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“I want to change my life:” An Analysis of Four Case Studies of Youth Migration

Synthesis Report for the Youth, Migration, and Resilience Research and Learning Partnership

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Introduction

This paper synthesizes findings from four studies on youth migration and resilience in different urban contexts. This work emerges from a collaboration between Save the Children US (Save US) and Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University and entailed mixed-methods research by four students in the second year of their Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy (MALD) degrees at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Save US sought out the opportunity to generate evidence on populations of interest through in-depth and independent student research. In particular, Save US was interested in better understanding the experiences of youth migrants who were *not* currently benefitting from the programming and services of aid organizations. This interest originated from the assumption that such youth may be more marginalized than those who are directly participating in programming.

Research design process

Due to the perceived convergence of issues related to youth, migration, and resilience, initial conversations between Save US and Feinstein faculty envisioned the studies taking place in the Greater Horn of Africa. As part of the competitive selection process, however, students were able to propose their own research locations and populations. The process resulted in four unique studies reaching far beyond the original geographical confines. We believe that this diversity has led to a much richer analysis, one that highlights critical themes and trends, with broad relevance for programmers, practitioners, and policymakers working on issues of youth, migration, and resilience.

Research took place with: i) young rural-urban migrants to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; ii) young men from rural areas working in Bengaluru, India as drivers on two app-based platforms; iii) young Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers in Kampala, Uganda; and iv) protected persons in Vienna, Austria who had arrived in the country as minors. Across

Save US was interested in better understanding the experiences of youth migrants who were not currently benefitting from the programming and services of aid organizations. This interest originated from the assumption that such youth may be more marginalized than those who are directly participating in programming.

the studies, we focused on youth who were unlikely to be included in programming by development actors, with the assumption that those who are in these programs may be better off or have specific characteristics that contribute to resilience. We sought to understand the perspectives, experiences of migration and urban integration, future aspirations, and views on what constituted “successful” migration of youth not included in development programming. We investigated their livelihood strategies in urban areas, including challenges faced and specific barriers to accessing critical services (health, education, etc.). We explored their relationships with other migrants and their families back home, including household characteristics, expectations around migration, interactions, and remittances and exchanges with these family members.

All phases of the research involved collaboration between the Feinstein and Save US teams. We held a design workshop at Save the Children’s offices in Washington, DC in May 2018, where the students presented and received feedback on their research

proposals. The students designed the research tools, with input and guidance from the Feinstein team that was made up of the principal investigator (PI) and a researcher supporting the quantitative aspect of the design and analysis. The Feinstein team also worked closely with each student to obtain the appropriate research clearance from the Tufts University ethical review board (SBER-IRB) and, where relevant, national bodies. Research commenced in each location in summer 2018 and continued, depending on location, for two to four months.¹ Over the 2018–19 academic year, each student worked independently on data analysis and writing, with guidance from the Feinstein team. The final output represents each student’s capstone project, the last deliverable of the MALD degree. Students presented the final results to Save US in May 2019 and discussed common themes and practical implications with Save US staff. This paper presents this synthesis process. It is accompanied by four country briefs, which provide more detail on each project and are designed to be relevant to stakeholders in each location. In addition to these materials, the virtual repository (<https://fic.tufts.edu/research-item/partnership-on-youth-migration-and-resilience/>) houses the full final capstone documents, the final presentations, and the data collection tools.

This synthesis paper begins with a discussion of the shared methods and constraints, followed by a brief overview of each of the four studies. We then discuss the common themes and trends across the four cases, as well as new insights and areas for further investigation. The paper ends with implications and recommendations for policy and programming.

¹ The student researcher in Vienna was able to continue data collection for 10 months as she was studying in Vienna for the academic year.

Methods

All four studies used a mixed-methods approach, relying on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to enable triangulation of the data and strengthen the validity of the findings. Purposive sampling was used by establishing inclusion criteria (for example: within a certain age range, number of years in urban area, and nationality) and stratifying the sample by key characteristics such as gender, region of origin, and livelihood. While limited, some studies were able to build on the sample size using snowball sampling by asking for referrals from respondents. Final sample sizes, including overlap between quantitative and qualitative respondents, can be found in Table 1.

In three of the cases, participants were selected by first identifying areas of urban centers where migrants commonly reside: for example, Eritrean-owned coffee shops in Kampala, Uber and Ola offices in Bengaluru, neighborhoods in Addis Ababa known to have a high proportion of migrants. The researchers then approached prospective individuals, explained the study and the voluntary consent process, and asked for respondent participation. Given the nature of the study in Vienna, all respondents were identified through organizational referrals or the researcher’s personal contacts from previous work with migrants in the city. Quantitative data were collected using paper surveys in Vienna and Bengaluru and digital data gathering (Kobo toolbox) in Addis Ababa and Kampala. Qualitative data were collected using open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The team composition varied

slightly by study depending on the language skills of the researcher. Teams consisted of the student researcher, translator(s) (Vienna, Kampala, and Addis), enumerator(s) (Addis), and someone to transcribe the interviews (Bengaluru). Analysis was completed using NVivo for the qualitative data and STATA for the quantitative data. Given the small sample size, most of the quantitative analysis focused on descriptive and bivariate relationships; more complex models were built if significant relationships were identified.

Research limitations

The four studies have both collective and specific limitations. The short time frame and difficulty in locating respondents meant researchers had to rely on a relatively small sample size for their analysis, particularly for the quantitative survey. Therefore, the quantitative analysis was generally underpowered to statistically identify all but the largest differences across groups. The sampling was equally limited by these factors, likely leading to selection bias. This bias is most apparent in the under-coverage of key populations who were more difficult to access (for example: sex workers or full-time domestics in Addis; female platform economy workers in Bengaluru; and female unaccompanied minors in Vienna). Finally, all four studies were limited to respondents who were still in the urban areas and thus only capture the “successful” migration stories. In other words, the studies do not capture those who decided, for whatever reason,

Table 1. Sample size and time frame by case study

	Case Study			
	<i>Addis Ababa</i>	<i>Bengaluru</i>	<i>Kampala</i>	<i>Vienna</i>
Key informant	12	3	8	13
Qualitative sample	54	36	32	31
Quantitative sample	84	52	71	72
Overlap between qualitative and quantitative samples	0	9	30	31

that life in the city was not for them and returned home or moved elsewhere. We believe the reliance on a mixed-methods approach helps to overcome or at least identify the possible limitations and direction of the bias in the data, though all findings should be treated as exploratory.

We had hoped for gender balance to the extent relevant across the cases but achieving this proved impossible in two out of the four case studies. In Bengaluru, no women could be found working as drivers. In Vienna, accessing females who arrived as unaccompanied minors was bureaucratically unfeasible due to strict restrictions on access by the organizations who house this population. Those females who had come with their families were also more difficult to interview than their male counterparts due to their more limited social mobility. Given the research topics, female respondents were more easily identified in the Addis Ababa and Kampala studies.

Case Studies

Ethiopia: Urban migrants in Addis Ababa

Ethiopia has made major strides in the past decade, with strong economic growth and significant improvements in education and health. Looking forward, one of the country's continuing challenges will be addressing the need of its rapidly growing youth population, with 70% of the population under the age of 30 and almost 50% under the age of 15.² At the same time, urbanization has continued steadily, and a recent United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assessment predicts that the 19 million Ethiopians living in urban areas as of 2018 will swell to 39 million by 2030.³ Many of these new urban dwellers will be youth, who often arrive in the city with limited resources, connections, or skills but with high expectations for the success that life in Addis Ababa will bring them.

Most respondents in the Ethiopia study came from large, low-income farming families with either small or poor-quality land holdings. They tended to be one of the oldest children in their families, a position that comes with more responsibility and pressure from parents. For example, one young female migrant reported that she had never attended school but that she has other siblings who have reached upper secondary levels. She explained that, although she was the fourth of eight children, as the eldest girl she was expected to take on the greatest amount of responsibility for household chores. For young men, the responsibilities of older sons tend to be more focused on agricultural labor.

This study found that in Ethiopia, differing expectations and aspirations of parents and youth can sometimes lead to tensions, especially about education and land inheritance. Responsibilities at

home sometimes kept youth from attending school, creating frustration that led to migration. As one respondent explained: "My family wanted me to work for them in agricultural tasks...Missing a week or a month [of school] was so challenging. Finally, I decided to quit and find my own job rather than working for my family." Land inheritance is the main way in which youth can access land, but with small plots and large families, many families are unable to pass land on to all their children. Land inheritance is patrilineal, meaning that very few female respondents had any expectation of inheriting land. At the same time, many male respondents were disinterested in the prospect of relatively high-risk, low-return agricultural livelihood strategies and preferred to move to the city, gain experience, and save up money to open a business.

