



## Ethiopia Hotspot

## 2016 Annual Report

## ETHIOPIA HOTSPOT OVERVIEW

### Program goal and objectives:

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#### Goal:

To ensure that the migration of women and girls to the Middle East for domestic work is safer.

#### Objectives:

1. Generate improved understanding and practice of safer migration amongst source communities.
2. Develop and improve economic alternatives for the poorest and most likely to migrate women and girls.
3. Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to empower and coalesce in support of potential and returnee migrant workers.

### SLAVERY RISKS AMONG ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS

- Ethiopia is experiencing unprecedented and increasing levels of migration of women and girls to the Middle East for domestic work.
- In transit and on arrival, female migrants are at high risk of abuse, exploitation and of falling into situations of slavery.
- Many women returning from situations of servitude in the Middle East are in dire need of mental health support and other services.



## 1. OPERATING CONTEXT



Following the Ethiopian government's decision in December 2015 to lift the two-year ban on migration to the Middle East for domestic work, in 2016 the government assigned four national offices to lead its migration-related work. The four responsible entities include the previously responsible Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), as well as the newly appointed Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Education (MoE), and the Small Scale Micro Enterprise Agency (SSMEA). Each entity has a uniquely mandated responsibility within the migration sector.

Through the work of this newly established procedure, Ethiopia plans to process visas for 100,000 citizens to work in Middle Eastern countries in the Ethiopian fiscal year, with the aforementioned entities overseeing different components of the process. Furthermore, to promote the welfare of overseas workers, the government has established bilateral agreements; assigned government workers at various regional levels to provide leadership and oversight of services to potential overseas workers; and is working with local technical and vocational schools to conduct skills training for potential migrants in care giving and household work. Additionally, the government has planned to create 3.5 million internal jobs within the fiscal year, in order to promote livelihood alternatives to migration.

This year the hotspot grew, adding six new community-based partners in the Amhara region, a strategic area of focus given that many women and girls from Amhara seek to migrate to the Middle East for domestic work. The hotspot now has a total of 13 community-based partners, spread among the country's capital of Addis Ababa and the Amhara region. Focusing on these two regions strengthens the relationship between civil society and government and bolsters civil society's response to migration concerns, which is a central aspect of the hotspot's approach.

## 2. HEADLINE RESULTS



This was an exciting year for the Freedom Fund's Ethiopia hotspot, as we witnessed positive shifts in attitudes, approaches and policies concerning safer migration of Ethiopian women and girls to the Middle East for domestic work. The hotspot continued to advance safer migration approaches in Ethiopia through community education, economic empowerment, reintegration of returnees and coordination with government officials.

### 11,849 community freedom group members supported

In 2016, the Ethiopia hotspot provided support through community freedom groups to 11,849 individuals. Local community-based partners supported a variety of groups, including women's self-help groups, multi-sectoral groups, community conversation groups and school groups to help prevent drop-outs and promote safer migration messages. These groups provide an opportunity to share information on safer migration and prevention of human trafficking, as well as to develop government services that will be available to assist women who choose to migrate. In Amhara, one local partner has engaged over 4,000 individuals in community conversation groups in 2016 and developed an accompanying manual for forming and facilitating the groups specifically to the region's context. The manual covers topics such as migration concepts, the push and pull factors of human trafficking and mechanisms for trafficking prevention.

### 4,772 beneficiaries provided with social or legal services

In 2016, the Ethiopia hotspot partners provided social or legal services to 5,192 individuals. One of the partners based in Addis provided services to over 700 women returning from overseas employment. These women have experienced trauma, and many are survivors of human trafficking. To help address returnees' many needs, a comprehensive set of services are provided that includes medical treatment, individual and group counselling, and recreational services such as sports, yoga, storytelling and traditional dancing.

### 468 individuals graduated from vocational training courses

During 2016, 458 women and girls graduated from vocational training programs that helped equip them with skills needed to find employment in Ethiopia or abroad. One of our local partners in Addis provided vocational training for jobs based in Ethiopia with a certificate program focused on housekeeping. Thirty students graduated from this program, mostly women who were involved in sex work in the capital city, and they found employment at various local hotels. The program included the skills needed for the certificate as well as training on customer service, entrepreneurship and business creativity.

### 373 people earned new income or started a microenterprise

The Ethiopia hotspot helped 373 individuals earn a new income or start a microenterprise in 2016. One of the hotspot's Addis-based partners provided seed capital and training for 56 individuals to start a business. These individuals started small-scale food businesses, began offering hair styling services, or became taxi drivers after receiving the proper licensure. These small-scale businesses allow women to generate income at home, which they may use to cover household expenses or save for training should they choose to seek employment overseas.



Image: The Freedom Fund

### 3. ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC DRIVERS OF SLAVERY

In 2016, there were three key areas in which the Ethiopia hotspot contributed to systemic change: 1) changing Ethiopia's migration approaches, 2) creating a more comprehensive approach to mental health services and 3) strengthening linkages between local leaders to promote safer migration.

