

Moving for work from rural communities (2010-13) WIDE Discussion Brief No. 8 of 10ⁱ

Key messages from the WIDE evidence:

- In line with broader evidence that mobility first rises with developmentⁱⁱ, in 2010-13 the research found:
 - **much expanded and more complex mobility** in the WIDE communities - more people, especially many more **women and youth**, move for work, for various durations and to **diverse destinations** (cities, factories, other rural areas **within Ethiopia and abroad**);
 - this is a **product of the communities' development**, as people move to fulfil higher aspirations (embodied in earlier successful migrants as role models) as well as to respond to constraints - youth landlessness and un(der)employment in particular;
 - **mobility experiences** have mixed outcomes, with **instances of severe harm**; but **when successful** finance **local economic investments**, enhance **wellbeing and social protection of migrants' families**; contribute to **change in social norms** (e.g. re women's status); and reduce pressure on land and labour markets,
- ...suggesting that **rural work-related mobility can contribute to local rural development**. To strengthen this potential Government could consider:
 - Refining a **migration policy** that would recognise both the risks and benefits of migration, and guide all stakeholders in mitigating the former and enhancing the latter;
 - Institutionalising **capacity of understanding**, to help strengthen **policy for and management of** (evolving and complex) **mobility in Ethiopia**.
- Measures aimed to improve the use of migration returns would strengthen rural mobility outcomes, such as for instance
 - Further **easing money transfer and banking options** (in line with the expansion of banking services in rural areas foreseen in the GTP2);
 - Encouraging the use of **remittances/savings in insurance schemes and as collateral**;
 - Building on the Gurage migrants' tradition, developing ways for migrants/returnees to **co-finance local infrastructure development** in and around their community (e.g. 'local development bonds').
- **Moving for urban/industrial work is increasingly important** for rural people. Yet this often entails a **precarious life, exploitative work conditions** (especially for women migrating to towns) and **very small returns** (if any).
- Improving urban/industrial migration experiences would support Government **industrial and small town development policy objectives**. Specific measures that could help include:

- **Easing migrants' access to ID cards and social services and providing information on job availability;**
- **Opening up interventions of support to MSE creation for migrants;**
- **Enforcing minimum work conditions**, clarifying and following up on employers' responsibilities.
- **Implementing such measures in smaller towns/local factories would reduce flows to larger cities**, as many may prefer to work nearer home, where it is possible to commute or return regularly to one's community.
- People in rural Ethiopia know the risks of irregular migration. In spite of this and of known cases of actual harm, it was often preferred because **the regular overseas employment process** (when it was available) was **seen as costly and 'not better'**, with regular workers poorly prepared and lacking effective protection.
- For **young men** (as most of the 'regular' job opportunities abroad were for domestic work) **and poor people** (often financing migration through asset-depleting strategies), **irregular migration was seen as the only option**.
- Building on the **recently strengthened legal framework for employment abroad** and alongside ongoing efforts to curb irregular migration, Government should consider **how to make legal migration more attractive**, e.g. through:
 - Ensuring that **full and clear information** (on jobs, requirements and processes) is widely available (e.g. through social media as well as from government offices);
 - Making legal migration **more easily accessible, cheaper and more time-efficient** (e.g. by decentralising aspects of migration management);
 - Deploying the resources required to offer **effective protection** to workers abroad;
 - Developing **formal financing options for would-be work migrants from poor backgrounds;**
 - Opening up **opportunities for young men** through e.g. bilateral agreements including a wider range of jobs, and regularising migration to more destinations.
- Special attention is needed to **ensure that women's increased mobility benefits them fully**. Measures that would help this include:
 - Ensuring that industrial employers uphold the **'equal pay for equal task'** principle;
 - Focusing on enforcing **minimum work conditions especially in relation to domestic employment and employment in hospitality services;**
 - Promoting women's rights to benefit from the financial returns of their migration and facilitating this through e.g. **easing young women's access to banking solutions independently of their family** and credit schemes incentivising them to save.

