"BUT NOW, I KNOW HOW TO MIGRATE PROPERLY, SAFELY AND LEGALLY"

Final Report for the Process Evaluation of Freedom Fund's Ethiopia Hotspot Programme

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Introduction

This report presents findings from the final round of data collection for the Hotspot Programme process evaluation conducted in the two Ethiopian sites (Amhara and Addis Ababa). Data in 2018 were collected in Addis Ketema in February and in Amhara in May.

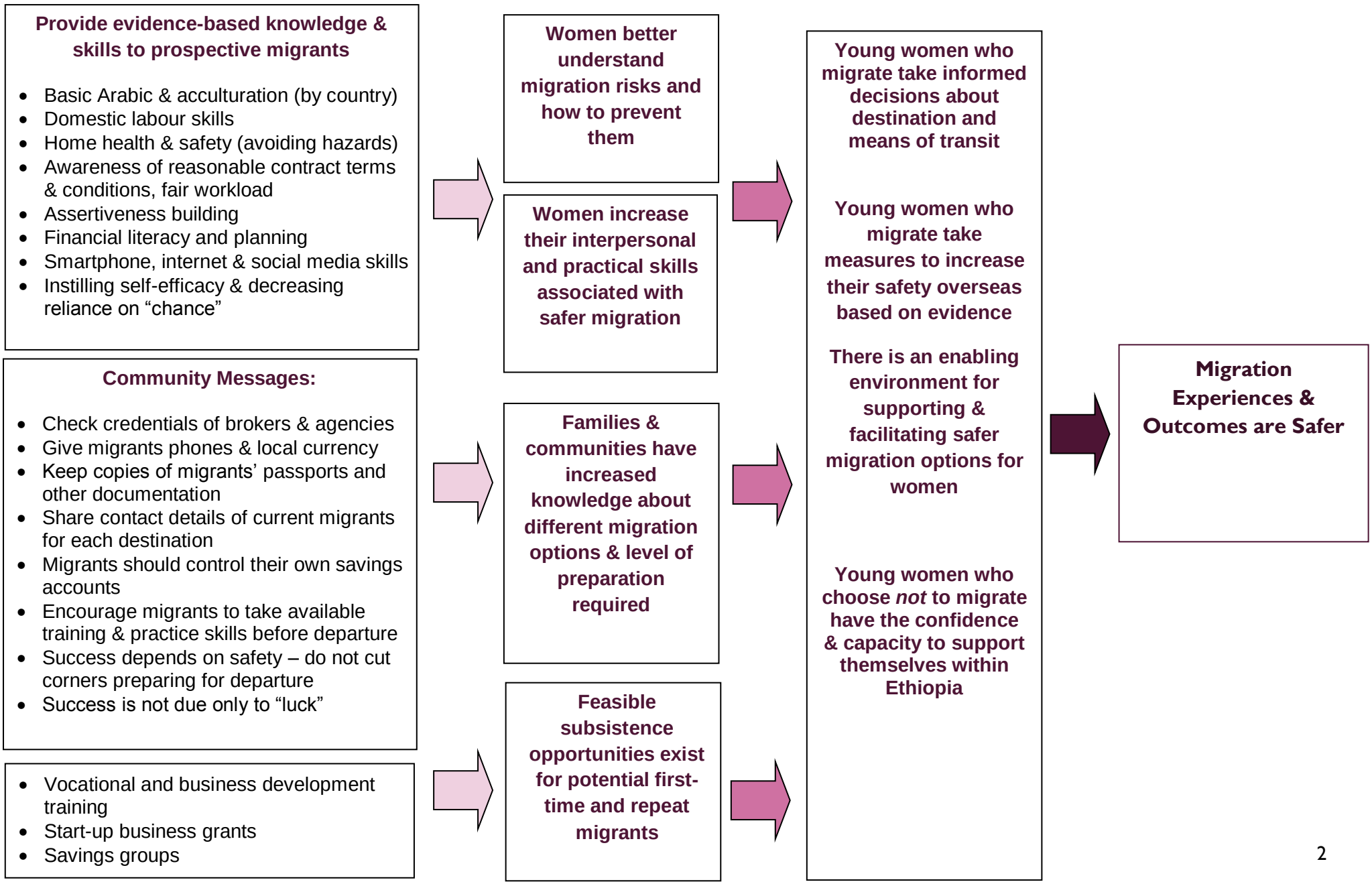
The aim of this report is to review safe labour migration attitudes, knowledge and practices among local implementors, authorities, community leaders, participants and their communities following two years of Hotspot programme implementation. The report also examines changes in how the programme was delivered by Implementing Partners (IPs) and perceived by stakeholders following the Government of Ethiopia's early 2018 lifting of the 5-year national ban on migration for domestic workers. This policy change occurred at national level with implications for the Freedom Fund's ongoing and future operations in the country. Although specific legal restrictions and conditions are yet to be finalised, the new policy effectively re-introduced lawful means for women to migration for domestic work, creating new opportunities to promote "safe" migration within a formal policy framework.

The final process evaluation complements the previous formative and midterm research reports. While the formative study identified determinants of safer migration experiences, and the midterm assessment examined the acceptability and feasibility of Hotspot implementation, the focus of this report is on informing future Freedom Fund supported activities, with a view to highlighting the strengths, weaknesses and potentially beneficial adaptations to the Hotspot model as the programme developed further. The final report takes stock of whether the programme appears to have contributed to its intended changes through the activities delivered by IPs.

The report is structured in accordance with the programmatic Theory of Change (Figure 1 below) that was developed following formative research. The Theory of Change sets out hypothesised pathways from Hotspot activities to safer migration practices. Results are presented from the final round of data collection conducted in Amhara and Addis Ababa to highlight the existence (or absence) of evidence through the interim stages between programmatic activities and safer migration practice (middle two columns in Theory of Change), namely: **knowledge and attitudes** (1) understandings of migration risks and how to prevent them, (2) interpersonal and practical skills for safer migration, (3) family and community knowledge and attitudes, (4) subsistence opportunities for women in Ethiopia and **perceptions of behaviour** (1) informed decision-making, (2) safer migration planning (3) enabling environment for safe migration, (4) confidence among those who wish to stay in Ethiopia. Psychosocial support and rehabilitation for returnees with mental health concerns is an additional component within the Hotspot programme, and for the purposes of the process evaluation, has been included within "confidence among those who wish to stay in Ethiopia."

These thematic areas indicate whether Hotspot programme activities were delivered as planned, with clear and acceptable messages, and produced intended effects. As the process evaluation did not track migrants following departure, actual outcomes of labour migration during the Hotspot programme (final column) cannot be assessed.