#### "Stop Migration": shifting the approach

In 2016, the hotspot continued to strengthen relationships with government and coordinate approaches to migration issues. As our partners worked with government officials, many of them recognized the important need for a different approach to migration policy. Previously, the slogan "Stop Migration" had been used and widely circulated in order to prevent migration and the subsequent labour exploitation and human trafficking of overseas workers.

After the lifting of the migration ban in December 2015, the government has begun to incorporate more practical prevention measures, developing processes and systems for migration as well as services to assist potential overseas workers in preparing for their migration journey. In 2016, government officials joined meetings with hotspot representatives, and they also attended a Freedom Fund sponsored learning trip to the Philippines to understand how specific policies and government systems can help ensure the safety of workers and the economic benefits for local communities.

#### Mental health roundtable

Providing mental health services to workers returning to Ethiopia after working overseas is crucial for reintegrating those who experienced trauma as a result of exploitation and trafficking. Although the Ethiopia hotspot partners provide these services, it is clear that there needs to be a stronger and more systemic approach to ensure that comprehensive and survivor-informed services are provided.

To promote change in this area, this year the hotspot conducted a mental health roundtable in Addis Ababa that brought together representatives from civil society, the health sector, university medical schools, leading mental health professionals, multilateral groups and Ethiopian government officials. During this meeting, it was identified that there is a significant gap between the need for mental health services and the availability of mental health services for those who are returning to Ethiopia having suffered a range of traumatic experiences.

This roundtable enabled us to push forward discussions on mental health with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to garner more government attention on the need for mental health services. This will be an area to continue to strategise on and push forward within the coming years.



Image, above: The Freedom Fund

## A network of iddirs

One key strategy the hotspot has been employing since its inception is working with local leadership to help systemically promote better knowledge of safer migration. To that end, one partner works with ‘iddirs’, an influential traditional social structure within every Ethiopian community that has legal license to act on social issues. In many cases, the actions of iddirs are more powerful than the police and court system. Our partner has worked with the iddirs to create a network that ensures there is consistent coverage of safer migration messaging through an already established and trusted local system.

## 4. ENHANCING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY

### Strengthening linkages between the government and civil society

With the 2016 expansion of the program to Ethiopia’s Amhara region, the hotspot now supports 13 locally-based partners, forming a network of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that are at the forefront of interventions aimed at promoting safer migration. In the areas where our partners operate, they are recognised by government officials and routinely engage with them to assist in planning for and delivering migration programs.

In both Addis Ababa and Amhara, the partners have developed communities of practice where they meet on a quarterly and monthly basis, respectively, to share lessons, experiences and best practices. Through these communities of practice, CSOs communicate regularly with local government officials, sharing their challenges and successes on the ground and informing local officials of migrants’ and returnees’ needs. As migration policy is currently being reviewed and revised by government officials, the communities of practice provide a unique opportunity for civil society and government to collaborate in promoting safer migration and helping develop migration policies that are informed by local experiences.

## Learning from the Philippines about how safer migration can be systemically addressed

The Freedom Fund sponsored learning trip to the Philippines in November 2016 included an Ethiopian delegation: six government representatives and four CSO leaders. The trip provided a comprehensive introduction to the Philippine overseas employment programs, the issues and challenges faced in operating these systems, and more importantly, the wide-ranging efforts to better protect Philippine migrant workers at different points of the migration cycle – pre-departure, onsite, and upon their return to the Philippines.

During the trip, the Ethiopian delegation observed how the Philippines has developed effective and efficient processes to ensure the safety of overseas workers; how migration has been used to promote economic development; and how they work with families of overseas workers to ensure remittances can be advantageously used. Prior to the trip, the delegation met to discuss the priorities of the visit and determine the process for how learnings would be used and shared with others. The trip contributed to the capacity development of the CSO leaders, as they learned more about migration mechanisms through which CSOs can work with the government to promote the safety of workers, while simultaneously allowing them to strengthen relationships with Ethiopian officials. Since returning to Ethiopia, some NGOs have been in greater contact with officials to assist in providing services to survivors of human trafficking. A final report from the trip will be produced in early 2017 with recommendations from the delegation on specific areas in which learnings from the Philippines may be applied in Ethiopia.

## Improving civil society approaches to monitoring and evaluation

In order to assist our partners to strengthen their approaches to safer migration programming, in 2016 the Freedom Fund worked with all 13 partners to provide capacity building on monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Capacity building on M&E was central for the hotspot, given the importance of good data management to enable organisations to have information available to routinely review and use to make informed decisions about safer migration programming and service delivery to program participants. A technical provider worked with each individual partner to assess their M&E systems and create a report that suggests areas for improvement. The technical provider also met collectively with each sub-hotspot to discuss best practices and delivered a tailored M&E training. The final M&E training for the Amhara-based partners is scheduled for early 2017.