Overall, the most common reasons for migration were a desire for job opportunities, a hope of changing one's life, a livelihood shock in the village, failure on the National Learning Assessment, or an inability to continue education due to poverty. There are some notable gender differences, with women more likely to name poverty or a shock as the primary driver, while men more often noted an inability to pursue education. Among those who mentioned a shock as a spark for migration, the most common type of shock was the death of a family member, followed by drought or early marriage (of the respondent). Qualitative respondents also noted family conflict as a shock, particularly divorce and/or a parent's remarriage.

Interviews revealed a widespread assumption among youth that jobs in Addis Ababa are both more plentiful and higher paying than work in the village or other nearby towns. This idea is often rooted in peer influence and a lack of accurate information. Youth often receive both negative information from government anti-migration campaigns and

² Assefa Admassie, Seid Nuru, and Shelley Megquier, "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Ethiopia," *Population Reference Bureau* (blog) (August 1, 2017), <https://www.prb.org/harnessing-the-demographic-dividend-in-ethiopia/>.

³ Zeru Fantaw Desta, Anne Bitga, and Jack Boyson, "USAID/Ethiopia Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment Situational Analysis," (USAID YouthPower Learning, 2018).

positive messages from their peers who have built their parents a new house or returned to the village wearing fancy clothing. Faced with these conflicting messages, many decide they will take the risk, come to the city, and see for themselves.

During transition and adjustment to life in the city, men and women tend to rely on different social networks for support. One of the greatest challenges is the high cost of housing. Men are significantly more likely to have a friend from the village as a link in the city and often use these connections to find very small, cheap houses and divide the rent. Young men also reported either sleeping in the streets for a few weeks or renting out a spot on the floor in low-income, slum neighborhoods, either initially upon arrival or during periods of unemployment. On average, women have 2.7 fewer social connections upon arrival than men and are more likely to depend on an older family member—a sibling, aunt, or uncle—for support. Women also sometimes engage in full-time jobs like housemaid, bartender, or waitress, in which the employer provides housing and meals.

Social connections are also important in finding jobs, with 60% of respondents finding their current job through a friend, acquaintance, or relative. For some employers, a recommendation from a reliable source is deemed even more valuable than whether the candidate has the required skills, education, and experience. One young man currently working at a garage explained that his friends who came before him had been able to find him the job even though he had no experience or training related to car mechanic work. This research discovered that there is a progressive hierarchy of social relationships among young migrants. At the most basic level of this hierarchy are small-scale financial exchanges, often with peers, neighbors, and household members. On the other end of the hierarchy, the deepest level of social relationship for many migrants is a person who is willing to serve as their guarantor, a requirement for some jobs and rental housing. Only the closest connections—often family members—are willing to put their own reputations on the line and vouch for a migrant's trustworthiness by being a guarantor.

After arriving in Addis Ababa, many migrants discover that life is more difficult than they expected. Acquiring formal identification is a major challenge; not having such identification is a source of vulnerability for many young migrants. Youth migrants in this study either have an ID from their home region (71%), a Resident ID for Addis Ababa (23%), or, in a few cases, no ID at all (8%).⁴ Lacking an Addis Ababa ID can prevent youth from accessing services and government programs. It can also prevent youth from being able to pursue onward international migration. Some youth also encounter livelihood shocks like unemployment, illness, theft, loss of merchandise, or homelessness. Youth tend to cope with these shocks by relying on social networks in the city, finding solace in their religion, depleting savings, skipping meals, and sometimes engaging in substance abuse.

For many young Ethiopian migrants, sending regular remittances to their families is impractical. Only 45% of respondents reported sending money home. Interestingly, in a few cases, qualitative interviewees reported that their families at home are the ones who send them support to make ends meet in the city, either financially or through in-kind goods like grains. The quantitative survey results demonstrated this as well, with 15% of respondents indicating that they receive money from their families at home.

While most respondents did not perform multiple jobs at the same time, they do shift often from one job to another. Among youth in the survey, 44% have had more than one job since migration. Youths' desire to shift between different livelihoods is often connected to their hope that migration can lead to upward social mobility. For example, a young man working as a daily laborer or porter can use that role as a stepping stone to better work, as these jobs provide immediate cash and require no up-front investment. Therefore, earnings can be used to purchase capital such as the equipment to shine shoes or sell clothing. Youth also viewed social mobility as an indicator of success. For many respondents, an example of a success involves a person who started in a low-level job but was able to save money and eventually change his/her life through investing in an asset or new business.

⁴ The total percentage adds up to 102%, as a few respondents had both a regional and Addis Resident ID.

According to youth, success is also enabled by having a strong support network in Addis Ababa. As an example, one 18-year-old housemaid described two migrants who arrived in Addis at the same level of success, but one had relatives while the other did not. In this case, she said, the one without relatives might not end up being as successful. Social networks can also be a powerful determinant of whether a young migrant decides to stay in Addis Ababa, return home, or migrate abroad. In fact, the variable most strongly correlated with a desire to stay in Addis was whether the migrant had someone to celebrate holidays with in the city.

This research found that certain factors, like gender, birth order, livelihood shocks, and communication with families, are closely associated with migrants' perceived levels of success. Female respondents consistently rated themselves as more successful than their male counterparts, possibly showing that women who choose to migrate to Addis Ababa are a selective group, with a high degree of ambition, courage, and confidence. Those who were later in the birth order among their siblings also report a consistently higher level of success. Perhaps there is less pressure on younger children, or they might benefit from having older brothers and sisters who have spent time in Addis Ababa and can provide advice and support. Respondents who have experienced some type of livelihood shock in Addis Ababa like unemployment or an illness report lower levels of success, showing that those who have faced hardships may struggle to get back on their feet again. Somewhat surprisingly, those who maintain close connection with their families and friends in their home villages also tend to perceive themselves as less successful. These close ties to home might mean that they are more homesick and struggling to make new connections they can rely on for support.

India: Migrants in the platform economy in Bengaluru

This study was conducted in Bengaluru, India to investigate the financial and social impact of rural-urban migration on young migrants engaged in

the rapidly expanding platform economy. Internal migration in India is largely under-regulated, which contributes to a lack of citizenship and workers' rights, absence of social and employment entitlements, inability to organize, lack of protection, and abuse from employers. However, migration is an important livelihood strategy for rural people. It is driven by the search for basic means of survival due to the lack of opportunities in many rural areas. It is also driven by aspirations to seek better opportunities and to increase the standard of living, either in their home or destination.

The growing platform economy in urban areas is providing employment opportunities to many youth. The platform economy is distinguished by the prevalence of a digital marketplace where intermediaries match buyers and sellers.⁵ While the platform economy can allow workers greater flexibility and control over their labor, detractors cite the lack of protections and potential for exploitation. This type of work is growing, based on the rapid expansion of access to technology in India and is increasingly found in big cities in India. Such opportunities have created a new type of job in the urban informal sector—app-based service delivery. This case study focused on workers in platform economy taxi services such as Uber and Ola. The objective of the research was to answer the question of whether platform driving helps young migrants secure a better standard of living socially and economically, compared to their status prior to migration. What are the livelihood strategies employed by them, and what is the meaning of success for these migrants? How similar or dissimilar is their experience of work and life in the city compared to other migrants in the traditional urban informal sector?

The study found that most respondents had migrated from rural farms because of a lack of productive work throughout the year. They had migrated to Bengaluru to earn higher incomes and support their family and agricultural livelihoods back home. A small number of migrants had migrated to the city to drive for platforms specifically, while a majority had come looking for any kind of work and joined platform driving after doing one or two

⁵ For example, the Uber app matches passengers with available drivers. Workers receive pay for each ride completed, as opposed to receiving a regular salary.

other jobs. Regardless, migration was a calculated decision for most of them, often with the support of their families and influence from friends or relatives who had previously migrated. Bengaluru was the obvious choice as the most “famous” city in the region. It symbolizes a land of opportunity where migrants hoped to find jobs and to experience an urban, modern lifestyle. Apart from the economic reasons for migration, respondents showed a desire to do something more with their lives than just tend to their farms for a few months in a year. They had a strong sense of self and wanted to escape the idleness and feelings of stagnation in the rural area.

The study found that, by and large, respondents felt financially better off compared to previously, whether “previously” was before coming to Bengaluru or before switching to the driving platforms. The returns were commensurate with the amount of work they put in and were enough to support their families back home, and meet expenses in the city. Respondents had been able to invest in assets back home by buying land or building a new home. They were also able to increase savings. However, car loan repayments, high cost of living, and changing incentive schemes set by platform companies were major sources of financial stress for migrants. While different from the stresses that migrants experienced back home, these urban realities belied their vision of an easy and prosperous existence.