Introduction

There is a wide range of kinds of ‘people moving’ that include small or large-scale, single, circular or repeated, temporary or permanent, voluntary or induced movement caused by social, economic and/or political factors including seasonal employment, diversifying livelihoods, political instability, ethnic strife, natural disasters, social distress, marriage arrangements, or the combination of one or more of these factors. This brief focuses on the experiences of **individuals moving away from their home rural communities for livelihood-related reasons.**

Moving for work – Who, where and for how long

Moving for work was not new in the WIDE communities but **new trends** had emerged between 1995 and 2010/13 in relation to **who moved, where and for how long.** **Agricultural out-migration** (people moving to seek work on land elsewhere) coexisted with new/ increased **urban or industrial migration** (people moving to urban areas of various sizes, or to work on various types of industrial premises - flower farms, gold mines, industrial zones, local factories) elsewhere in Ethiopia, and large numbers of **people moving to work abroad.** Mobility experiences were of **very diverse durations,** from commuting e.g. to nearby towns or factories, to a few weeks for a specific job, a few months/ seasonal, and several years.

Moving to urban areas or to work in factories was as important as for employment abroad: it was mentioned in all communities and was said to be important in twelveⁱⁱⁱ. In several cases (e.g. Gara Godo/Wolaita, Adado/Gedeo) seasonal migration for urban/industrial work partly substituted seasonal agricultural migration. **Destinations abroad** were primarily the Gulf countries, Sudan, and South Africa in Aze Debo’a/Kembata. In seven, very diverse communities, large flows to various destinations coexisted in addition to seasonal rural migration.

There had been a **marked increase in the number of women working away from home** (e.g. in Oda Dawata/Arsi and Oda Haro/West Shoa in 2013, more women migrated than men); and many of the recent migrants were **young people** (for instance in Geblen/Eastern Tigray in 2010, 56 of the 185 members of the Youth Association had left the community).

Why people moved

People moved away **for a range of reasons.** Most often decisions were taken based on a **mix, in proportions varying from one individual to another, of push and pull factors.** People moved both as a survival/coping strategy and as an investment towards a better future. **Aspirations played a larger role than in the past.** E.g. in Oda Haro people talked about the migrants’ *“ambitions”*. Some people migrated initially under duress but this shifted into an investment, like a man from Harresaw (Eastern Tigray, 2011) who went to Saudi three times over six years, initially to repay his and his son’s debt but who later on sent remittances, saved at the bank, and was able to build a good house.

Decisions often resulted from **joint family decision-making** or a combination of the migrant’s agency and some pressure from her/his family, peers or the community. The **ability to help one’s family** played an important role in many decisions. For instance, in Aze Debo’a a young woman working at the local coffee plant wanted to migrate to the Gulf *“to change her life and that of her family, as the money I get here is not enough.”* In Somodo (near Jimma) a farmer stressed that *“those migrants are able to assist their poor families and change their lives... migration also serves as a job opportunity. If there is no migration, where will the kebele put the large number of jobless youth?”*

There was **much mobility in both economically thriving and well connected communities** like Oda Dawata (on Adama-Asela road), Somodo (near Jimma) and Sirba (on Debre Zeit-Mojo road), as well

as **struggling/less well connected ones** like Harresaw. Thus **even when the local economy was healthily growing**, the existing local opportunities may have been too few, or did not match the needs and aspirations of increasingly somewhat educated youth (e.g. *“no job opportunity that is satisfactory to the youth”* in Harresaw).

Aspirations combined with the prospect of **landlessness** for many young men **and un(der)-employment** for both young men and women, to make migration a logical prospect, even for people with resources and perhaps even more so. So for instance, in Sirba a rich farmer explained that one of his daughters, grade 10 complete but who did not get any job, migrated and was working in Dubai. They did not need remittances but wanted her to have a chance to improve her life. In Harresaw and other communities even government employees like teachers migrated.

Longstanding or more recent **traditions of migration** also mattered, like in Girar (Gurage tradition of urban migration), Aze Debo’a (Kembata/Hadiya migration to South Africa had become a ‘tradition’ in a few years), Harresaw (building on trade links with Saudi Arabia through Afar) and Adele Keke/East Hararghe (traditional seasonal migration to Djibouti as domestic for women and with the chat trade for men, with some continuing their journey to Yemen and Saudi Arabia).