Figure 1: Hotspot Programme Theory of Change



Methods

A qualitative research framework was used for the Hotspot process evaluation, as agreed at the inception of the programme. Data were collected every six months, alternating between Amhara and Addis Ketema, for a total of 2 data collection points in each site over the course of Hotspot implementation (one round of data collection in 2017 and 2018 in each location).

In Addis Ababa, however, the final round of data collection marked a departure from the original study design. Originally, only 4 of 7 local IPs were followed in Addis Ketema (AGAR, Bethsaida Restoration Development Association (BRDA), Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE), and Mission for Community Development Program (MCDP)), but in February 2018, interviews, group discussions and attitude ranking exercises focused on the 3 IPs that had been previously excluded (Hope for Children, Organization for Prevention Rehabilitation and Integration of Female Street Children (OPRIFS) and Association of Forced Migrants (AFM)), to provide the Freedom Fund with a more comprehensive picture of this Hotspot, particularly in the absence of any comparison communities. The lack of any comparison sites reflects the uniqueness of Addis Ababa as Ethiopia's capital city and largest urban setting. Within the city, the Addis Ketema neighbourhood is also unique, serving as an initial "hub" for internal migrants, temporary workers, and women considering out-migration for domestic work. No other areas in the city were adequately similar to merit inclusion in the evaluation for comparative purposes.

In Amhara, the same 3 IPs continued to be followed in both urban and semi-rural locations around Dessie (Professional Alliance for Development (PADET) and Emmanual Development Association (EDA)) and Kombolcha (Beza Posterity Development Organization (BPDO));); community level data were also collected in comparison sites matched for geographical and socio-demographic profiles. Tables 1 and 2 summarise the IPs and their locations.

Table 1: **ALL** Addis Ababa Intervention Woredas and Implementing Partners

	Woreda 4	6	7	8	9
AFM	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
AGAR	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
BRDA	☑	☑	☑	☑	
FSCE	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Hope for Children	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
MCDP	☑	☑			☑
OPRIFS		☑	☑	☑	

Table 2: Amhara Intervention Sites, Implementing Partners and Matched Comparison sites

	Dessie Sub-Cities	Implementing NGO	Kombolcha Kebeles	Implementing NGO
Intervention	Hoite Menafesha BwanbwaWuha	PADET	Abakolba Metene	BPDO
	Segno Gebeya Salayish Arada	EDA		
Comparison	Piasa Agergizat Dawdo Robit		Mitigrar Galeshia	

As previously stated, data collection methods consisted of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with IP representatives, local authorities, community leaders and key informants, and programme beneficiaries (or local young women of similar age and background in comparison sites). Attitude ranking sessions were conducted in intervention sites bi-annually, and annually in comparison sites to track community-level changes in attitudes and norms potentially linked to project activities in intervention sites.

Attitude Ranking uses a structured activity conducted in groups and repeated over time. It generates standardised scores based on participants' beliefs about how normative (or "locally common") a particular scenario is, allowing quantification of normative views that can be compared between locations and time points. The Attitude Ranking tool and data are presented at the end of this report, as Appendix 1.

In **Addis Ababa**, in 2018 we conducted 7 in-depth interviews with programme beneficiaries, 7 in-depth interviews with IP staff, and 2 FGD (1 with Idir members and 1 with local authorities). In **Amhara**, data collection was split between Dessie and Kombolcha. In Dessie, there were 13 interviews with beneficiaries, 3 with staff, and 4 interviews and 1 FGD with community key informants. A further FGD was conducted in the comparison site with local women. In Kombolcha, there were 8 interviews with beneficiaries, 2 with local authorities, 1 with programme staff and a 4 interviews with community key informants in the comparison sites.

Interviews and FGDs asked respondents to describe their understanding of safe migration and how to prepare for positive migration experiences. We also asked respondents to describe any information campaigns, programmes, or activities related to migration risk and safety in their local communities, including their levels of participation and satisfaction. In intervention sites, questions related to existing programmes made clear to what extent activities supported by the Hotspot programme were recognised, and how acceptable they were to beneficiaries and other community members. In comparison areas, these questions aimed to explore other potential sources of information and intervention related to migration.

Due to concerns during previous waves of data collection about the introduction of "desirability bias" due to the involvement of staff from implementing NGO or local Bureau of Labour Affairs and Women's Affairs bureau in recruiting respondents, a more "random" sampling approach was adopted during the final episode of fieldwork. Lists of programme beneficiaries were obtained and names selected according to criteria such as age and school class. This reduced the inclusion of "best performers" or most active participants in Hotspot activities. It was only possible on this occasion, however, for two reasons. First, the study team had visited each site on numerous occasions since the start of the intervention and had built trust over time with local authorities. Second, it had already been made public that the Freedom Fund had committed to ongoing Hotspot funding and therefore there were fewer concerns that the evaluation study might lead to withdrawal of support.

Results: Knowledge and Attitudes

This section examines the determinants of safer migration intentions and practices, which are prerequisites for individuals, families and communities to take action to reduce migration-related risks. They include accurate understanding of potential hazards and how to avoid them, acquisition of practical and interpersonal skills associated with safer experiences, improved knowledge among family members and community leaders (who may influence or take decision for potential migrants), and availability of alternative livelihood options to make *not* migrating a feasible choice. These determinants were the intended outputs of Hotspot activities, which focused on educating and empowering young women most likely to seek domestic labour abroad, engaging the broader community including traditional authorities and local government, and offering vocational and business development training and support.

Understanding Migration Risk and Prevention

Understanding potential risks inherent to women's domestic labour migration to the Middle East and Gulf States has been strong throughout the programme. Following the 2013 mass deportation of Ethiopian workers from Saudi Arabia and subsequent national ban on out-migration, considerable efforts were made throughout the country to publicise the dangers of migration. In Hotspot communities, many respondents shared stories from their own families and social networks. It was common for returnees, migrants' family members, and traditional or political leaders to narrate stories from among their acquaintances, extended family, or neighbours featuring negative migration experiences, including severe injury, mental health breakdown, and death.

> *Let me tell you my story; my youngest child migrated. She was 20 years old. After she failed the grade 10 national exam, she nagged me to send her. … But she did not go the agreed place. Instead, my daughter ended up in a desert. [FGD with Idir members, Addis Ababa]*

> *There are returnees who got injured and became disabled. There are returnees with mental disorders, hand cripples and leg cripples. [FGD with local government, Dessie, intervention site]*

Respondents were also familiar with less dramatic risks, including exploitation by brokers and employers, not being able to save enough money to meet their own or others' expectations, and losing their earnings through mismanagement or theft by family members back in Ethiopia.