Higher income earned by the migrant had direct implications for households back home. Supporting the family was the main goal of migration for most respondents, and most migrants sent back remittances regularly. They reported that these funds were used for food consumption, farm inputs like fertilizer and labor, and repaying loans. Relatives also used remittances to contribute to savings groups, and for clothing and medical care. Importantly, the flow of money was not always from city to the rural area. Many respondents had initially financed the down payment for their cars through family savings. The family pooled money to finance the new livelihood in return for the expectation of regular remittances. As expected, remittance amounts were significantly correlated with monthly income. However, the quantitative analysis implies

that neither monthly income nor the amount of remittances had any bearing on the migrant’s financial decision-making power in the household back home. Qualitative interviews also showed that financial decisions were generally made together or made by parents back home with some input from the migrant, providing more evidence that migration and its returns were consolidated at the household level.

In terms of social status, respondents felt they were viewed positively by their community and peers in the home area because they had managed to get a job in the city and support their families. Within the home, the feeling of increase in status was mixed. Some felt there was no change, and some felt that it had increased because of their financial contribution. Most respondents felt that their status among their urban peers, as well as more broadly in Bengaluru, had not improved since moving to the city or switching to platform driving. The lack of improvement in the urban setting was due to a combination of feeling like they would never truly belong in Bengaluru, the relatively low status of drivers in the urban social hierarchy, and in some cases the unsustainability of the platform driving as a livelihood.

Since most respondents had been engaged in other work in the city before joining the platform, the research was able to capture the positive or negative aspects of platform driving compared to previous jobs. Respondents were motivated to join the platforms because of the perceived benefits, particularly higher incomes, which spread through word of mouth among friends. Low barriers to entry and guidance from peers on how to navigate the platform provided additional incentives. Driven by a desire for upward mobility and the chance to be “self-employed,” respondents in the study were not afraid to take risks and invest in assets (i.e., vehicles) at a relatively young age. Having flexible work hours was reported as a positive aspect of the work. At the same time, however, incentive schemes were rapidly changing, leading to falling incomes and longer work hours. These new stresses caused concern among respondents. Many expressed the desire to move on to another business once the car loan was repaid. Therefore, there were short-term returns for

joining the platform in terms of higher incomes and remittances back home. In the long run, however, this short-term coping offered by the platform economy did not provide longer-term resilience. In particular, these jobs appear to be largely unsustainable, with income negatively associated with time in the city. That said, many migrants felt trapped in this opportunity and could not look for alternatives until they repaid their initial investment.

Uganda: Eritrean migrants in Kampala

Eritrean migration is one of largest drivers of global irregular migration,⁶ particularly from Africa. As of 2016, an estimated 411,000 Eritreans were living as refugees outside of their home country, equal to almost 8% of Eritrea's population. Roughly 5,000 people flee Eritrea a month, leading Eritrea to be known as "the world's fastest emptying nation."⁷ Due to Eritrea's policy of forced military conscription, many of these migrants are teens and young adults traveling on their own to avoid indefinite military service. There is substantial literature regarding Eritrean migrants who traveled north to Israel or west and onward to Europe; these are the most popular long-distance routes to date. Significantly less has been written about those who had journeyed south or those who have attempted to establish themselves in Uganda specifically. Yet as northern and western migration routes from Eritrea become less viable and appealing, the number of Eritrean migrants arriving in Uganda each year is growing, even in comparison to other destinations in sub-Saharan Africa.⁸

This study aims to understand how Eritreans who live in Kampala develop livelihood and protection strategies and access informal and formal institutions. It considers what factors in migrants' lives and backgrounds prior to arrival influence their ability to successfully develop these strategies and

effectively access institutions. Before beginning fieldwork, the research team hypothesized that migrants' journeys and transit destinations between Uganda and Eritrea would determine their available livelihood assets and shape the livelihood strategies available to them. They further hypothesized that migrants' journeys and transit destinations would contribute to determining their political status and documentation, thereby shaping their protection risks. The study specifically considered if Eritreans who lived in Israel and participated in its "voluntary departure" program faced different challenges and opportunities due to their prior experience of living in a western country and the characteristics of the departure program.

This study concludes that for Eritreans who have yet to find a path to leave Africa, Kampala is seen as the best of bad options. However, migrants face a myriad of challenges that make it quite difficult for them to feel comfortable or thrive in Kampala. Simultaneously, nearly every respondent found it to be preferable to the reality they fled in Eritrea, and many found Kampala to be a better alternative than refugee camps, war zones, dangerous journeys, and other major urban centers in sub-Saharan Africa.

For most young Eritreans in Kampala, it has not been possible to make enough income to cover their expenses, if any income at all, due to a high unemployment rate and restrictions on asylum seekers working in the formal economy. Unless they own a small business or have significant savings, migrants are dependent on accessing remittances to make ends meet. Counterintuitive to prevailing wisdom on migration, remittances flow not only from the migrants back home to families in Eritrea, but also vice versa. Financial exchanges come from relatives who are in Europe to the migrants in Kampala and even from Eritrea to the migrants when they face severe protection challenges. Young Eritreans are struggling and frequently failing to build a livelihood in Kampala if they do not have support from relatives in the west.

⁶ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines irregular migration as the "movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination." See www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

⁷ Mark Anderson, "Trapped and Bereft in the World's 'Fastest Emptying Country,'" *Guardian*, September 28, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/28/eritrea-military-service-life-people-left-behind> (accessed June 20, 2018).

⁸ Researchers' own analysis using population data from http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/persons_of_concern.

An even larger concern for young Eritrean migrants in Kampala is the pervasiveness of corruption in the asylum-seeking process. Eritreans allege that they are frequently expected to pay bribes throughout the application process. This occurs when they first report to the police station, when they apply for asylum at the Office of the Prime Minister, and when they appeal if their first application for asylum is rejected. With migrants sometimes paying hundreds of dollars (US) in bribes, those who are the poorest feel that they cannot even begin the asylum process. However, without refugee status, migrants cannot access formal employment, services from United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR) or InterAid, or apply for asylum in many western countries. They are also more at risk for extortion, which compounds their vulnerability.

In contrast to the initial hypothesis, migrants' lives and family situations in Eritrea prior to their departure had a bigger influence on their well-being in Kampala than their transit destinations prior to Uganda. Migrants from rural areas and "pioneering siblings"—those who were the first in their families to leave—face substantial disadvantages in developing sustainable livelihood strategies and gaining political security. Although migrants' journeys by and large do not have any measurable impact on their situation in Kampala, people who came from Israel or South Sudan have distinct protection risks, social networks, and perspectives. For example, migrants who participated in Israel's "voluntary departure" program benefited from a United States dollar (USD) 3,500 cash transfer, but simultaneously were vulnerable to extortion and struggled to gain documentation since the Ugandan government denies the existence of the program. The study also found that respondents who had lived in Juba, South Sudan were statistically significantly more likely to have someone in Kampala they could call in the event of an emergency than people who hadn't passed through Juba. This is likely because of the deep interconnectedness between the Eritrean social networks and economies in Kampala and Juba.

Many of the challenges experienced by Eritrean migrants in Kampala require structural political

solutions in Eritrea, Uganda, Israel, and other destinations countries; however, practitioners can take practical steps to better support this population, identify young migrants who are most at risk, and ensure that the most vulnerable migrants are able to access and benefit from critical services.

Austria: Protected persons in Vienna

Of the over four million extra-European Union (EU) persons filing claims for international protection within the EU between 2013 and 2017, Austria received roughly 200,000, establishing it as the third-highest receiving country on a per-capita basis. Nonetheless, little international attention and research have focused on issues related to youth migration in this country.

The research examined protected persons who arrived as older minors (ages 14–17 years) in Austria, either accompanied or unaccompanied. A 2014 UNHCR study found that many minors experience negative psychological effects and have their access to education undermined when approaching adulthood.⁹ Moreover, the programmatic and policy environment in Austria strongly favors minors, particularly younger minors—a perception also shared widely among respondents. Further, older minors must navigate their entrance into adulthood, and the social and legal changes flowing from this transition, while also integrating. An examination of the older minor age group thus allows for a critical investigation into the personal, structural, and other factors contributing to vulnerable populations' long-term resilience.

The study investigated whether unaccompanied and accompanied older minors experience integration differently regarding the labor market, social connections, and their outlook on integration. There exists little research comparing the two groups, despite widespread claims among development actors that unaccompanied minors are the most

⁹ Nadine Lyamouri-Bajja, "Unaccompanied and Separated Asylum-Seeking and Refugee Children Turning Eighteen: What to Celebrate?" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2014).

vulnerable. The research question and hypotheses contested such an assumption and attempted to bridge a research gap.