Alongside a few people with a better life through education and a formal job, **daring migrants** who had not needed much education to succeed were **new role models** for the many young people who dropped or failed too early to be employable in formal jobs (*DB05:education, DB04:youth*). So for instance, a 13-year old girl from Somodo whose role model was a successful international migrant returnee explained: *“The reason I want to migrate is that I worry that on completing Gr10 my results may not be good enough to enable me to get a job.”* In Harresaw the son of a poor household had scored enough to join government university but they could not afford it – and he had migrated to Saudi as he *“lost hope”*.

The balance of risks and benefits

Different people had **very different views on the balance of risks and benefits** of moving away from one’s home community. Local officials usually highlighted the **risks and harms of unsuccessful migration**, which they also presented as most common. Migration was described as a *‘new HTP’* (Somodo) that brought disaster for the migrants, their families, and the community losing its young energetic people and therefore facing much slowed-down development. Government’s efforts to develop local options for the youth were emphasised, such as the ‘rural youth job creation initiative’ (Adado/Gedeo), women’s saving and poultry-rearing groups (Somodo) etc.

However, for people who considered the girls migrating to the Gulf as *‘heroes’* (in Kormargefia/ North Shoa) or talked about their migration as a *‘prudent economic move’* (in Oda Haro), such options were no match against the **prospects of higher gains through working elsewhere**. **People knew the risks** and several interviewees recounted **stories of actual harm** (e.g. cases of exploitation, physical and mental abuses and death). Costs, labour shortage and absence were other drawbacks. But there was also **evidence that successful experiences were beneficial** at individual, household and community levels, so that many were of the opinion that the positives exceeded the negatives.

In a few predominantly Muslim communities migration abroad interacted with religious mobilisation discourses (e.g. migrants said to bring a *“new Muslim culture”* and *“spread this kind of strict religion”*, in Oda Haro). Much more commonly **migration was associated with ideas of modernity** and linked to success, wealth, *“modern lifestyle”*, *“civilised ways”* (dress, houses, cooking), new business ideas etc. As one of the Research Officer said about Adado, *“old people perceive migration as a sign of poverty, the younger generation sees it as a way to generate an income”*.

There were signs of the **possible emergence of a 'culture of migration'** in some of the communities, with mentions of snowballing influence, "*competitive migration*" (in Somodo), and the frequent occurrence of repeat migration. In the communities visited in November 2013 there was **little support for the ban on migration abroad**: youth and their families argued that it would fuel joblessness, that the government did not have the right to prevent them from '*changing their life*', and that it should '*unban*' migration as it was not able to create local jobs^{iv}.

Effects on livelihoods

In most communities there was a clear sense that outmigration provided some relief from the ever increasing pressure on land. Indeed, as noted earlier, migration was partly a response to land scarcity and more generally **scarcity of local livelihood options**. But remittances and savings **also permitted livelihood-related investments**. They were invested **in the farm sector**, for instance to buy livestock (ploughing oxen or for fattening), farm implements or inputs, and rent-in more land (e.g. in Turufe, Harresaw, Aze Debo'a, Kormargefia, Sirba, Oda Haro and Oda Dawata).

Returnees or migrants' relatives also invested **in the non-farm sector**, contributing to local **economic diversification** and often to the **thickening of rural-urban links** described in *DB02:(r)urbanisation*. For instance, returnees had invested in trucks or minibuses in Aze Deboa and Somodo and bajajs in Adado, in hotels in nearby towns in Aze Deboa and Girar, and in shops of various sizes, grain mills, trade, cafes or restaurants, beauty salons etc. a bit everywhere. However, it was mentioned that successful returnees wanting to invest in non-farm activities faced **structural constraints** such as poor access and limited size of the local market.

Other positive effects noted in some communities included **more daily/contract agricultural work** (in households with men away); **ability to pay debt** (instead of selling assets); and **new skills and** (more rarely) **business ideas** brought back by migrants (e.g. in Somodo, migrants were said to analyse activities they would engage in and influence local people in this way).

There were negative effects on households when migrants failed or died; or for households severely depleting assets to finance migration. However, in five communities, **migration was identified as one of the main drivers of the local economy** and key informants estimated that it contributed to it by as much as 10-25% (including migration to urban/industrial areas in one site).