I think that the danger in migration has increased. There are a lot of migrants whose money and whose parents' money gets wasted and misused. There are migrants who get abused and their human rights aren't respected at all. [Community police officer, Kombolcha, comparison]

After we migrate, most of us send money to our families; it is our family that consumes our money. When you send money to your family to save it for you, you return thinking that you will get all the money you made. But when you get here, you get nothing. [Interview with returnee, 29, Addis Ababa]

They told me to pay 9000 Birr. I paid and after I left Ethiopia, I was at the agency, in Dubai, for 1 month. I was not making money. The lady that helped me get there told me that she hadn't found an employer for us yet, so we stayed with her for a month. When we would ask her why we're staying with her, she'd tell us to shut up and wait until she finds employers for us. She would say "You came here for work, so work." … And after we've experienced all of that and we return, we still don't have money here. I worked there for four years, but I didn't even get a single coin when I returned. [Community Conversation participant, Kombolcha, intervention site]

Although basic knowledge of risks has been widespread, more relevant to understanding the effect of the Hotspot programme, however, is whether people differentiate *risk* from *legality*, and whether they can identify realistic measures to prevent or reduce the likelihood of confronting the most serious risks. This did appear to be the case, and participants in Community Conversations, school-based programmes, and skills training felt strongly that the Hotspot had increased their understanding of *what* made migration unsafe, and how this did not necessarily correspond simply to outward signs of "legal migration" such as travelling on a passport or by air instead of sea. The programme was credited with providing participants with accurate and relevant information, which motivated women to avoid migration while at the same time guiding them in how to make it safer if it proved inevitable:

Even before we participated in the training, we had an awareness on the issue and we would regularly hear about illegal migration. But it is much better now that we've taken part in the training. Part of the reason why the training made it so much better was because there were returnees in the trainings. They told us about the challenges they've faced. Listening to the dangers of illegal migration through stories alone isn't enough; we have to talk to the real people who have experienced it for themselves. … The way they educate us is excellent. … We're not just hearing stories, we're getting to see that the experiences they're telling us about are real. They've showed us the real-life effects of illegal migration. … We decided to stay here and change our lives here. And if that doesn't work out, then we could migrate legally, with our health and our rights protected. We could develop the skills here, and then migrate with the necessary skills. This is the plan that I have, just in case I don't become successful by staying here. [Participant in Community Conversation, Kombolcha, Intervention site]

Furthermore, respondents who had undergone awareness raising activities from IPs were able to give specific examples of measures that could be taken to improve the chances of positive and safe migration, including obtaining a passport, taking pre-departure training, and not using illegal brokers (or those known to be abusive).

The ability and willingness of respondents to describe risk reduction measures were likely facilitated by re-introduction of legal migration at national level, meaning that people no longer feel obliged to report compliance with the ban on labour migration. Yet in the comparison areas of Dessie and Kombolcha, where there had been no Hotspot programme

activities, respondents were less explicit about how to determine whether migration was safe or unsafe, relying on the "legal-illegal" dichotomy.

> *Especially for those who are from rural area, it is good to share this [information about safe migration] through the media. Many girls do not know about it, so they are still with [illegal] brokers. They travel with brokers by the sea. [Women's Association Member, FGD with community key informants, Dessie, comparison site]*
>
> ***Interviewer**: Are there any programmes around here about safe migration? What are these?*
> ***Participant**: No, there aren't any programmes.*
> ***Interviewer**: Is migration an issue that people talk a lot about through Idirs or other community groups?*
> ***Participant:** The conversation isn't brought up that often.*
> ***Interviewer**: What kinds of programmes do you think you need in this area to support safe migration?*
> ***Participant:** Yes, it will be useful if programmes that promote safe migration existed in our community. [Interview with religious leader, Kombolcha, comparison site]*

In comparison sites, few references were made to specific ways of improving migration safety, and people did not know of any current awareness raising programmes, expressing interest in receiving more information. This strengthens the likelihood that the Hotspot programme was instrumental in improving knowledge that could be practically applied.

Interpersonal and Practical Skills

The formative study conducted as the Hotspot programme was being adapted for the Ethiopian context identified 4 main "domains" for preparing prospective migrants for safer experiences. These were based on in-depth interviews with returnee domestic workers and family members of current migrants, reflecting empirical experiences abroad. The domains cover practical knowledge, skills, behavioural attributes and resources considered to improve relationships with employers, protect against egregious abuse from brokers, employers and family members, and facilitate risk reduction. It was suggested, therefore, that IPs should tailor their pre-departure information for prospective migrants to include information and messages for each domain, where practical application was feasible (i.e. not for immutable personal attributes such as age or religion).

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS
• Basic Arabic • Cultural expectations (clothing, religious observation, gender relations) • Personal hygiene (using and disposing of sanitary pads)	• Use of modern appliances and domestic products • Cleaning toilets or other unfamiliar household items • Financial planning, e.g. opening an account prior to departure
INTERPERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	**RESOURCES**
• Confidence • Assertiveness • Obedience • Older age/ maturity • Being Muslim/ pretending to be Muslim	• Phones and local sim cards • Contact details of agency, local Ethiopians, family • Leaving copy of contract and agency details with family • Access to Facebook, WhatsApp, VIBER etc • Arriving with foreign currency for any delays on arrival

Overall, advice from the 4 domains was not explicitly mentioned in interviews and FGDs, with several notable exceptions. Financial planning (such as opening a bank account to ensure control over earnings), learning to use household appliances and products, and obtaining and sharing copies of employment agency details and agreed contracts were all raised during the final round of data collection. The 2018 round of data collection was the first time pre-departure preparation could be openly discussed during the process evaluation, so it was notable that respondents were able to recall some of these specific messages. Prior fieldwork occurred before migration restrictions were lifted, and IPs had also been limited in their ability to give very specific advice to prospective migrants.

Below, a returnee discussed how she had learned the importance of setting up her own bank account prior to leaving Ethiopia, so that her family could not gain access to her remittances, and careful selection of agency:

> *What I want to say is that when we migrate, we have to open our own bank accounts. But you cannot blame our families, we're all from a poor society. The families don't know how you get the money, they just see it coming. If migrants go after opening their own accounts, they become recognized by the government. There are [employment] agencies that are recognized. [Interview with returnee, 29, Addis Ababa]*

Similarly, a prospective migrant undergoing training at a vocational college supported by one of the Hotspot IPs felt familiar with the type of work she would be required to perform abroad, and how to use modern appliances. She also felt that receiving a formal certification of her training put her in a good position to secure legal, well-paid employment on arrival:

> *The experience was very good. … it focused on practical training. Training that will enable me to become more successful in what I will do when I go to the Arab countries. I had a chance to see many household utensils that I might use in the Arab countries. … Individuals who have a certificate have better opportunity to get a job in the Arab countries. [Prospective migrant, 22, Dessie, intervention site]*