Unlike with the three other case studies, the researcher resided in Vienna for a year, allowing a longer duration to conduct interviews. The quantitative surveys were different from the standard approach, as the researcher delivered the questions to the respondents herself and then recorded the answers. This approach allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions, as well as enrich her understanding of respondents' quantitative answers.

Given the comparative nature of the study, the research purposively sampled for an equitable distribution of accompanied (49%) and unaccompanied minors (51%). All research respondents in the study were protected persons, namely persons who had received Convention status or subsidiary protection¹⁰—the main forms of international protection available within the EU. Moreover, all respondents had resided in, or held the nationality of, Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria. However, some respondents and their families had forcibly migrated abroad years and decades before the minors' arrival in Europe. Many respondents thus lacked official documentation. For the Afghan Hazaras who had resided in Iran, as well as for some Kurdish respondents, the lack of clarification regarding citizenship and "home" was particularly acute.

The family status of respondents, whether they were unaccompanied or accompanied, influenced their integration experiences in Vienna, particularly regarding language use and attainment, employment status, education enrollment, the type of education pursued, development of social connections outside the refugee community, and desire to remain in Austria. Contesting assumptions, unaccompanied minors generally fared better. For example, when controlling for various factors such as gender, country of origin, and year of arrival, unaccompanied respondents were significantly more likely to be employed, be enrolled in education

either currently or in the past, be enrolled in German courses immediately upon arrival, and always feel a part of Austria. Unaccompanied respondents also reported having higher German levels and that their closest friend was outside their linguist group and spoke German with them specifically.

Nonetheless, integration "success" remained a complicated phenomenon within the study. Regarding education, unaccompanied respondents reported positively on their experiences entering the formalized apprenticeship system within Austria (which combines work and school). However, they repeated their desire to take the high school exit examination so they would be able to study at university; this path is not normally available to those within the apprenticeship system. This disconnect implies that there is inaccurate information reaching this population. Accompanied individuals or those unaccompanied who resided with Austrian families, however, often were able to continue on the university path. Unaccompanied respondents thus may fare better today by heavily investing in their short-term well-being (employment) and forgoing strategies that lead to greater long-term resilience (university). With the support of parents and the ability to pool money, accompanied minors often do not face such a choice. This finding underlines the importance of differentiating between short-term changes in well-being outcomes (e.g., income, health, protection) and achievement of long-term resilience at the individual and household levels.

There were several factors that interacted with family status, such as gender and form of protection. Accompanied women at times reported family or community strife over embracing an "Austrian" lifestyle, with at least one instance leading to violence. Moreover, Afghans, the main recipients of subsidiary protection, often relayed fears and stories of deportation. When asked about their legal status during the surveys, they quickly followed their answer with "I'm in the renewal process." When asked about their goals for the next five years, some responded that they did not even know if they would be here—a finding unique to subsidiary protection recipients. Such anxiety and fear over their ability

¹⁰ Some respondents had recently achieved the permanent residency status but were included, as they had recently transitioned from the earlier forms of protection.

to remain in Austria, exacerbated by the biennial renewal process, leads to a high level of stress, likely impacting their psychological health and eventually their ability to pursue successful livelihoods in Austria.

The exploratory nature of the study yielded important areas for future research. The discrepancy between subsidiary protection and Convention status discovered qualitatively deserves further quantitative investigation. Moreover, the transformation of gendered dynamics within the family units of accompanied minors is particularly interesting for informing family programming.

As many (former) minors enter their fourth, fifth, or even sixth year in Austria, their identities increasingly transform and shift; many will have spent the most formative years of their life in Austria. Others may even experience a regrettable or welcomed distance from their former lives. Seventy-one percent of respondents reported wishing to stay in Austria.

Common Themes

Youth and their families make careful and calculated decisions about migration

People make decisions to leave their homes after weighing the options, examining their prospects, considering the risks, and often consulting their families. These characteristics of decision-making were consistent across many of the respondents in the four studies. Shocks, timelines, information about the route and destination, and social and economic pressures varied, but migrants and their families made, whenever possible, careful and calculated decisions around migration. This finding contrasts with some of the global rhetoric that portrays migrants as acting without plan, forethought, or agency.

Although individuals and households make the decision to move, external factors influence and shape the environment in which these choices are made. Structural aspects may spur migration, such as the expanding youth population in Ethiopia coupled with state ownership of land, diminishing farm sizes, minimal yields from farming, and a reluctance of many youth to pursue agriculture. Interviews in Addis Ababa revealed that traditional land inheritance often excludes young women and that many young men resisted the idea of inheriting, driven by a desire for independence and preference for a non-agricultural livelihood. For example, one 23-year-old man declared proudly, “I want to win out and lead my own life. I do not need any house or land from my parents.”

The Vienna case showed that a combination of conflict and insecurity motivated Afghans, Iraqis, and Syrians to flee their homes, with many (28%) minors having previously internally migrated to nearby countries before embarking for Europe. The policies of countries initially receiving these minors, such as Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Kuwait, may have impacted whether a minor set off on his/her own or as part of a family unit to Europe. Such a transformation of one’s family status during minors’

journeys speaks further to the influence of structural aspects in determining the success of individual migration strategies.

The rapid economic growth of urban areas such as Bengaluru and Addis Ababa attracts young people from rural areas. These locations offer the promise both of economic success and the experience of a modern and more exciting life. Many youth respondents in Addis Ababa cited the “desire to change their lives” as one of the primary factors motivating migration. Similarly, many young migrants in Bengaluru, coming from farms where they mostly did seasonal work, felt the need to “do something with their lives” instead of sitting idly at home. Word of mouth about the positive impact of migration is also a draw. Relatives and peers who migrated previously share information with those back home, feeding the desire to migrate. In Ethiopia, for example, young people reported that their migration was influenced by peers who purchased houses for their parents or who visited wearing fancy clothes.

Inaccurate and fluctuating information complicates decision-making

Decisions might be calculated, but this does not mean they are always based on accurate information. For example, young men who moved to Bengaluru to work in the platform economy or switched over from other jobs often had inaccurate information about how much money they would be able to make as drivers. They had high expectations of incomes based on word of mouth from friends who were already engaged in platform driving. However, a reduction in incentives paid to drivers had effectively reduced incomes by half, leading to disappointment. The fluctuating demand for services on platforms also made it difficult to predict how much they would make in a day. This lack of predictability made it difficult for migrants to make informed decisions about the future for themselves and to share reliable information with others hoping

to join this work. For example, one migrant lamented, “I used to make 7,000–8,000 [Indian rupees (INR) or United States dollar (USD) 100–114] a day. But earnings have gone down. Now even if I work 24 hours, I am not able to make INR 4,000 [USD 57].” Youth in Ethiopia also had high expectations for life in Addis but were unprepared for the high cost of living. The difficulty of making ends meet in the city sometimes led to disappointment, leading some youth to consider either returning home empty-handed or pursuing onward international migration in hopes of more lucrative opportunities.

Routes, livelihood strategies, and risks are dynamic

Fluid national and international policies mean that even the most careful and calculated decisions regarding migration can lead to high-risk situations and may require migrants to change strategies. In Vienna, many minors spoke of filing applications for international protection in Austria unexpectedly, with their initial intentions being to travel elsewhere, at times to reunite with family members and friends. Such a shift in destination was often the result of Europe increasingly cracking down on irregular border crossings. Moreover, as various provinces within Austria have begun to enforce increasingly discriminatory measures against recipients of international protection status, particularly subsidiary protection recipients, many minors have also migrated internally to Vienna in search of greater security. Sixty-four percent of subsidiary protection respondents reported coming to Vienna from elsewhere in Austria, at times even leaving jobs and an established community behind. In Bengaluru, young people drawn to the city to partake in what they expect to be the booming platform economy have found that incentive schemes for drivers on the platforms Uber and Ola change frequently and are seemingly designed to make it increasingly difficult for drivers to make a profit, even when working incredibly long hours. This also affects their ability to repay loans, adding to the already considerable financial risk they undertake to do this work. The Eritreans who made the difficult choice to take part in the “voluntary departure” program from Israel

found themselves without legal status or protection and exposed to theft and extortion once they arrived in Kampala. Many thought it would be easy to get refugee status in Kampala and then quickly be accepted as refugees in the west, but most people got “stuck” in Kampala for far longer than they had planned.

Migration destination is frequently the best of bad options

Potential migrants and their families may feel that they are deciding among multiple bad options when they weigh the cost of migration. In the case of Eritrean migrants in Kampala who had first been in Israel, for instance, people discussed choosing between staying in Eritrea and facing indefinite military conscription, often with conditions that human rights organizations describe as a form of modern-day slavery,¹¹ or exposing themselves to the extreme risks of crossing the Sinai Peninsula to Israel. Those who chose the latter option were not ignorant of the dangers or misinformed: the horrors of human smuggling and extortion on the journey were well known among would-be migrants and their families. The decision involved weighing these risks against the potential opportunities, which included—in the case of the first migrants in their families—the opportunity to help their younger siblings migrate in the future.