Effects on human development

There were **clear wellbeing effects in families with successful migrants**. Most widespread were investments in **better housing and living standards**. There were mentions of marked improvements in **diet** (families with migrants were said to "*drink milk like water*" in Aze Debo'a), **clothing**, and ability of **paying for types of health care services** otherwise out-of-reach for most rural people. For instance, a young woman from Sirba was helping her father who had been blind for ten years to get the best medical treatment in Addis, something which he "*wouldn't even think of... without the help of his daughter covering all the medical, transport and accommodation costs.*"

The **interaction between migration and education was complex**. As noted earlier, failing (or the fear of failing) on the 'education-then-job' trajectory was a frequent prompt to migration. In some communities this and the influence of experiences of earlier successful migrants reportedly led to an increasing number of youth dropping out of school even if they would have been able to continue (respondents described a "*snowballing effect*" in e.g. Harresaw, Aze Deboa, Sirba, Somodo and Adado). There were also youth who went to town to study and stayed afterwards.

On the other hand, there were urban migrants trying to **combine work and study** (mentioned in e.g. Sirba and Kormargefia). Some of the young migrants from Adado paid their school costs when back from the gold mines. And in some cases **remittances financed the education** of children or siblings – e.g. a successful woman head of household in Somodo used the remittances sent by her son to make her daughter study, and she was now employed at the wereda water office.

Effects on social development

Migration had **complex effects on households' structures** – notably, **later age at marriage** as young men or women or both migrated, reportedly also to be able to establish an independent livelihood and household afterward. There were also **more households deviating from local norms** (e.g. more female-headed households, young married women living with their parents while the husband was away, children living with grand-parents as their mother had migrated, divorce following a migration experience or to be able to migrate etc.).

The **effect on intergenerational relationships was dual**. On one hand, migration decisions **generated tension** in some cases (e.g. young man “nagging” his father to use his savings as a teacher to send him to South Africa in Aze Debo’a). On the other hand, migration **reduced tension** around access to land (e.g. rich families in Kormargefia giving money to youngsters for them to go and find work in towns; young man from Oda Haro who migrated to Ambo when his land-poor father made clear he wouldn’t give him land, was employed in a hotel and lived well).

There was also a **dual effect on local social protection mechanisms**. As they moved away young people left elderly households without labour. But migration was also seen as a first choice option for young people to be able to assist their families, which they often did when they did well enough – and as noted earlier this aspiration was a major factor in many migration decisions.

Migration also had **huge effects for women**. Their **much higher mobility** represented a significant shift in conservative communities such as Aze Deboa (Kembata) and Kormargefia (North Shoa). More broadly, successful migration was **potentially a major factor of socio-economic empowerment for the women**. As one elderly woman, fairly successful household head from Kormargefia said: *“there will be a different kind of household where women will become the decision-makers in economic activities... the more money a person has means power to decide”*. However, **it could also be exploitative** like seemed to be the case in Somodo where young women were ‘sent’ abroad by families or husbands and reportedly often found little for them when they returned; and in many cases of urban migration (see below).

Enhancing mobility to strengthen rural development

Thus, WIDE found that **greater mobility in Ethiopia’s rural communities was a product of their development**, with local, context-specific mixes of opportunities and constraints; and people moved to fulfil the higher aspirations resulting from this development. There was evidence that **successful migration can be beneficial**. It reduced the pressure on scarce local resources and on the (local and domestic) labour market. Through remittances, the young generation contributed to social protection and increased wellbeing for their household at home. Remittances and savings financed investments in and diversified local economies. And in several communities, the increased work-related mobility of women brought positive changes in gender perceptions and values.

As rural Ethiopia continues to develop, **various forms of work-related rural outmigration** will also continue to increase. This could become an **ingredient of local rural development**, alongside the ongoing Government-led development of more and better rural economic opportunities. To this effect, Government could consider

- Refining a **migration policy** that would recognise both the risks and benefits of migration, and guide all stakeholders in mitigating the former and enhancing the latter
- **Institutionalising capacity of understanding ‘mobility in Ethiopia’** and its complexity and evolution over time, with a view to strengthening policy for and management of mobility.