Importantly, she went on to say that the hands-on training, which included the opportunity to practice using household appliances, instilled her with greater confidence. Both confidence and assertiveness emerged in the formative research as contributing to safe experiences for Ethiopian women, as they reduce their vulnerability in relationships with employers. Confidence and assertiveness are thus two of the key "intrapersonal skills" relevant to pre-departure preparation. Trainings offered as part of the Hotspot programme were clearly perceived to have influenced these intrapersonal attributes at the same time as conveying new information and skills:

> *After receiving the training, because I gained a lot of skills, I feel confident that I will be successful. It helped me to develop my self-confidence because when I go [abroad] I know that I have the knowledge and the skill to deliver what is expected of me. [Prospective migrant, 22, Dessie, intervention site]*

School-based programmes appeared to be particularly effective in developing young women's confidence, self-efficacy and resilience. Every interviewee from a school-based "girls' club" mentioned that their participation increased their self-confidence and willingness to proactively engage with local issues. Participants and community members alike spoke with awe at how "regular" school girls became competent social activists, willing to organise and lead events to raise awareness among adults. For example, one girl in

Kombolcha who became a peer educator, described feeling empowered by her involvement:

> *My participation in this program has helped me become independent and has enabled me to fully trust myself. For example, I think about the questions that the trainees are going to ask me and I prepare myself on what I think those questions are going to be. Then, they actually end up asking me those exact questions. Situations like these have enabled me to depend on myself and to trust myself. I've also been able to develop my skills. [School girl, 14, Year 8, Kombolcha, intervention site]*

A religious leader also spoke admiringly about the increasingly prominent role taken by young women in the community:

> *Once I got the chance to participate in a discussion held among girl students from selected schools that are in the intervention area. I was really amazed with the girls' level of awareness, they really surprised me while they were discussing the issues related to illegal migration. It almost seemed like they had a better understanding than most of us who has higher educational level. This shows how much the school and students who participated in the programs have successfully increased their awareness level. [Religious leader, Male, Dessie, intervention site]*

Returnees enrolled in business development also felt the programme provided them with self-esteem and self-efficacy. In both Addis Ababa and Amhara, women enthused about how they transformed their self-doubts following return from abroad into a sense of purpose and self-worth:

> ***Respondent**: The training was useful for me, there are many things. To start a business, we need money. But we also need to plan and make it practical.*
> ***Interviewer**: How do you feel about what you are learning and discussing here?*
> ***Respondent**: I feel less afraid, [I am] getting something and feeling some courageous behaviour. [Returnee, 20, Dessie, intervention site]*

> *I heard about this project from people and they told me that the project gives training to returnees. … It was when I was feeling hopeless and waiting that I finally heard from them. … Even though I had the skill before the training, I could not work. After I returned, I stayed home for about a year and almost finished my money. Thus, when I was about to be hopeless, they motivated me. …It has changed me very much. [Returnee, 27, Addis Ababa]*

Particularly salient is the fact that new skills and self-confidence were perceived to be useful for *both* re-migration and staying in Ethiopia. Women acknowledged that while they may wish to stay in Ethiopia, this option could prove economically unviable. Most returnees considered it possible they might re-migrate and felt their chances of success abroad were now better. The 27-year old returnee in Addis Ababa quoted above stated "*I have changed a lot with the discussions we have been having, I am happy. ... I used to think of migrating again, but with their encouragement and guidance, I am happy here*." Yet at another point in the interview, she also admits "*If I don't get changed [succeed here], I can go to an Arab country with the hairdressing certificate. Not illegally, but legally because I have the certificate on my hand. There is nothing I am afraid of, I think that I will be successful there*."

Improved confidence seems to be a "transferable" skill, helpful to both those who re-migrate and those who do not. On the other hand, there was one prominent gap in the 4

domains from the formative study: no respondents mentioned the **resources** that might prove useful when working overseas, e.g. use of social media applications, obtaining mobile phones and sim cards, and accessing small amounts of foreign currency. None of these were mentioned in any of the sites. Furthermore, within the "knowledge" domain, personal hygiene, appropriate clothing and learning basic Arabic were similarly not discussed, except in one of the comparison sites near Kombolcha, where a Women & Children's Affairs committee member said she encouraged migrants "to know the language of the country that they're going to migrate to, to have the necessary experience and skills."

Family and community knowledge and attitudes

The Hotspot programme supported a broad mix of community-based activities, including working through Idirs (traditional funeral associations), Community Conversations (following the tradition of public discussions around a coffee ceremony), and public engagement events, such as video screenings and discussions. These targeted a wider audience than prospective female migrants, based on evidence that family members or people with influence in the community can be heavily involved in migration-related decision making.

The process evaluation interviewed key informants across sites, including religious leaders, Idir leaders, and representatives from local authority structures such as kebele administration and women's associations, as well as local government. Community members shared their perceptions of the coverage, appropriateness, and effects of these public engagement activities. Responses from both participants and local authorities were overwhelmingly positive about the content and its delivery, as illustrated below:

> *Those of us who are meeting every 15 days have better understanding of the negative consequence of illegal migration… But those who do not participate in the Community Conversation do not have a detailed information on illegal migration, what the girls face on their way to the Arab countries and the cruelty of the employers in the Arab countries. But since we hear the experiences of women you have been to the Arab countries we understand better than them [those not participating in the Community Conversation] [Interview with woman, 50, Community Conversation participant, Dessie, intervention site]*

> *They [IPs] have done a great deal on educating and making people more aware about the topic at hand. By calling on the help of religious and community leaders as well as local celebrities, they have managed to host several discussion groups, give out workshops for women, and by working with some individuals from Wollo University, they have made a documentary about the ugly features of illegal immigration, as well as creating several educational workshops regarding the topic. … A lot [of people] have learned from this [Kebele administrator, Kombolcha, intervention site]*

Suggestions on how to improve the programme generally commented on the lack of coverage across the population, both in terms of excluded groups (boys, men), and proportion of community members. For example, in Kombolcha, a Women's Affairs representative believed that the Hotspot was reaching at most half the local population, and that the most inaccessible, rural areas were most likely to be neglected, as well as most likely to be migration "source" locations. IPs also felt they now have a good model that could be expanded further.