Many of these same respondents (Eritreans who had lived in Israel) faced another difficult decision in choosing whether to accept Israel’s “voluntary departure” scheme or risk being jailed indefinitely. While the sample population does not include people who took the second option, the weight of this decision was apparent in the stories of those who did opt to come to Uganda. One respondent, who lived in Israel throughout his late teens and early twenties, explained his decision to participate in this program in 2017, in spite of being warned that it is difficult: “I was not stable in my mind, I was having many thoughts. But then Israel wouldn’t renew my visa and I went to the jail. I was 24 years old. I made up my plan, I have to have my own family and I have to be mature, I have to look after myself.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, “Service for Life. State Repression and Indefinite Conscription in Eritrea” (New York: Human Rights Watch, April 16, 2009), <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/04/16/service-life-0>.

So I went to the Ministry of Interior and said, 'You're asking me to go back to Holot [jail]? I'm not going back. I want to go to Africa.'"

Family dynamics influence migration decisions and strategies

A common theme across several of the studies is the role of changing intra-household relations as a shock that spurs migration. For example, many respondents in Addis Ababa said that they had decided to migrate following the death, divorce, or remarriage of a parent within their household. Both the death of a parent and a divorce can result in similar emotional and economic shock, and it can be difficult for the remaining parent to support their children. For example, one respondent told us, "After the divorce process, I was living with my mother, but she had nothing to support me...my father had only been giving us 100 birr [USD 3.50] per month, which could do nothing at all." This young woman decided to migrate alone to Sudan at the age of fifteen to try to support her mother and siblings. Respondents in Addis also explained that, when parents remarry, youth often fall into conflict with their stepparents, who sometimes resist the idea of financially supporting their stepchildren. The Kampala study showed similar findings among Eritrean migrants. Those who had lost a parent during the war or who had been forced out of the home after divorce or remarriage often had fewer resources and felt greater responsibility to support remaining siblings. They were thus more likely to migrate. For example, one migrant from Eritrea said of his time in Eritrea, "My younger sister keeps on saying, 'Because you're a boy you can easily leave the house, but for me because I'm a lady, I can't easily leave the house. I mean for the sake of my dignity, I'm still here. But don't forget, you are the responsible person.' I was just making some money for survival, for myself and for my sisters."

For the many migrants who were the eldest sibling (and especially the oldest male), the need to support siblings and other family members following a livelihood or personal shock propelled migration. Again, these decisions were, by and large, careful and calculated, and involved input from multiple household members about what was best for

both the individual and the family. An exception came from the Ethiopia study, in which qualitative interviews revealed several examples of ambitious youth—in particular, some young women—who migrated to the city without the consent or knowledge of their parents. Similarly, in Bengaluru, some young men had migrated against the wishes of their parents to live independently in the city or, in the case of one respondent, to avoid tension with his parents. While examples of these independent decisions did exist, in most instances the choices were made based on input and feedback from multiple family members.

Remittances and exchanges flow in multiple directions

The multi-directional flow of remittances and exchanges was another commonality across the case studies. We often envision urbanization as being closely associated with urban-to-rural financial remittances, and some of the migrants interviewed were indeed helping families back home in rural areas. For example, for Uber and Ola drivers interviewed in Bengaluru, supporting rural household members was often the primary motivation for the urban move. In other settings, however, this vision did not match up with reality. Many of the respondents in Addis Ababa had hoped to be able to support rural relatives but found that the high cost of living and low wages made this nearly impossible. Some respondents even laughed incredulously when asked whether they send remittances, explaining that they can barely meet their own living expenses, let alone send a surplus home. Only 45% of respondents in Addis reported sending remittances home. These remittances were usually used to support large investments such as farm inputs or school fees for siblings rather than regular consumption expenditures.

A more consistent trend across the studies was that remittances and exchanges went in multiple directions and from a variety of locations. In each study, there were at least some instances of financial support *to* rather than *from* the migrants. In Addis Ababa, 15% of respondents reported that they receive remittances or in-kind support, such as grains, from their families in rural areas. Eritrean

migrants in Kampala were highly dependent on these “reverse” remittances. Almost half of those sampled in Kampala reported receiving remittances from relatives living in western countries or in South Sudan. These sums were critical in allowing Eritreans to live comfortably in Kampala, and those who did not receive remittances were more likely to report struggling to make ends meet or recover from shocks. In some cases, the remittances to the migrant were once-off, such as the use of household savings to cover the down payment on a vehicle for a driver in Bengaluru or the liquidation of a business to raise funds for the ransom of Eritrean migrants held by human traffickers in the Sinai. This example of reverse remittances illustrates the continuing interconnectedness of families across multiple locations. Households are investing in the success of their migrants as a means of building longer-term resilience for the broader household.

Young men and women have different migration experiences

Gender played a major role in determining migration experiences, outcomes, and aspirations across the studies. Gender influenced migrants’ social and economic integration, their social networks and capital, their views of success, and their aspirations for the future. In Vienna, male youth were generally more advanced in their language skills than females and hence had an easier time meeting people from outside the migrant community. Multiple women reported that wearing a headscarf made it difficult for them to even obtain a job interview, as photos are often attached to resumes when applying for jobs in Austria. As many young men expressed the importance that their job and co-workers played in their integration within Vienna, such a critical barrier slows the integration progress of female protected persons in Austria. Despite this seeming integrative advantage men enjoyed, many young men nonetheless expressed that they would “never be Austrian” and felt that they could not fully integrate.

Female protected persons who came to Vienna with their families reported experiencing strife around gender roles and dynamics within their households, often because of the greater social freedoms afforded to women and girls in Austrian

society. For example, one young Arab woman from Syria reported how removing her headscarf and dating a Kurdish young man had caused her brother to become physically violent with her. Conversely, a young Afghan woman expressed how her father had been excited and supportive of her newfound rights in Austria, encouraging her to embrace her new freedom. Even then, however, two families from her city in Afghanistan, who had been residing in the same camp in Austria, frightened her family into switching locations.

In Addis Ababa, young women had fewer social connections than men and more limited options for housing. Female respondents were significantly less likely to have someone to ask for a medium or large loan, though they were more likely than men to have someone with whom they could celebrate the holidays. This might indicate that, while women do have some close relationships in the city, they feel less comfortable than men do in asking for favors like a loan. While male respondents often shared accommodations, even if in poor conditions, with several other male migrants, young women who moved to the city predominantly lived with an older relative, such as a sibling, aunt, or uncle, or worked in full-time jobs such as bartenders, waitresses, housemaids, and cleaners that provide housing and meals. Some women were in favor of full-time work, because eating and sleeping at their place of employment helped them save a great deal of money. Others acknowledged the risks and limitations this work can have on one’s freedom.

Young men in Addis Ababa could also rely on the large informal network of other migrants to find employment, while women were more likely to turn to employment brokers and at times found themselves exploited (or worse) in these arrangements. Gender also determined access to assets back home, which in turn may have affected future aspirations and migration decisions. For instance, only 10% of female respondents in Addis expected to inherit farmland, compared to 89% of males (though many of these young men did not aspire to agricultural livelihoods). Perhaps because they had fewer rural options to fall back on, females in Addis consistently rated themselves as more “successful” than their male counterparts. This could

also signify that the young women who decide to leave their homes and migrate to Addis Ababa and then stay are a selective group, demonstrating a high degree of ambition, courage, and confidence. On the other hand, females had a much harder time envisioning what livelihood they desired for themselves in the future, which might mean they have less direction and specificity in their goals compared to men.

In Bengaluru, the sample consisted entirely of men. Their migration experience, goals, and outcomes were informed by their position as a male member of the household. Some respondents emphasized the point that, as men, they had to fulfil their role as chief providers for their families, look after and support elderly parents, and get their siblings, particularly sisters, married. For example, one respondent said, “My younger sister is of marriageable age now. It’s my responsibility to get her married as her older brother. So, I have that goal. I want to do it grandly.” Being able to arrange good matches for sisters was discussed as an element of a successful migration. Men’s ability to look after their families in the home area by working in the city also led the wider community back home to view them as being “good” sons to their parents.

