



ETHIOPIA

Hotspot report

April 2023



Front cover: Returnee migrants from the Middle East celebrate graduating from their vocational skills courses provided by AGAR Ethiopia Charitable Society.
Photo credit: Genaye Eshetu/The Freedom Fund/AGAR Ethiopia Charitable Society

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ACRONYMS

BoJ	Bureau of Justice
BoLEID	Bureau of Labour, Economy, Industry and Development
BoWSA	Bureau of Women and Social Affairs
BPDO	Beza Posterity Development Organisation
CDW	Child Domestic Worker
CVM	Comunita Volontari per il Mondo
ECCSDCO	Ethiopia Catholic Church Social and Development Commission
EDA	Emmanuel Development Association
HCE-RDE	Hope for Children Ethiopia - Relief and Development Association
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLS	Ministry of Labour and Skills
MoWSA	Ministry of Women and Social Affairs
MPC	Migration Partnership Coalition (a subset of the NPC)
NPC	National Partnership Coalition on Migration
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
PADET	Professional Alliance for Development Ethiopia
PEMS	Program to End Modern Slavery
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America

OPERATING CONTEXT

Displacement and migration

Significant push factors in 2022 – including conflict, severe drought, economic crisis and high inflation – led to substantial internal displacement and forced many Ethiopians to migrate through different routes. The migration system in Ethiopia remains inadequately resourced and the Gulf countries – regardless of whether migration is through formal or informal channels – continue to present a high risk of exploitation and trafficking for Ethiopian workers.

Tigray conflict

The conflict has been the most significant push factor for migration and internal displacement. The impact of the conflict has been felt across Tigray and bordering regions, including Amhara: according to the IOM, the number of internally displaced people from Amhara reached 4.5 million in February 2022. On 2 November 2022, the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the Government of Ethiopia formally agreed to a permanent cessation of hostilities.

Vulnerability to exploitation

UN experts reported that women and girls in Tigray, Afar and Amhara were increasingly vulnerable to trafficking for sexual exploitation as they fled the conflict¹. Internal trafficking in persons is not currently acknowledged by the Government of Ethiopia, leading to limited data or reporting of instances. However, as most CDWs are migrants from rural areas, there is likely high crossover between migration of CDWs and trafficking of CDWs from rural to urban centres.

Returning migrants

Another significant trend has been the forced return of Ethiopians from the Gulf countries. Between January and October 2022, the IOM registered over 100,000 Ethiopian returnees. The majority (71%) came from the KSA. The number of migrants forcibly returned from the KSA since 2017 has now reached half a million. The IOM reported that approximately one-third of all returnees from the KSA originate from areas devastated by the Tigray conflict.²

Trafficking and irregular migration

The transnational migration situation of Ethiopia has raised new levels of concern in government. Recent horrific reports of hundreds of Ethiopian migrants found dead along the 'Southern route' towards South Africa led the Government of Ethiopia to take renewed actions and make migration and trafficking one of its priorities. In December 2022, the Government organised in Hossana, SNNPR region, a high-level awareness-raising event in the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister, the deputy head of the Prosperity party, regional heads and ambassadors to declare combatting trafficking and irregular migration the highest priority of the nation. The Freedom Fund team in Ethiopia was formally invited by the government to participate in this event.

PROGRESS TOWARDS SYSTEMS CHANGE

Policy/legislative change

Victims Assistance Fund

At the federal level, the National Partnership Coalition on Migration – which includes members from both central and regional government departments and civil society groups – developed and ratified a directive on the Victims Assistance Fund, which is critical in ensuring that trafficking victims are supported and able to testify against traffickers.

Anti-trafficking regulations

1 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/10/ethiopia-critical-moment-strengthen-fight-against-trafficking-tigray-afar>

2 <https://crisisresponse.iom.int/response/ethiopia-crisis-response-plan-2023>

At the regional level, local authorities – including in Addis Ababa – have taken several steps to implement Proclamation 1178 (P1178) on anti-trafficking. Under the Bureau of Justice, regions have set up Partnership Coalitions as decentralised government structures and produced directives and codes for the implementation of P1178. The Addis Ababa Bureau of Justice, after influencing from our partners in 2021, established in 2022 the sub-city level ‘Migration Partnership Coalition’, who’s focus is the prevention and controlling of human trafficking and smuggling of persons. The establishment of a sub-city level Partnership Coalition is expected to improve the functioning of the migration system by forcing local authorities to put in place local regulations for the practical implementation of the proclamation on anti-trafficking. This will, for example, improve the oversight of private bodies like recruiters and training colleges, as well as allow local authorities to access funds from central government to fund anti-trafficking initiatives.

Domestic workers’ rights

The Ministry of Labour and Skills has under discussion a proposal to recognise domestic work as an occupation under the labour law. If this happens, it would for the first time give domestic workers rights and protections (such as minimum wage, maximum hours, leave and sick pay entitlements) under the Ethiopian labour law 1156/2019. This would also be a significant step forward for CDWs who, as young workers under the labour law, could have enhanced provisions to ensure they are protected differently from adult workers.