> *We did not even cover all the Woredas in Dessie. Among the 10 Woredas we only work in 6 Woredas and hence we need to expand our target area. If we are able to cover all the areas*

we will see change in Dessie. But still we are making progress. For example, in Amhara Region Dessie is considered as a model project which needs to be replicated in other areas due to its achievement and success. It is a model area and others are sharing experience to learn from Dessie. This is very encouraging. [IP staff #4, Addis Ababa]

Respondents agreed with the Hotspot's rationale for educating the wider community to reach potential decision makers. One girls' club member emphasised that parents were particularly important decision-makers (or gatekeepers) for girls' migration, and felt they should be prioritised:

Our mothers did not participate in the training. There are many mothers who are staying at home. So it would be useful if other segments of the society participate in this kind of awareness raising programs. Sometimes parents put pressure on their kids to migrate and work. So if they participate in this kind of programs they will understand the problem. Fathers need to be included too. [Girls' club participant, 14, Grade 8, Dessie, intervention site]

Specific to Addis Ababa, concerns were raised that the programme addressed international migration only, without discussing internal migration, for which Addis Ketema district is a hub as it hosts the "Autobus Terra" (bus terminus) that brings rural labourers into the capital city.

International migration is not the only kind of migration that exists. There are young people who come to Addis Ababa from rural areas within Ethiopia. … Children who were in school quit their education and migrate to Addis Ababa. We remove children from the street all the time. There are many children on the street. [Local government representative, Addis Ababa]

Nonetheless, respondents from communities where the Hotspot was being implemented felt that it had made considerable progress in improving accurate knowledge and good understanding. Furthermore, the lifting of the ban had provided a conducive environment for potential migrants to translate their new knowledge into practice, and an emerging theme was that while the re-introduction of legal means of migration might *increase* out-migration numbers, it would *reduce* its adverse consequences, and this was partly due to the combination of more stringent pre-departure requirements with improved community knowledge of risk mitigation.

These days women and youth in general do not just pack their things and decide to go overseas and work. We do not see many individuals who use illegal brokers to go abroad. … They want to fulfill the requirement set and travel legally. They ask to be enrolled in the training centres. [Interview with Women's Association representative, Dessie, intervention site]

We can't know for sure but it's [new migration law] starting to motivate people. The thought of fleeing legally rather than illegally has taken root in the people who are travelling and who are eligible for it. …I think the [migration] rate won't decrease but the rate of illegal migration might decrease. The legal one will continue. I believe it would benefit our country if it increases. … Our best choice is to create awareness. [Local government authority, Dessie, intervention site]

In comparison areas, respondents also saw that the lifting of the ban was increasing interest in migration, but were more concerned than intervention communities that this would lead to growing numbers of local people being taken advantage of by unscrupulous brokers and human traffickers.

There is not much awareness about the change [i.e. pre-departure requirements]. So they are still exposed to brokers and unless these brokers are stopped it will not stop. In my opinion the challenge is brokers. They [migrants] lose their life and their money by brokers. … there is a lot to do in creating awareness about it. [Local government authority, Dessie, comparison site]

Respondents in comparison sites did not know of any formal "safe migration" programmes, and felt they would benefit from them. There is no reason to expect "courtesy bias" from respondents in comparison sites, who did not know about Hotspot activities; thus their views on inadequate local awareness and need for programmes supports the evidence that the Hotspot programme was well-received and useful where implemented. Furthermore, when asked how programmes might best reach those in need of better knowledge and skills, respondents in comparison sites described an awareness-raising model closely aligned with the Hotspot approach:

In my opinion it is especially good for women. Most of the women think to go and improve their household. There are also husband who put pressure on women. [Women's Association representative, Dessie, comparison site]

To share the information, first we have to go to religious leaders, and then there are [local authority] sub leaders, similar to elders and parents. These groups can identify those women [potential migrants]. … First there should some job creation activity, second, expand the awareness creation education, third after they organize them for job creation the resource should be enough so that they can work and improve their life. [Police officer, Dessie, comparison site]

House-to-house visits was the only activity that did not appear to be acceptable to community members. Indeed, respondents did not even mention this component of the Hotspot, with the exception of one IP staff member who singled it out as unpopular with households, as they felt they were being negatively "targeted," described below:

The most challenging activity is the "home to home". Since only one or two families participate in the "home to home", the discussion is not very much. Ideas are not discussed as in the other activities. This is challenging for the facilitators. Sometimes the individuals also feel that they are targeted. They usually ask the facilitators why they focus on them. They ask them "What do you see in my house that makes you come to my house only?" So people do not feel comfortable. This is the major challenge. Other than this all the programs are highly acceptable and relevant. [IP staff 2, Amhara]

It is difficult to verify how widespread this belief was, as there were no other opinions shared during data collection about home visits. In any case, this particular component of the intervention was dropped early in the programme due to lack of perceived enthusiasm.

Subsistence opportunities in Ethiopia

A key component of the Hotspot programme was vocational training alongside business development skills and some form of financial support, through small start-up grants and/or group savings schemes. While group-based business development was the preferred model at the beginning, this proved unsuccessful and more flexibility was introduced, as described by an IP in Addis Ababa:

We focused on group businesses and gave them seed money. But the group business were not successful. There were many businesses; 3 or 4 of them were in this building. They just

closed and left after they shared the items. Even though we counselled them, they still faced many challenges. There were many disagreements within each group. They also told us that their businesses were not profiting. Currently, we don't encourage group businesses.

Overall, participants expressed favourable opinions about the organisation, content, and quality of trainings on financial and business management. There was slightly less satisfaction about the technical components (sewing, food preparation, hair styling), which a few participants felt did not add to what they already knew.

During the training, I used to disagree with my teachers. One of my teachers told me that I was learning to get the certificate not because I was lucky, but because I had the knowledge. Sometimes you came from abroad; I think I have better knowledge than him. [29-year old returnee, Addis Ababa]

Finally, the resources provided for women to start their own (or shared) businesses received the most criticism. Participants felt the start-up capital was inadequate, facilities for new businesses were poor, and disliked the group model. However, this criticism was limited to Addis Ababa, and possible reasons for this were discussed in the midterm report and related to higher expectations and lower social cohesion between women. As a transport hub, Addis Ketema is in constant flux, bringing a changing mix of people together who do not necessarily feel socially connected. Costs of living and managing a business are higher, and there are some tensions with local police. Another returnee in Addis Ababa expressed her gratitude to the IP that had helped her, but described why ultimately her business venture failed:

At this time, we have not found an available market, but we have paid back the money that we borrowed from the project. Even if we feel hopeless and motivated to go back to Arab countries, they urged us not to return. It has been 3 months [since we have started the job]. [They] motivated us to work here and not to think about migration again. The work is not yet busy. They said it may take 6 months until we get regular customers. They still encourage us though. They did not leave us, they encourage us daily. Now, the beauty salon is in debt. We were also told to get a trade license. To process a trade license, the owner of the property has to come. The owner is not in the country, he is in America. So, we are suffering, meaning we are worried and we hide whenever they [the trade license controllers] come. We only have Saturdays and Sundays and we are still hiding to work. So, nothing is in our hand. … The expenses are increasing: for taxi, food and other expenses. [27-year old returnee, Addis Ababa]

In Amhara, participants were much more likely to feel that while the financial support would need to be supplemented through their own savings or loans, the overall programme successfully set them up in new businesses. Fieldworkers were also able to visit several small tailoring cooperatives and saw groups working effectively together.