In Kampala, male migrants within the qualitative sample were more likely than females to report having experienced imprisonment or physical torture as part of their migration journey. They were also more likely to be victims of theft or physical attack in Kampala, in part because they spent more time in public spaces than did women. In contrast, females without families in Kampala seemed more likely to be requested to pay more expensive bribes (to intermediaries) as part of the asylum process, which may be due to their perceived greater vulnerability on the part of officials and extortionists. For example, a 22-year-old woman who came to Kampala alone fleeing early marriage reported being demanded to pay USD 70 to a fixer for an appointment at the Office of the Prime Minister to begin the asylum process. The average respondent reportedly only paid USD 22 for the same access.

Poor policy environments hamper the success of migrants

Overall, the studies show that poor policy environments limited the success of migrants in achieving their goals. The Vienna case is in some ways an exception, in that migrants received social and financial support from the state. However, even in Vienna many respondents had migrated to Vienna to escape the poor policy environments and greater social exclusion found in other Austrian provinces. Moreover, in Vienna respondents from Afghanistan were particularly impacted by the preferential treatment Convention status refugees received in comparison to subsidiary protection recipients. Almost all had received subsidiary protection, necessitating that they renew their protection claim every two years, a process which begins about a year prior. The situation of Afghan participants thus stood out in their almost ubiquitous desire to stay (91% reported a desire to stay in Austria permanently, compared to just 56% of Syrians), juxtaposed against an indelible legal uncertainty.

The impacts of the poor policy environment were most apparent in the case of Eritreans in Kampala. This was true for both those migrants who had come from Eritrea without leaving Africa and those who had come from Israel. All faced a series of bad options in making the choice to migrate. None felt that Kampala was their preferred destination, and, once in Kampala, migrants were met with a corrupt and hostile system that made it almost impossible to secure refugee status or to find adequate work to support themselves or families back home. Making the situation worse, national and international organizations were only able to provide support to official refugees, further marginalizing those without status who were already among the most vulnerable.

Social connections can lead to increased resilience

The four cases illustrate the importance of social connections in helping migrants succeed during their migration journeys, during their integration into new surroundings, and in their short-term financial stability. Gender was an important variable in the nature of migrants’ social connections. As

discussed above, male migrants to Addis Ababa often had more social contacts than women did. For women, these social links were more likely to be with relatives, while men were more likely to be connected to peers, including friends from their home village. The research revealed that having connections to friends from home can be extremely important, because young migrants rely on these people for both practical assistance such as loans as well as social support like celebrating holidays together. Women, who are less likely to have a strong network of peers from their home region, are therefore at a disadvantage without these connections. Eritreans in Kampala by and large had social connections with other Eritreans, who frequented their small businesses and offered social and financial support in emergencies. On the other hand, Eritreans in Kampala who did not have strong social ties in the local Eritrean community or relatives in the west described shocks like theft, injury, extortion, or business failure as feeling insurmountable and often were not able to recover.

In contrast, in Vienna participants at times avoided extensive contact with members of their linguistic, ethnic, or national community and instead sought out Austrian connections. Only 27% attended religious services, many had met their best friends early on in reception camps, and many spoke with pride of their contacts with Austrians. For many, it was clear social connections outside of asylum seekers and protected persons were the most valued. This may stem from a real desire to connect with Austrian and Viennese society, as well as the negative perception in Vienna surrounding groups of refugees in public spaces. At times, it appeared the respondents had deeply internalized such negative perceptions, even of their own nationality or ethnic group. As one respondent explained when asked why his experience in Vienna had recently worsened, "Because of our people, ourselves. We have done bad things ourselves, and now the Austrians and other countries don't like the foreigners, particularly the Afghans. And the Austrians are now afraid of [uses expletive to refer to Afghans]."

Migrants in Bengaluru benefitted from social connections in two ways. First, immediately after migrating to the city, migrants used linkages to

friends and family members who had previously migrated to Bengaluru to get initial income support and accommodations, and to find jobs. These supporters often recommended new migrants to their first jobs. Second, when intending to switch to the driving platform, social connections proved helpful in learning about the work and navigating the process to join the platform. Interactions and friendships with other drivers were considered important by respondents, as those were the few social relationships they could maintain due to their long work hours and the solitary nature of the work.

New Insights

The four case studies revealed new insights on the determinants of success among youth migrants. In this section, we briefly discuss some of the more surprising findings coming out of the research, many of which highlight areas for further investigation. Specifically, we discuss the importance of having formal status, voluntary job mobility, birth order, familial responsibility and support, and short- versus long-term resilience.

How a lack of official documentation affects vulnerability

The case studies confirm that having “formal status” such as national or city identification cards, refugee status, and/or protected status is an integral component of migrant resilience. In Vienna, all respondents (by study design) had formal status and therefore had access (frequently mandatory) to income, education, and language and training opportunities. Even so, only 62% had any contact with a refugee organization. Furthermore, the study found that the different levels of support granted to protected persons impacted their integration experiences. As stated earlier, subsidiary protection versus Convention status had a qualitatively disparate impact on participants. Moreover, “unaccompanied” versus “accompanied” status affected minors’ integration, with unaccompanied minors generally faring better in terms of access to skills training and social services. The relative success of unaccompanied minors likely was a result of their more favorable and hands-on treatment during the legal process, as well as the more consistent, but almost forced, interaction with Austrian society. Without minimizing the likely long-term impact of the migration experience, the study population in Vienna was significantly better off than most of the Eritrean migrants in Uganda, who are still seeking refugee status. Such a finding further underlines the importance that obtaining formal status and documentation has in terms of building and maintaining resiliency.

For the majority of Eritreans in Kampala, refugee

status is both the goal and a critical component for accessing many livelihoods and institutions. Without refugee status, Eritreans in Uganda are not allowed to pursue employment in the formal economy nor can they benefit from services offered by UNHCR or InterAid, organizations mandated to only serve people with full refugee status. While most Eritreans do not plan to stay on in Uganda, refugee status is required by many western countries to apply for asylum. However, the formal refugee process in Uganda is rife with corruption. Eritreans reported paying USD 200–800 in bribes per household member for refugee status, with USD 300 being the most common amount among qualitative respondents. Access to an Eritrean passport is also critical for anyone trying to cross a border through formal channels or to reunite with family abroad. However, eligibility for Eritrean passports is dependent on age and the completion of military service. This means that anyone who left Eritrea in violation of its national service requirement does not have a passport. As with refugee status, acquiring a passport in Kampala frequently requires financial capital to pay bribes, pay the Eritrean expatriate tax, and cover the cost of travelling to the Eritrean Embassy in South Sudan (there is no consulate service for Eritrean passports in Uganda). Thus, it is precisely the most vulnerable who cannot obtain formal status or documentation due to lower levels of education, smaller social networks, and, most importantly, significantly less financial capital. Without refugee status or a passport, vulnerable populations are more invisible to the institutions designed to help them. When asked what kind of help from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was most needed, respondents in Kampala overwhelmingly described wanting to be able to gain refugee status without paying bribes.

In Addis, access to an Addis Ababa Resident ID card opens many doors, but just as in Kampala, there are several bureaucratic, political, social, and economic barriers preventing youth from accessing these resources. Most youth surveyed in Addis had an ID card from their home region, but only about a

quarter of interviewees had the Addis Resident ID card. Respondents reported that the lack of an Addis ID prevented them from accessing government programs, formal financial services, shared housing projects, food distribution programs, NGO programming, and barred them from joining civil society organizations. Without a Resident ID card, they cannot pursue onward international migration. For example, to enroll in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' training and placement services for those aspiring to go to the Middle East, individuals must have an Addis Ababa Resident ID. According to respondents, there are several barriers preventing migrants from obtaining the IDs. Migrants must first have an ID from their region of origin. But they can only get an ID from their region of origin after they turn 18, which leaves many younger migrants in limbo. Other hurdles include the associated fees and the requirement of having another Addis Ababa resident serve as a guarantor. As a migrant, building trust among social connections is not easy, and often migrants primarily socialize with other migrants, which makes finding someone willing to vouch for them who also fits the criteria of a guarantor very difficult. Thus, as in Kampala, it is the most vulnerable who are unable to access the documentation that would allow them to access the services needed to improve their situation in the city. The findings also show that having an ID card was strongly correlated with the decision to stay in the urban center rather than to return home. Thus, we see across the case studies that refugee status, resident IDs, passports, and other identifying documents provide migrants with the social and political capital they need to gain protection, build livelihoods, and work toward their future goals, yet the associated constraints limit access for the most vulnerable.

The role of mobility and agency in the job market

Another surprising finding related to the frequency with which respondents in Addis Ababa and Vienna reported changing occupation, although not always for the same reasons. For example, in Addis, almost half of all respondents had held more than one job during their time in the city. Respondents reported that they are always on the lookout for the next

and best opportunity and equated success with upward labor mobility. On the other hand, failure was often associated with a static life, in which a young migrant stays in the same job and has the same level of income long after he or she arrived. Similarly, in Vienna, many reported switching between different occupations out of their own volition. For many, however, the goal was not so much upward mobility as access to the formal apprenticeship system in Austria. While respondents across the studies said that finding employment, and particularly good employment, is no easy task, the voluntary labor mobility implies both strong personal agency and a need for employees and NGO programming to adapt their skills training appropriately.