## 5. LEARNING

### Collaboration is key for systems change

Understanding how to address safer migration within Ethiopia has required increased collaboration to promote change. The Ethiopia hotspot has done this by developing communities of practice with hotspot partners, working directly with government offices in the areas where our partners work and aligning with policymakers on implementation. The lifting of the migration ban has provided the opportunity to have discussions on improving migration outcomes. Even before the ban was lifted, we focused on coordinating and establishing relationships with officials at various governmental levels, enabling us to be action-oriented once the ban was lifted. We have seen how these open lines of communication are allowing us to work together for better outcomes for overseas workers.

### Using existing community and government structures allows for sustainable dissemination of safer migration messages

As noted above, the hotspot has worked with local community structures, called iddirs, to help disseminate safer migration messages in a sustainable manner. The Freedom Fund believes that local community members are best placed to identify and execute local solutions. Through support to local partners, we were able to assist these local structures to develop a greater understanding on the need to impart their communities with information about safer migration and to deliver tailored messages that resonate within their communities. The importance and feasibility of working with these structures became especially clear this year, when we saw 80 percent of the iddirs in one of our implementation sites in Addis adopt safer migration objectives as a component of their bylaws. This helps ensure that safer migration messaging will continue to be a component of the iddirs' work as long as they exist and/or as long as there is a need for such messages.

### The value of learning trips

In November 2016, the Freedom Fund sponsored a learning visit for a delegation of ten Ethiopian government and NGO representatives to the Philippines. The visit proved to be exceptionally valuable in that it provided an opportunity to ask questions of Philippine government officials and discuss how these ideas could be contextualised for Ethiopia. The trip demonstrated the civil society and government officials could work together. At the end of the trip, members of the delegation were asked to complete a brief assessment. Overall, the assessment showed that participants were very pleased with the trip and found it beneficial. Given that this was the first learning trip for the hotspot, there were several key takeaways captured that we would want to consider for future learning trips.



## 6. LOOKING AHEAD

Key priorities identified for 2017 include:

### Philippines trip follow-up

In early 2017, a meeting will be held with the delegation that attended the Freedom Fund sponsored Philippines trip. The delegation is meeting to collectively produce a report of recommendations for the Ethiopia government as well as determine to which government offices they will present the report. The report will include key areas in which Ethiopia's migration policy may be adapted to promote more effective migration processes and help strengthen services provided to overseas workers and their families.

### London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) research report update

Throughout 2016, LSHTM has worked with hotspot partners to conduct research on the community's attitudes on migration, as well as evaluate the partners' approach to safer migration programming. In 2016, baseline data was gathered from some of the Amhara partners, with additional data collection of the remaining partners to occur in 2017.

Baseline data for Addis partners was gathered in 2015. A priority for the hotspot research is that it is routinely shared with partners and that they can provide feedback on research methods and findings. In early 2017, partners will have the opportunity, for the first time, to collectively receive an update from the researchers on the baseline findings and provide feedback. This feedback may be used to inform the research process moving forward to help ensure that the data gathered is usable and relevant for partners. The update also provides the space for partners to reflect on data gathered to date, and discuss how this emerging evidence base can be used to inform current activities.

### **Nepal learning visit**

In the first half of 2017, a learning visit to Nepal will be conducted with our Ethiopian partners. To help strengthen and support Ethiopian CSO activities in promoting safer migration, we will organise a learning visit for Ethiopian CSOs to learn how Nepal is promoting safer migration of women and girls to the Middle East, especially those migrating for domestic work. Trip participants will learn about the progress that the Nepal government made at the policy level to ensure the rights of migrant labourers, as well as understand the pre-departure measures Nepal has put in place to empower aspiring migrant labourers. The goal of the trip is to promote a meaningful exchange of ideas, practices and theories on migration and trafficking that can be shared to increase the effectiveness and innovation of programs both in Ethiopia and Nepal.

### **Establish a national migration platform**

The national migration platform will bring together government officials and civil society organisations, including the hotspot partners. The main purpose of the platform is to increase collaboration among different groups working to address migration. The platform will strategically focus on resource sharing and mobilisation; sharing of information among civil society and government; exchanges of best practices and lessons learned; and coordination of efforts.



## 8. CASE STUDY

### Zebo's story

Zebo, 23, grew up in a rural village in Ethiopia's Amhara region. When she was 14, she was forced to drop out of school and get married. Feeling pressure from her peers and husband, she planned to migrate to the Middle East to find work. As she prepared to migrate, she was approached by an illegal broker. "I had my passport at hand and I had no information whether it is legal or not," she recalls.

While Zebo was still making preparations to leave, she heard that one of the Freedom Fund's partners, NRHSDO, provided migration training within the local community. She met the facilitator and attended peer leader training for five days, where she learned about legal migration and safe travel. The training convinced her to wait until Ethiopia's migration ban was lifted before traveling to the Middle East. Zebo proudly notes, "I am now a peer educator in my community. I teach my peers to follow legal channels and wait until the ban is lifted to migrate". She is thankful that the training gave her the space to think and plan for her future.



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