I am glad that I learned about saving. I did not save before. I did not know what I get and what I lose because I did not do accounting. Now I know with how much I bring, how much the expense is, how much I need to profit, my salary. I did not think about my salary before. … In my opinion I have got much knowledge, when I compare it with what I had before there is lot of change. [Returnee, 20, business development, Dessie, intervention site]

Some of us sell onions individually at the local market. We sell them at the local market because the organization hasn't found a location for us yet. We take additional funds through a loan system; the organization gives us the 45,000 Birr as support, but we take additional

funds when we need it. We've taken a 2000 Birr loan. We pay the loan back each month…. We meet with the staff frequently. … There's nothing to be improved. … My daily expenses no longer put pressure on my finances. I'm able to provide for my family. [Self Help Group participant, Kombolcha, intervention site]

IP staff understood differences between Hotspot sites and emphasised the importance of adapting programmes to fit the local context.

We have noticed that we need to customize our plans and projects according to the kind of community we are working with. For example, the communities and demographics of Addis Ababa is greatly different from the communities of Kombolcha and any kind of work we do should be in accommodation of that. There shouldn't be a one size model that we have to follow. [IP staff #3, Amhara]

While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to consider how realistic it is to find viable business opportunities for prospective or returnee migrant young women, the overall economic climate in Ethiopia has to be considered as the backdrop to livelihood support. The tendency throughout Ethiopia is to provide "gendered" work opportunities, i.e. construction and road maintenance work for young men and food-preparation, hairdressing and light manufacturing for young women. The relative demand and remuneration for these options is likely to fluctuate over time, but even "growth" industries likely to attract a feminized workforce, such as clothing factories, fruit and flower farms, and assembly plants for small electricals, currently pay salaries less than $100 per month.

Results: Perceptions of Behaviour

This section presents findings related to migration-related behaviour, to determine whether changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills are being translated into actions by prospective migrants and their families to reduce potential risks. The intended outcomes of the Hotspot programme include better decision making in preparing for migration, taking measures known to improve migration safety, increased community-level support for safer migration, and availability of alternative livelihood options within Ethiopia. While actual migration behaviours (and experiences in the destination countries) could not be directly observed by the study, comparison between perceived changes reported by programme participants, community stakeholders, local authorities, and IP staff can help build a picture of likely trends.

Informed decision making

Over the course of the Hotspot, the biggest observed change resulted from the Federal Government's removal of the 2013 ban on all international labour migration. This had two major implications for the programme's implementation and process evaluation. First, there are now specified criteria and procedures for legal migration, providing an entry point for IPs to support prospective migrants and broaden the discussion from "legal" and "illegal" to "safe" and "unsafe." Second, community members and key informants are able to freely discuss migration intentions and behaviour, without feeling concerned about inadvertently admitting to illegal activities.

Respondents reported a surge of interest in the re-opened legal migration route, as noted by one of the IPs in Amhara:

This morning I checked with Ministry of Labor and Social Affair office. Currently we have more than 1000 women who are registered to migrate. This is in line with the new law and ready to get the training. So when we look at this, the [project's] objective moves toward safe migration. [IP staff 1, Amhara]

Representatives from local government and community associations talked about the policy change as an opportunity to permanently shift people's decision-making so they migrated solely through formal, approved channels. As mentioned previously, key informants expressed some concern that at first, migration levels might increase more rapidly than the capacity to process migrants through the new system. Furthermore, it was considered inevitable that some people who do not meet the new criteria, such as education through Grade 8, would continue to rely on illegal brokers, but that they could still benefit from enhanced knowledge and awareness about safe migration. The existence of the Hotspot programme was thus considered an asset, as IPs had already set the groundwork for conversations about safety during several years of rapport-building with communities and authorities; this meant they were in a good position to build on their strengths and act quickly within the new legal framework:

Previously the focus was on stopping migration and not on 'safe migration'. There was a perception that the two organizations [IPs] were encouraging migration. But now after understanding the objective and the concept of safe migration, there is a lot of change. Previously everyone had a negative attitude towards migration and were working towards stopping migration. There was a lot of resistance from sector offices and political appointees. So we first worked with them and clarified the concept. That is what we did at the beginning, getting acceptance and support from relevant sector offices and officials. [IP staff 2, Amhara]

Local authorities also believed that the Hotspot helped prospective migrants weigh up the benefits and risks of illegal migration more carefully than before. In Addis Ababa, for example, a representative of the Ministry for Labour Affairs felt that widespread awareness raising meant women did not automatically select the cheapest or easiest route out of the country now that they had heard realistic cautionary narratives from returnees:

Illegal migration costs less and it is an easier process. Because of that, they [prospective migrants] were at high risk for illegal migration. However, after they saw what was happening to migrants in Arab countries in recent years, many were forced to re-think migration. There's still pressure from illegal brokers but potential migrants got the chance to think about their decisions before they went. … At those [Hotspot] forums, they [returnees] shared their stories on how they travelled, what they faced, what they think about migration now and whether or not to go back. I think that created awareness, particularly for potential migrants. [MOLSA representative, Addis Ababa]

There was a general sense that people were more reflective about the options and did not simply take the first opportunity available to them.

Safer migration planning

In terms of putting specific safeguards in place prior to migration, there were signs that women found the recommendation to open bank accounts prior to departure so that they could control their own earnings particularly memorable. Other community members also talked about the need to register with approved employment agencies, check their work contracts, and leave copies of their passports with family members. However, while

respondents mentioned these measures, they did not actually describe anyone putting them into practice, which is why the findings were presented under results for "knowledge" rather than behaviour. For instance, participants talked about having receiving training in taking specific measures to mitigate against risks, but did not report having done so:

> *What I loved is the fact that they educated us on how we should migrate, and how to migrate legally and safely. … Before I took part in the training, society only talked about migration when praising a returnee for leaving and changing her life. But now, I know how to do it properly, legally and safely. [Prospective migrant, Kombolcha, intervention site]*

New pre-departure requirements are being increasingly publicised, and respondents spoke positively about the new trainings planned for registered migrants. Overall, there appeared to be unquestioning trust that if the Government of Ethiopia opened legal migration routes, it would be the Government that would protect all migrants and ensure their safe passage and experiences abroad. In some ways, the removal of the ban *strengthened* the association between concepts of "legal" and "safe", with full responsibility placed on authorities for ensuring migrants' well-being.