Family structure, migrant resilience, and decision-making

Another finding that came out clearly across many of the studies was the importance of birth order of siblings in migration decisions and outcomes; however, the role of birth order differed slightly by context. Among the migrants in Addis and Kampala, older siblings, or as coined by the Kampala study—“pioneering siblings”—tended to play an integral role in starting the migration process for their household. In both studies, there was a tendency for pioneering siblings to be one of the oldest children in their families, a position that was often associated with more responsibility.

For pioneering siblings in the Kampala study who coordinated their departure with their families, their emigration was an investment in the overall household. Families would use their limited savings or borrow money from friends and relatives to help the first person leave. They would expect this pioneering sibling to send remittances home, ideally to repay the costs of their journey, help the family meet basic needs, and fund younger siblings' journeys.

Having a family member, such as an older sibling, already migrated or residing in an urban center frequently served as a pull factor. Younger siblings surveyed in Addis thought of themselves as being closer to success, compared to older siblings, possibly due to having received advice or support

from an older sibling or having lower levels of responsibility or expectations placed on them by their families. Similarly, in Kampala, migrants who reported having a family member who had already migrated fared much better compared to pioneering siblings. They had access to remittances and other resources that allowed them to set up a business and, if not to thrive, then at least survive in Kampala until they were able to continue their journey. One young woman in Addis gave a simple explanation of why family was important for migration: “[Finding a job is] very difficult. The only reason I had the opportunity to stay here for a year [searching for a job] is because I had relatives here. If I didn’t have them, how would I have had a place to stay?” The flip side is that most pioneering siblings, unless they have friends or other relatives guiding them, do not benefit from the financial resources, inherited wisdom, and social networks that younger siblings might access. The Kampala study consistently highlighted respondents who were older siblings as some of the most vulnerable in the population.

Migrants participating in platform driving in Bengaluru, on the other hand, mainly came from the higher caste and wealthier families. Some were older brothers seeking to provide for their families, while others were younger siblings with the support and freedom needed to explore their options. Given that older siblings had responsibilities back home, primarily farming, younger siblings had the freedom to explore other livelihood options in the urban area. In the Vienna study, parents sending their younger children under the age of 18 was mentioned by key informants as a possible migration strategy. The hope was that the younger sibling would receive formal protection given their minor status and then be able to support the regular migration of the remaining family. Across all studies, birth order consistently influenced migration decisions and outcomes, yet was dependent on both initial family wealth and the context of migration.

Building on the importance of birth order and its association with specific household responsibilities, the research shows that family relations often have an important role to play in why individuals migrate

and their short- versus long-term resilience in urban centers. Respondents in Addis, Kampala, and Bengaluru frequently reported that they migrated to help support their family and siblings back home. In Vienna and Kampala, this migration may also have been to initiate further migration of family members. Experience of divorce of the parents, death of a family member, or abandonment were also noted as push factors for the Addis and Kampala study. Many respondents from larger families reported less access to resources, yet were still trying to find a way to support their families. Thus, responsibility for the family, or lack of support and opportunities due to family size, played an important role in migration decisions.

Family connections can also be a burden for migrants. A key finding from the Vienna research showed that unaccompanied minors might be initially more successful and better at integration than accompanied minors, given that they can focus almost exclusively on themselves and their individual needs. Accompanied minors frequently had to serve as the bridge between their families and the new community, including translation of documents, support with accessing general services, etc., which increased their personal responsibility. Nonetheless, unaccompanied minors frequently expressed distress over missing their parents and family. As one respondent said when speaking about his efforts to bring his family to Austria: “Sometimes I hold my book...I cannot learn because I always think about what my mom is doing, is she with my sister, is she cooking, is she with my dad?” In Addis, respondents who expected to inherit land surprisingly saw themselves as less successful.¹² One hypothesis is that inheriting land might feel like a burden for young men who are torn between building an urban livelihood and fulfilling their families’ expectations. This burden could lead to a fear of disappointing their families and a feeling of being unwillingly tied to the land, sentiments that could pull them away from really investing in urban life. Similarly, but equally surprising, Addis respondents who spoke more regularly with their families at home also considered themselves less successful. These close ties to home might indicate that they are more likely to feel

¹² Though it is worth noting that this association could be a product of the fact that women both found themselves to be more successful and less likely to inherit land.

homesick after migrating to Addis and struggle to make new connections, which could in turn influence their feelings of success.

However, the burden of responsibility to the extended family might only negatively affect short-term outcomes for migrants, while having a positive impact on long-term resilience. For example, while unaccompanied minors appeared to fare better in the short term, accompanied minors appeared to be more likely to invest, with the help of their family, in education. This sort of investment may build long-term resilience. The pooling of money for larger investments in the family was a common practice reported by accompanied minors. Similarly, in Bengaluru, while migrants reported remitting an average of one-third of their income to their family back home, they also benefited from their family's investment in their urban livelihood. Respondents who reported that their family initially contributed assets, such as a vehicle, to their new livelihood also had a significantly higher reported income as a driver. Thus, it is important to consider the temporal aspects of resilience when it comes to the responsibility to and support from the family.

Resilience for whom?

The four studies elucidated the familial practices, incentives, and responsibilities associated with migration, raising the question of whether and how migration supports individual or household resilience. In the case of the Eritrean migration to Kampala, the goal was often to get one household member—the pioneering sibling—out of the country so that they could facilitate the migration of all other household members. However, the journey for that first household migrant is extremely harrowing and the outcome far from certain. For instance, a lack of information on how and what migration route to take could mean the difference between life and death—pioneering siblings are at a disadvantage in having no older siblings to pave the way. Additionally, once these migrants made it to Kampala, they lacked the remittances that helped others survive while also working to support the journey of the remaining siblings. Thus, for the pioneering sibling, migration builds their larger household's resilience, but comes potentially at their own personal sacrifice. One

respondent who lived in Israel for nearly a decade before coming to Kampala took great pride in successfully helping his four brothers safely reach Europe. He also recalls the stress of this project: “All four of them left at once without warning me. I was upset because that is too many people to help at once. I was already working so hard.” Today, while he navigates the asylum process so he can join them, his brothers send him remittances from Europe to Kampala.

Migrants from Eritrea largely viewed their departure as a necessity to escape a violent and repressive state. If we see Eritrea as one end of the spectrum, then the Bengaluru case represents the other end, given the stable context and the comparatively wealthy sample population. In Bengaluru, over three-fourths of respondents reported sending remittances back home, much of which was invested in agricultural inputs, paying off household loans, and marrying off sisters. However, even with the family responsibilities, more than half of the respondents expressed that the decision to migrate was their own and due to the desire to “make something of themselves.” Many respondents reported feeling personally financially better off, more respected in their village of origin, and more powerful in their household than prior to migration. Thus, migration and resulting remittances clearly increase the resilience of the household while also boosting the earning power of the respondent, even if employment in the platform economy may not be a long-term and sustainable endeavor.

A similar level of agency is displayed among migrants in Addis. For most, the decision to migrate is a combination of push and pull factors, a desire to improve their own condition, explore livelihoods outside of farming, and support their families back home, even if only by reducing the competition for available land. However, unlike in Bengaluru, few respondents in Addis Ababa said they had managed to send remittances back home, and some remained dependent on support from their family. Hence, the decision to migrate to Addis may primarily support individual as opposed to household resilience, although if migrants are successful over time they may be able to start sending remittances and boost the resilience of their families back home. For most

of the young migrants in Addis, this goal was not currently within reach. On the whole, however, migrants reported a high degree of optimism about their chances of achieving success in the next five years.

For unaccompanied and accompanied minors in Vienna, little information was gathered on how the experiences of individual youth migrants impacted their households. Nonetheless, some research indicates that sending unaccompanied children under the age of 18 is a specific household strategy that could lead to more household members being able to migrate to Europe. The differential family statuses of the participants, however, did impact the success of migration for the individual respondents. Unaccompanied minors gained individual resilience, while accompanied minors contributed to the resilience of their households. For example, unaccompanied minors integrated more quickly into Austrian society in certain respects, with evidence suggesting that they may do so, in part, by distancing themselves from both their communities and their families back home. Their integration story was very much an individual story. On the other hand, the services and opportunities that accompanied minors gained access to very much contributed to the well-being of their families: learning German, earning money, and navigating Austria were tools used to help not only themselves, but also their parents and siblings. Considering that the respondents interviewed in Austria had all come as minors, it is difficult to say what, if any, role they played in the initial decision to migrate or what level of responsibility they feel for those back home. In time, however, they will likely be an important source of support for relatives who remain behind. Meanwhile, we can ascertain from their personal stories that migration will continue to play an important role in increasing their individual resilience and achieving greater security.