A number of measures could contribute to **tap more fully the potential benefits of rural mobility by strengthening the way in which returns are being used:**

- Young people migrating often arose in part from a sense of responsibility towards their family, and in many cases **strengthened local social protection mechanisms**. This could be further enhanced by ensuring that, in line with Government objective of expanding banking services in rural areas, migrants have **access to cheaper and easier banking and money transfer options**, both within the country and from abroad.
- Migrants and their families **prioritised investments in wellbeing and human development**. Government could consider ways to strengthen this welcome trend, such as encouraging the **use of a part of remittances/savings for e.g. contributions to health insurance schemes and other forms of insurance mechanisms, or collateral for formal credit**.
- Measures helping migrants to **maximise savings and remittances** (e.g. better banking/ transfer options as above; higher interest rates on savings) would enable more of them to **consider productive investments** alongside investments in wellbeing. Local authorities could provide **advice on worthwhile productive investments in various economic sectors** (e.g. rural ‘one-stop shops’ that could advise entrepreneurs on marketable products/services, link them to credit and training, help them to get land etc. – *DB02:rurbanisation*).
- Building on the Gurage tradition of migrants funding development projects in their area, Government could develop means for **migrants/returnees to co-finance infrastructure development in and around their community**, thereby addressing some of the structural constraints that they face when they want to invest at home (e.g. ‘local development bonds’ like a localised version of diaspora bonds).
- Special attention is needed to **ensure that migration**, like any other economic option, fully **contributes to women’s empowerment and brings balanced outcomes** for the women themselves and their families. This could be stressed in **Government’s message promoting gender equality** (*DB07:women*). Government could also consider ways to **facilitate young women’s independent access to banking solutions** so they can send funds to an account at their name without having to rely on family members. **Other incentive measures** could be considered, such as access to low-interest loans as a complement to their savings, enabling them to launch their own business on return.

Better information on and preparation for available jobs, more efficient and migrant-friendly migration management systems and strengthening/enforcing the relevant legal frameworks would **further enhance migration outcomes**. The next sections look at this in relation to WIDE evidence on (i) urban and industrial migration and (ii) migration abroad.

Urban/industrial experiences

The WIDE data suggest that people moving to seek urban/industrial work or work on large-scale agricultural schemes (including hospitality services, cobble-stone paving, construction works, factories of different types and sizes, gold mines, flower farms, Metema and Humera sesame farms, sugar plantations) often faced **a host of difficulties** linked to the **precariousness of their situation**. It often was a challenge to find a job, especially in urban areas where many moved without a specific

plan, and accommodation. Another challenge was life being expensive as migrants did no longer share their household's food etc.

Men moving to urban areas seemed to be doing better than **women, who often faced various forms of exploitation** in poorly paid and vulnerable jobs as domestic workers, waitresses in bars, cafés or restaurants or commercial sex workers. Relatedly, urban migration was considered as undesirable for women in several communities. As a young woman from Oda Haro explained, *“most girls who migrate to urban towns looking for a better life are not successful. (When they return), sometimes with a child, they are very disadvantaged as they lost their previous status both at the family and community level. Domestic workers in the country are less respected; they don't send money, and they don't even change the clothes they were wearing when they were living in the community.”*

There were women among the people employed in **industrial jobs**, which might have been seen as preferable. But they **did not seem to be better paid**. For instance in Oda Haro where some young women worked in factories in Fincha or Addis, and Oda Dawata where some worked in Asela factories, this was considered to be a lot less advantageous than migration abroad. **Work conditions were also an issue in some cases** (e.g. a young woman from Sirba and a young man from Geblen had severe headaches after working on a flower farm and in a pharmaceutical factory, respectively).

Generally **urban migrants were said to be unable to support their family at home**. E.g. in Gara Godo (Wolaita), a poor farmer explained that his son, in Awassa, did not send money as he needed to finance his personal life before sending support home. Respondents in Kormargefia also explained that most migrants working in Ethiopia did not get much to support their families while *“many of the women in Arab countries were sending money, within four months of starting work, and building tin-roofed houses for their parents.”*

Improving urban/industrial experiences

Helping people seeking work in urban/industrial areas would improve outcomes for them and their families as well as support Government industrial policy objectives. This could involve a range of measures such as

- easing migrants' **access to identity cards** to ensure they have access to social services;
- **opening up the opportunities of support to MSE creation to migrants** (skill and entrepreneurship training, credit)
- providing migrants with easier access to **information on jobs available**, reasonable accommodation, health services, skill training and credit opportunities – e.g. through designating a responsible kebele/municipal office especially in areas prone to in-migration.