> *The government has to work starting from a regional level. … If the government wants to stop girls' exploitation and abuse, they have to work on decreasing the number of brokers. … Second, the governing body that gives identification cards has to put some limitation and they have to teach the community that they're in. In the immigration office, when they process a passport, thay have to check [ages]. … The government can even work in the airport, to block any migrants that are leaving illegally. [FGD with Idir leaders, Addis Ababa]*

> *In this area, the government should play a big role. The government should work on giving legal protection for its citizens, … the travel should be healthy with legal law protection, and travel done within an agreement with another country is good. [Local authority leader, Dessie, intervention site]*

Enabling environment for safe migration

It is likely to take time for the new policy to be reflected "on the ground", with systems established for registering and monitoring employment agencies, expanding pre-departure training, and building local capacity for processing potential migrants in line with age, education, and other requirements. Furthermore, measures will need to be put in place to prevent or prosecute attempts to by-pass the new criteria by individuals, families, and unregistered brokers.

While these systems are being introduced and strengthened, communities themselves will need to act on their knowledge about unsafe migration and create social norms that support safer routes and processes. The study identified several examples where this appeared to be happening and where community leaders intervened in potentially exploitative situations:

> *Once, when I was travelling, I encountered a man and his daughter. The girl was crying and I approached and asked them why she was crying. They told me that the broker took 10,000 birr and her passport and disappeared. Both the father and daughter were crying. They said they had nothing, even to rent a bed for a day. Then, I took them to my home because I had to comfort them. [FGD with Idir leaders, Addis Ababa]*

Participants in Community Conversations also said that their new awareness of the problems faced by migrants meant they also gave different advice from before and remained more vigilant.

> *Last year one of my neighbour's children wanted to go [abroad] and I was with them searching for illegal brokers. I had no awareness and I called many brokers to compare their fees, I even called to Addis Ababa. That child's trip got delayed … Then immediately this teaching came. After that I told her personally not to go, and to participate in the training. She went to Addis Ababa for domestic work [instead of abroad] … so the training gave me a good thing and saved me from regret. [Participant in Community Conversation, Dessie, intervention site].*

Also in Amhara, an IP staff member documented cases of people's changed plans following participation in community events:

> *During the last two years especially in 2017 and 2018 we were very active, we reached about 78 people who were planning to go illegally. At the time, 11 people already paid between 9,000 to 11,000 birr to illegal brokers who told them that they are legal and there is no problem, and were getting ready to travel before they participated in our program. Luckily during our program they got the opportunity to hear the discussions and they found out that the legal migration has been banned and there is no guarantee [of safety]. After that they have managed to take back the money from the brokers. [IP staff #2, Amhara]*

On the other hand, respondents admitted that pressure to migrate from spouses or family members remained widespread, and it would be overly ambitious to expect all families to try to safeguard potential migrants. Close relationships to illegal brokers meant families continue relying on unregulated migration channels, sometimes unknowingly.

> *For example, there is this girl that her uncle told her that he is working on getting her a passport so she could work abroad. That is all she knows. Other than that, she really didn't know the details of her future trip, and this is a very common thing. Most people who want to go don't really know the details of their trips or the repercussions of it if they are to do it illegally. [IP Staff #4, Amhara]*

Confidence to remain

As found in the midterm assessment, some respondents credit the Hotspot programme with changing their mind about migrating, either altogether or through illegal routes. One woman had already planned to take advantage of the ban having been lifted, but felt that the bad experiences she heard from returnees during the Community Conversations demonstrated that *all* migration was inherently risky:

> *I had planned on migrating legally, but I thought about the education that we've received and the girls' experiences, and I realized that it's very challenging. After I heard about the challenges they faced, and after they told us about our sisters and friends that are dying at sea, I've decided to stay here. … I changed my mind once I heard the real-life experiences of a returnee in the third session. We understood that her experiences were very challenging. We couldn't believe that a person faced that much abuse and torture. I decided to stay after I heard the experiences. [Participant in Community Conversation, Dessie, intervention site]*

For prospective migrants to be able to act on changing their minds, however, they must believe there are enough opportunities in Ethiopia to be able to make a living wage. Many women expressed hopes for more than economic survival, but to "change my life," a

recurring phrase expressing aspirations for a significantly better quality of life. It is impossible to determine how realistic it is for these women to fulfil their hopes within the country, which will depend on a constantly changing mix of individual and family expectations, women's decision making power, and local and national economic climates. Many kinds of respondents highlighted the difficulties in ensuring employment for young Ethiopians in general, and poorly educated prospective or returnee female migrants in particular:

> *Most of them [returnees] … they want to return and work in the Arab countries because they say they will have much better financial success there. [Religious leader, Dessie, intervention site]*

> *There are returnees who came after experiencing different kinds of abuse, but they still want to go back. The reason they want to go back is because they're frustrated with the absence of local job opportunities. [FGD with local government representatives, Addis Ababa]*

Women themselves admitted that migration would always be an option. This was particularly true of returnees, regardless of whether they experienced positive migration or poor mental or physical health consequences:

> *Everyone is migrating because of poverty. If I don't receive a job after the training is over or if the job doesn't pay me a good amount, it will push me to migrate. No one wants to migrate, but they want to see visible changes in their lives. …There are people who changed their lives and became successful. That is why we migrate and die; we want to be like them. We leave and end up facing many problems. [FGD with rehabilitation beneficiaries, Addis Ababa]*

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that among Hotspot participants, self-belief and motivation among those who would prefer not to migrate was clearly bolstered through their participation in IP activities.

> *They helped me understand that I didn't need to go to Arab countries in order to work. They encouraged us to work here with the capital that we have. I felt free after I participated in the program. I was wondering what I was going to do with my life; I was feeling lost, confused and there wasn't peace in my mind. [Community Conversation participant, Kombolcha, intervention site]*

School girls expressed confidence that life in Ethiopia was getting better, with viable opportunities for the future. They talked about committing to graduating from school, resisting peer pressure, and changing the assumption that labour migration is the sole option for adolescent girls.

> *It is useful for me because I understand that migration is not good for me. I have learned that I can change myself by working hard in my own country rather than going abroad. …Now I am sure that it is possible to change your life here in my own country rather than choosing migration as an only option. [Girls' Club member, 15, Dessie, intervention site]*

> *Yes, there's a change. Since we [the ones who took part in the trainings] know that illegal migration is a dangerous thing, we will stay in school and continue our education because we know that education will help us become who we want to be. But the ones that didn't take part in the training might end up thinking that education isn't useful to them, and that they just want to make money. This will result in them thinking that they can migrate, even illegally, just to get money. But we know that we can learn, get a job here and really become assets to our country. Since we know the dangers, we'll focus on our education. The others will just focus on getting money. [School training participant, 15, Kombolcha, intervention site]*

If social norms are indeed changing so that migration is not always considered the "default option," then it is likely that more women will try to support themselves through local opportunities, and a growing number may well succeed. To date, Ethiopia's economy continues to grow, and in all 3 Hotspot sites industrial parks and textile factories are increasing in number. The sustainability of an expanding job market and adequate wages to meet consumer demands, however, remains unpredictable.