Long-term migrant resilience

How does migration impact the long-term resilience of the individual migrant? Most respondents, across all four case studies, favorably compare their post-migration situation with that prior to migrating. However, many also struggle to make ends meet,

and future success is uncertain. Take the case of the migrants in Bengaluru participating in the platform economy. While they feel that they have more power and respect from those back home, their current urban livelihood will be difficult to sustain due to low pay and the length of hours worked. In fact, the data show that the length of stay in Bengaluru negatively correlates with monthly income. Few respondents can invest in establishing a life in Bengaluru. Many feel trapped by their debt and high urban expenses and yet continue pursuing this unsustainable livelihood.

Where migrants can invest in education, such as in Austria, it may contribute to individual and household resilience in the long term. Similarly, in Addis Ababa, many of the migrants listed the lack of parental (financial) support for education in their rural home as a major push factor and expressed a desire to invest in their education in the city. However, most respondents found that limited free time and low income made it very difficult to pursue further education in Addis, though there were a few exceptions. One migrant, for example, joined formal education for the first time after coming to Addis and now studies in a fifth grade class. Explaining his motivation, he says, “After I came to Addis, the main lesson learned is the importance of education. I have observed that every job needs education.” As for the Eritrean migrants in Kampala, much depends on their ability to get formal status or receive outside support, so little can be surmised about their long-term prospects for resilience. For example, two respondents shared a similar journey through Israel, both had wives in Sweden, and both were rejected for family unification. Only days after his interview, one respondent set off to try to access the west through Libya, despite knowing the dangers, and the other stayed behind looking for safer means of migrating on.

There are some narratives of success for those migrants who have been able to improve the immediate position and the long-term resilience of both themselves and their households. However, there are numerous failures that are not captured in this study—those who didn’t survive the journey, never reached their intended destination, turned back, or returned home.

Collectively, findings from the case studies suggest that what truly determines long-term resilience is the support that individuals and their households receive, either from family networks, local organizations, international bodies, and/or local and national services and policies. In the next section, we review some program and policy recommendations that arise from the four case studies to better serve the migrant population and hopefully improve their long-term resilience.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Although it remains difficult to provide concrete policy and program recommendations across diverse environments, the common themes among the case studies indicate that youth migrants may encounter a similar set of problems and opportunities across communities. Flowing from this exploratory research, below we provide policy, programmatic, and research conclusions, implications, and recommendations for improving the long-term resilience of youth migrants and their families.

Policy recommendations

Advocate for the expansion of documentation programs for undocumented youth migrants to provide better legal protection. As this study has clearly identified, the structural environment often drives the initial migration, as well as the resilience that individuals and households do or do not achieve once they have migrated. Lack of documentation compounds risks for young migrants by inhibiting their livelihood opportunities, access to critical services, and freedom of movement, and by increasing their protection risks. While organizations may have limited impact on the structural environment, they can advocate on behalf of migrants to access the resources necessary for formal documentation. In some settings, organizations have a limited mandate to work with only those youth who hold refugee status. In these instances, organizations should advocate with relevant partners and stakeholders to try to encourage policy change and access underserved migrant populations.

Programmatic recommendations

Expand program mandates to include undocumented youth to better support the most vulnerable. Besides advocating for greater access to programs for undocumented youth, organizations should

offer alternative programs that are available to all migrants, irrespective of documentation status. The four studies identified additional characteristics of migrants that could be used for identifying and targeting the most vulnerable. These included pioneering siblings, women migrating alone, individuals fleeing persecution, and those travelling from rural areas.

Improve pathways for information exchange between migrants and prospective migrants. Young people receive mixed messages on migration, with information coming from friends, public service campaigns, social media, and other sources. While many flee to avoid conflict, some also migrate due to peer pressure or the belief that there are lucrative and easy livelihoods in an urban area. Campaigns to improve the flow of information could include efforts to relay realistic information about life in destination locales. If such messages are entirely negative, they are likely to be discredited by prospective youth migrants. Messages should aim for a balanced perspective. Content might include information from potential employers, current migrants, recent returnees, and service providers.

Establish skill development and training programs for urban youth migrants that have a direct link to a job placement, facilitating employment in the formal sector. Many of the respondents highlighted that one of the biggest barriers to employment is the lack of initial contacts and networks with potential employers. Organizations could provide greater support in facilitating these links, ideally associated with a specific training program. Organizations could create links with employers, set up networking events (as universities in the west frequently do), and specifically highlight networking as part of their skill training, particularly for groups that might have lower social capital to start with, such as women in Addis Ababa.

Modify and create programs that teach long-term, transferable skills, such as financial literacy, interviewing, and networking. All will be applicable upon repatriation, returning home, or further migration. Such skills will boost longer-term resilience. A defining characteristic of migrants in these studies is their transience, although to varying degrees. In Kampala, most respondents viewed Uganda as just one stop on their migration route, while in Addis and Bengaluru migrants frequently mentioned the possibility of eventually returning to their village. Some respondents in Addis Ababa contemplated further international migration. Hence, livelihood programs should go beyond vocational training and incorporate transferable skills.

Emphasize microenterprise development and access to capital. Migrants who were able to start their own businesses were often better off. In the Addis study, opening a small business aligned with many migrants' views of success and was the most popular career goal. Small businesses can be a particularly important livelihood for young migrants, particularly in situations in which the informal economy is large and formal employment is difficult to access. Organizations should consider supporting microcredit programs tailored for young and transitory populations, including those who lack official status. They can also investigate the utility of savings and credit groups and support migrants in starting them and adapting them for a migration context, particularly as these types of institutions are likely already familiar to many migrants. As previously discussed, training programs are only useful if employment in those fields is available. Therefore, in cases where political and economic conditions limit employment for young migrants, organizations may be better off designing programs to generate initial financial capital and help migrants acquire financial literacy skills.

Differentiate programs according to gender and age to cater to groups' specific needs. A common theme across the four studies is that there is significant heterogeneity in terms of the type of capital migrants have, from social, to financial, to human. For example, women in Addis Ababa were found to have less social capital, which, in some instances, might force them into more precarious livelihood and

living situations. On the other hand, men in Kampala tended to have experienced greater imprisonment, torture, and theft. In Vienna, male youth were generally more advanced in their language skills than females and hence had an easier time meeting people from outside the migrant community. Thus, the possible disparities by gender are not necessarily the same across contexts but could be identified in advance to better cater to the different needs of male and female migrants. Likewise, different age cohorts of migrants are likely to need different packages of support during transition periods.

Future areas of research

Investigate barriers for youth migrants to access programs. One of the advantages of these four studies is that the researchers had the time, resources, and support to be able to identify sects of the migrant population that appear to be currently unaware of or unable to access the resources provided by organizations. The lack of access contributes to the vulnerability of these migrants. Organizations should invest in identifying the barriers for these "hidden" populations and how to make sure to both meet their needs and increase their access to key programs.

Implement targeted exploratory research in areas that are hot spots for migrants to inform policies attempting to regularize migration. Even with limited resources, these four case studies yielded important insights into the migrant population that organizations aim to support while providing the graduate students with valuable research and field experience. Organizations should take greater advantage of partnering with students at both international and local academic institutions to carry out these smaller and focused exploratory studies, which could serve as stand-alone research or inform future, larger studies and evaluations.

Analyze further the connections between family structure and migration decisions. Much of the commonality found across the four studies related to the complex relationship between familial responsibility, obligations, and support that affects the initial decision to migrate, resilience of the migrant, and resilience of the household

(sometimes in opposing directions). Family-migrant relationships have a temporal aspect, and short-term and long-term resilience can vary depending on the context and unit of analysis. Migration decisions were frequently made by individuals and households giving consideration to these complexities, but they are not always reflected in either programming or how we do our research on migration. Further research on the topic could improve our understanding of how to best support youth migration as an adaptive strategy that strengthens the resilience of vulnerable households and communities.

Track reverse remittances to better understand the financial strategies of migrants and their families. A common understanding of remittances is that they tend to go in one direction, from the urban migrant to their rural family back home. However, in our studies, remittances flowed in both directions. Migrants in Kampala, and pioneering siblings more generally, could not survive without remittances from their families. This speaks to the wider point of the ongoing investment households frequently make, not just in the initial migration but in supporting the migrating member long after they have migrated. Thus, more research on the financial flows of migrants can help to further unpack how organizations and programs can help more holistically support the resilience of urban migrants and their rural households.

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