KSA	Main sources of income	Expected job in the KSA
First time migrants	22%	42%	1,800 ETB (61 USD)	13,364 ETB (453 USD)	Daily labour 54% Informal salaried employment 13% Farming 11% Formal salaried 10% Business/trade 5%	Shepherd 24% Agriculture 15% Daily labour 12% Domestic work 12% Gardener 11%
Returning migrants	28%	36%	1,700 ETB (57 USD)	14,544 ETB (493 USD)	Daily labour 49% Farming 27% Informal salaried 10% Business/trade 10% Formal salaried 7%	Shepherd 30% Agriculture 19% Daily labour 11% Gardener 11% Driver 5%
Females	12%	38%	1,003 ETB (34 USD)	15,724 ETB (533 USD)	Formal salaried 23% Informal salaried 23% Remittances/support from family and friends in Ethiopia 23% Daily labour 21% Savings 5%	Domestic work 56% Generic daily labour 9% Manager 8% Gardener 5% Service/sales 5%
Internal migrants	29%	55%	1,741 ETB (59 USD)	15,724 ETB (533 USD)	Daily labour 44% Informal salaried 23% Formal salaried 12% Business/trade 10% Farming 10%	Shepherd 27% Gardener 14% Agriculture 12% Generic daily labour 11% Domestic work 8%

ANNEX X: THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

	First-time migrant	Re-migrating individual	Returning migrant	Female	Internal migrant	Total
Informed family	**39%**	**34%**	**21%**	**39%**	**48%**	**35%**
Family approved migration	45%	43%	24%	44%	53%	42%
Family suggested migration	21%	19%	15%	24%	16%	20%
Family approved because it was the only option	16%	11%	30%	13%	21%	17%
Family did not want me to migrate	16%	17%	26%	19%	10%	17%
Did not inform family	**60%**	**63%**	**79%**	**59%**	**51%**	**63%**
They would have prevented me from going because the journey is dangerous	70%	75%	68%	80%	68%	71%
They would have prevented me from going because they need me at home	21%	20%	29%	26%	17%	22%
I did not want to worry them	24%	19%	17%	22%	22%	22%
They would have prevented me from going because the journey is expensive	9%	5%	10%	11%	5%	9%
I was ashamed of my decision	8%	10%	7%	15%	2%	7%
Was not sure of their decision	5%	3%	5%	5%	3%	4%
They cannot help me any way	2%	8%	3%	4%	1%	2%
Family supported migration	**29%**	**22%**	**15%**	**34%**	**37%**	**27%**
Helped in planning journey	49%	44%	33%	50%	38%	48%
Supported financially during the journey	29%	24%	41%	29%	39%	30%
Supported financially at the start of the journey	19%	22%	21%	21%	25%	19%
Set up with broker	9%	11%	10%	12%	9%	9%
Sold assets	4%	3%	5%	7%	4%	4%
Gather information	3%	5%	8%	4%	4%	4%
Travelled with family	**2%**	**3%**	**4%**	**8%**	**2%**	**3%**

ANNEX XI: REFERENCE LIST

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