Three areas deserve special consideration.

- Government could give priority to looking into issues of **minimum conditions for jobs on industrial or large-scale agricultural plants** to minimise labour exploitation. In enforcing **labour laws and regulations, employers' responsibilities** should be clearly defined, made known, and followed up (e.g. safety requirements at work, salary, transport, decent housing);
- **Urban or industrial migration should be made safer for women** – many of whom might prefer not to move abroad if they felt that this alternative was worthwhile. To combat the current widely prevailing exploitation of female urban migrants, special focus is needed on **work conditions in domestic employment and employment in hospitality services** as well as additional ways to protect migrant women from harm (e.g. urban shelters etc.) (DB07:women).
- Many men and women **might prefer finding work in nearer places** (DB02:(r)urbanisation).

Making this more attractive would also help to avoid a concentration of people all moving to larger cities. This calls for **attention to migrants' living and working conditions in smaller towns and local factories** as much as in large cities and industrial parks; strengthening the **management capacity of labour wereda/municipality offices**; and devising systems to **compile information on local/nearby jobs and disseminate it widely in rural communities**.

Experiences of moving abroad

In communities where migration abroad was large the **risks appeared to be well known**. People had heard the government awareness-raising messages, knew about unsuccessful cases locally or through the media; or they personally knew unsuccessful migrants or had themselves been unsuccessful. But it **did not deter everyone**, such as for instance a female returnee from Sirba who after three years in Dubai was processing her visa to go to Bahrein and noted that a lot of women got harassed by their employers or *"just disappeared"* but it was also *"a good opportunity for many young girls to earn a good amount of money"* and *"better to migrate and work than stay here doing nothing"*. Success in moving abroad was seen as the best pathway to *"change one's life"*, like for this woman development team leader from Kormargefia asking *"why collect dung rather than wash one's hands with soap many times a day?"*.

At the same time, **would-be migrants did not have clear and complete information on the regular (documented) migration channel**, allowing brokers to act as intermediaries and fill these information gaps. There were also mentions of brokers smuggling people on irregular journeys. However, brokers did not seem to have the importance often highlighted in the media and public discourse at least with regard to migrants' decisions of leaving. More generally, local discourses did not conjure the notion of trafficking. For instance, in Harresaw where most migration was illegal, people talked about *"sidedet"* (migration) and not *"hige wett ziwwir"* ('illegal transfer') most often used by government officials. In Somodo and Oda Haro people talked about *"godanssa sera (qabesa)"* for legal migration and *"godanssa serandhala"* for migration through unlicensed brokers, the latter referring to people who chose to migrate albeit not through the regular channel.

In addition to huge risks during the journey, undocumented international migrants were vulnerable to deportation given their irregular status. That said, **in some cases regular migrants seemed to be just as vulnerable to poor treatment**; and a number of returnees expressed a sense of **powerlessness** due to both their **lack of preparedness** to the jobs and the **lack of effective protection mechanisms** which they could rely on in case of problems. A young woman from Oda Haro compared with *"people from the Philippines... more secure with their employment contract as they receive advice and training from their national agency"*; while another from Oda Dawata explained that there was a *"big problem with agents"* who tell the women to 'keep quiet' when they report a problem. Yet when these women try to act by themselves they *"might face different problem as they try to change their place"* (a reference to the Kafala system bonding an employee to her employer).

Overall, migration patterns were quite **different for young men and young women**. For young women, in communities where both were present migration abroad was seen as and appeared to be a better option than urban migration. **For young men migration abroad was generally irregular**, therefore riskier, as most of the opportunities for regular migration to Gulf countries were for domestic workers. All migration to South Africa were irregular.

The returns to successful migration abroad were usually much higher than for other types of migration, and expectations were higher too. However, **financing migration was often a key issue**. In some cases would-be migrants and their families used **strategies leaving the household significantly impoverished and vulnerable** until remittances would compensate these losses – in

case of success. Families in Somodo would sell crops or cattle or borrow to send at least one child abroad. In Aze Debo'a a family had sold their two oxen and all eucalyptus on their land to finance their son's trip to South Africa "like other parents are doing".