Discussion: Going Forward

The Ethiopia Hotspot programme was introduced at an incredibly challenging time, almost concurrently with the federal government's imposition of a total labour migration ban. Following negative media coverage of the deportation of some 200,000 Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia, and the 2015 killing by ISIS of over 20 Ethiopian migrants in Libya, there was little social or political space for discussing how to make migration safer. National campaigns urged Ethiopians not to migrate at all, and although this policy was widely acknowledged to push potential migrants into illegal channels, official policy maintained an emphasis on legal prosecution of anyone who facilitated labour migration and the importance of alternative livelihoods for young people within the country.

Despite this constrained environment, the Hotspot activity was able to implement a wide range of activities through IPs that presented a more nuanced understanding of migration safety, legality, and decision-making. Working with originally hesitant local authorities and community leaders, the programme introduced the concept (and indeed Amharic equivalent) of "safe migration" and provided information on what it meant in practical terms, and how individuals, families and communities could put it into practice once legal migration became an option again. Thus, in early 2018, when the ban was indeed lifted, the Hotspot IPs had already set the ground for safer migration practices. Decision-makers, community members, and prospective migrants were clearly all significantly more aware of measures they could take prior to departure, during transit, and at destination to reduce their chances of exploitation. At the same time, a cohort of prospective and returnee women obtained skills that could either support them in Ethiopia while they prepared for departure (or instead of migration) or potentially increased their chances of securing better employment abroad.

For the most part, the programme followed its own Theory of Change, by providing education, empowerment, skills, and awareness at multiple levels across sites and thus contributing to improved knowledge, confidence, and public engagement. Activities were largely acceptable to participants and stakeholders, with the possible exceptions of home to home visits in Amhara and group based business support in Addis Ababa. Strengths that were highlighted included the applied, practical nature of safe migration provided; inclusion of returnees in raising awareness within their communities; bringing government and local authorities together and supporting existing training initiatives; and the quality of business and financial management curricula. Weaker areas of the programme were considered to be some (but not all) of the vocational courses, support in setting up self-sustaining businesses, and reaching all segments of populations in need (including those that might be most likely to opt for unsafe migration, such as young men, rural families, and parents who did not permit their daughters to attend school programmes).

There was strong evidence that the activities led to increased and *better quality* awareness of unsafe migration, including what makes it unsafe and what consequences might have been avoided. Certain basic pre-departure measures such as opening bank accounts for remittances and familiarisation of household appliances and products were easily understood and recalled. Women's confidence, assertiveness and self-esteem also seemed to be bolstered by many of the programmatic activities, including school clubs, community conversations, and business development support. This confidence extended to feeling better able to make decisions about migration, including the realisation that acquiring new livelihood skills could prove useful both within Ethiopia *and* during migration abroad. The Hotspot thus appeared to widen women's view of their options in a way that was empowering rather than naïve, although this was tempered by respondents' acknowledgment that in reality, the decision whether to migrate or not would ultimately be shaped by broader economic realities. Other community members also reported understanding migration against a wider context, and thinking more seriously about the balance of risks and benefits. Although perceived change was discernible in both intervention and comparison sites of Amhara, comparison sites appeared to have had significantly less exposure to good information about safe migration and respondents there described programmes akin to the Hotspot model when asked what kinds of programmes they would find useful.

The results of expanding knowledge and awareness does appear to be more informed decision-making and a social environment more conductive to both safe migration and the choice to remain in Ethiopia. However, actual practices and behaviours were not described adequately to know whether these are really evolving to become safer and better thought through; furthermore, the policy change allowing people to openly discuss their migration plans was still very new at the time of data collection. Fieldwork found evidence of small businesses among returnees operating and seemingly making a profit but these are similarly still too few (and nascent) to identify a trend in viable local economic activity. Some components of the recommended messages for preparing prospective migrants, including learning some Arabic, bringing a phone and obtaining a local sim card, carrying foreign currency during the journey, and setting up social media links to family and peers do not appear to feature in any of the Hotspot activities. Again, this is likely to be due to the lack of a legal framework allowing discussion of specific safeguards until now.

The 2018 policy change is a massively positive development for the Hotspot programme as it moved forward into the next phase of its implementation. Summarised by an IP staff member in Amhara: The lifting of the ban is an advantage for the program. The Hotspot can now build on its strengths and proactively work to fill remaining gaps. Its established presence "on the ground", and the fact that the IPs and their activities are well-recognised, favourably perceived, and linked to community and government authorities puts the programme in an excellent position to increase its potential impact. Its particular value is likely to lie in furthering understanding of safe migration, with greater attention to its practical details, and what specific measures prospective migrants should take as they consider moving abroad. The Hotspot has the expertise to ensure discussions around migration now move significantly beyond the "legal" and "illegal" dichotomy, and clearly delineate components of "safety" including what migrants and their families should do *in addition to* and *beyond* the basic requirements set by government policy.

Furthermore, while lifting the ban has been broadly welcomed, community levels of trust in the government's ability to ensure safety throughout the migration process may be unrealistic. Particularly in the early years, safe migration procedures are likely to be inconsistently implemented, with weak controls and few legal sanctions against non-compliance. IPs should help assess where risks still exist, and where government systems remain inadequate. A useful role for the Hotspot would be to put coordinated pressure on the relevant emerging institutions responsible for setting up legal migration mechanisms, for example by pushing for safeguard checks, routine monitoring of registered agencies, and supervision of staff tasked with processing pre-departure migrants.

Now that criteria and pre-departure requirements have been defined, there is a role for the Hotspot in providing technical support to the government institutions that provide pre-departure training. Quality assurance, assistance in developing the content and delivery of new curricula, mentoring trainers, and assessing preparedness of those who complete the trainings would all be useful contributions through the Hotspot. Finally, the introduction of specified criteria for migrants means there will continue to be illegal brokers and facilitators for those wishing to migrate who have not completed Grade 8 or are below legal age. The IPs already have experience in disseminating practical information throughout communities in ways that reach even those considering illegal forms of migration and should thus continue to try to ensure that the most vulnerable migrants still benefit from knowledge and skills for protecting themselves. At the same time, the Hotspot is in a good position to continue to influence prevailing social norms so that meeting the legal criteria becomes more highly valued than seeking to circumvent them.

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