In many instances the poorest people (who might benefit most from successful migration) undertook to **migrate first through irregular channels, riskier but perceived to be cheaper**, with the hope to earn enough money to migrate to better places, possibly for a better pay and through the regular channel. This was common in Somodo, for instance, where young women would migrate illegally to Sudan to get money to later on migrate legally to Gulf countries.

Improving employment abroad

A new *Prevention and Supervision of Trafficking in Person and Smuggling of Migrants Proclamation* and an *Overseas Employment Amended Proclamation* have been approved in July and December 2015 respectively. Building on this momentum and with a view to making employment abroad better for more people, Government should **consider how it can render regular migration more attractive**.

Efforts to curb irregular migration do matter - although would-be migrants and their families know the risks fairly well. The following measures would usefully complement these efforts, and are all the more needed that for more than two years, irregular migration was the only option available to those who had decided to find work abroad:

- Formulating **clear guidance** for all actors involved in informing on and managing employment abroad. The migration policy suggested above would be the relevant framework to **provide clarity – including on how Government structures at all levels will support voluntary, safe and legal mobility** based on the provisions of the revised legal and regulatory framework.
- **Ensuring adequate information both on the process to become legally employed abroad as well as on the risks of illegal migration**, so that people seeking to work abroad know that the option of doing so legally is available, understand how it works and its advantages, and do not need to call on costly and not always benign intermediaries. Alongside Government offices, media such as social networks etc. could be used for this and to provide information specifically about destination countries, jobs available and associated requirements, support schemes and training opportunities in TVETs or through other means, types of contracts, agencies' and employers' responsibilities and employees' rights etc.
- **Making legal migration more easily accessible, cheaper and more time-efficient** would help overcome widespread perceptions that irregular migration is quicker and cheaper, especially after two years during which the regular option was not available at all. To this effect, Government could consider how to **further decentralise legal migration management** e.g. by establishing more branches of the concerned federal department in migration-prone areas; clarifying wereda administrations' responsibilities (e.g. they could be authenticating required documents) and; ensuring that these offices are adequately staffed.
- Ensuring **better preparation of the migrants before departure**. Alongside skill training required for specific jobs this could include detailed information on the migrants' rights and on the specifics of the support available in their destination country, as well financial literacy training to help migrants to manage their income.
- Ensuring **better protection of and support to migrants at destination**. A first step is to allocate the resources needed to implement the provisions of the revised proclamation, such as for instance, the **deployment of labour attachés** in Ethiopian Embassies in destination countries. Embassies could also **support social networking among migrants**, and **offer**

shelter to workers facing problems e.g. with their employers for the time needed for employment agencies to address the issue.

In the process of reinstating legal employment abroad, **three groups of would-be migrants would need special attention.**

- First, the government could consider **developing formal options for would-be migrants from poorer backgrounds to be able to finance their migration**, with a view to preventing them and their families from opting for harmful strategies such as depleting their household's productive assets or choosing the illegal channel because it is perceived to be cheaper.
- Second, **young men need to be given legal opportunities to work abroad**, for instance by ensuring that bilateral agreements include types of jobs such as construction, transport etc. that would be open for both men and women. Consideration could also be given to exploring how labour migration could be legalised in a larger number of countries.
- Third, government may want to consider how to best ensure that the provisions of the amended Proclamation related to **minimum age, education and qualifications**, do not actually lead a number of would-be migrants who do not meet these conditions to continue to migrate illegally. This concerns in particular the many just under-18 young people who dropped out before grade 8 and by now have no educational option open to them (see *DB05:education*).

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ⁱⁱ In "Does development reduce migration?", Clemens (2014) states that "a lengthy literature and recent data suggest something quite different: that over the course of a "mobility transition", emigration generally rises with economic development until countries reach upper-middle income, and only thereafter falls".

ⁱⁱⁱ See 'RurbanAfrica – African rural-city connections' research project (<http://rurbanafrika.ku.dk/>).

^{iv} Further fieldwork would be required to see whether these trends towards a 'migration culture' were deflected by events that occurred end 2013 after the final WIDE3 fieldwork - notably, the government ban on international migration and the mass deportation of Ethiopian workers by the Saudi government.