Political will/public awareness/attitude change

Awareness campaign

Girl Effect in Ethiopia designed a TV campaign which focused primarily on working hours and access to education for CDWs. It has reached a TV audience of around 6 million households across the country. The campaign was accompanied by sessions with employers. A follow-up phase of the campaign included a social media campaign, with further on-the-ground activation sessions and TV spots. The campaign wrapped up in December 2022 with a sign-on pledge for employers. All content related to the campaign has now been published, with episodes available on [Youtube](#) and further information on Instagram ([here](#) and [here](#)), [Facebook](#) and Telegram. One Freedom Fund partner commented:

The campaign played a critical role in raising awareness among the community, especially employers, on increasing access to education and improving working hours of CDWs. We found the methodology of the campaign to be very engaging and fun so that the points raised would easily sink into the minds of the participants and not be forgotten. The pledge form required participants to sign on the agreed points of awareness and is a reminder of the commitment to support CDWs in the households.

Government performance

Capacity building

The Freedom Fund remained an active member of the National Partnership Coalition on Migration at the federal level. The coalition is led by a Secretariat at the Ministry of Justice with whom the Freedom Fund consulted on terms of reference for building their staff’s capacity in child and survivor-friendly interviewing techniques during investigations in human trafficking cases. This is part of the effort towards enabling stakeholders to better understand the legal framework relating to CDWs.

Migration system

Freedom Fund partners successfully engaged government in improving the migration system. In particular, our partner EDA secured government buy-in for new policies that improve pre-departure processes for prospective migrants. This has resulted in the Dessie City Administration in Amhara reducing the waiting time for issuing certificates of completion for pre-departure training from up to six months to 15 days.

Child domestic workers

This year has seen notable changes in practices and ways of working on the issue of CDWs at decentralised levels of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs. For example, the decentralised authorities

in Addis Ababa have appointed focal points in a number of local offices to conduct joint monitoring visits to CDWs with Freedom Fund partners and community volunteers and follow up closely on cases. This has resulted in an increased number of children referred to services and rescued from situations of exploitation.

Trafficking

There has been an increase in investigations and convictions of human traffickers in 2022 compared to the previous year. In support of this effort, Freedom Fund partners have been working to establish sub-city and regional Partnership Coalitions to combat trafficking with requests for budget allocations. As of December 2022, Freedom Fund partners were active in both set-up and technical support for these coalitions in Addis Ababa, Dessie, Kombolcha and Woldia.

Business performance

Training for migration services

As part of our support for strengthening overseas employment and migration services, during the year 75 Technical and Vocational Education and Training centres and instructors were trained on overseas employment to facilitate better training for employment agency staff on domestic work for overseas markets. It is estimated that 38,000 migrant workers travelled in 2022 to the Middle East for domestic work facilitated by 300 overseas employment agencies.

Monitoring and legal enforcement

The Ministry of Labour and Skills has been conducting an increased number of monitoring visits to overseas employment agencies. This contributed to better enforcement of the law, with outcomes reported by our partners including the revocation of licences and/or the issuance of written warnings to non-compliant agencies. However, a significant number of overseas employment agencies are yet to be monitored.

Community organisation

Survivor-led organisations

The first survivor-led organisation in Ethiopia, KASMA, is now formally an implementing partner of the Freedom Fund. In 2022, the Freedom Fund supported KASMA with building their organisational structures and systems, capacity-building and training of their staff and volunteers, and the development of accountability standards to their participants (returnees/survivors).

Domestic workers' groups

The Freedom Fund supported two Ethiopian domestic workers' groups in Lebanon and Kuwait with the aim of strengthening the organisational capacity of these groups to support Ethiopian domestic workers in destination countries. This also provides the opportunity to link returnees' groups in Ethiopia with Ethiopian activist groups in destination countries in order to better coordinate support and advocacy efforts and so generate better migration outcomes for Ethiopian women.

HOTSPOT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Headline results

Safer Migration

- More than **14,000 people** participated in community activities on safer migration, through community conversations, school activity clubs, survivors' empowerment, training for media professionals, and awareness-raising events.

- Over **140 recruitment agencies** received monitoring visits from the local government Bureau of Labour, Industry, Economy and Development. This led to 178 sanctions against recruitment agencies and 72 licenses revoked.
- A full internal **audit of the supervision of recruitment agencies** by the Bureau of Labour, Industry, Economy and Development was undertaken, after partners presented evidence of gaps in recruitment agencies' registration and of recruitment practices.
- **Guidelines** to assess viable occupations in Ethiopia including domestic work, which will make it a professional occupation, were issued by the Ministry of Labour and Skills.
- National **domestic worker unions, networks and associations** increased their membership and took a more active role in protecting and promoting safe domestic work. Their ability to confront local authorities and employers in a coordinated way, in order to receive timely payments, has increased.
- **Five domestic worker associations** were founded, supported by partners and led by returnees, to better represent returnees from the Middle East.
- Sub-city and regional **Partnership Coalitions** (local bodies of the National Partnership Coalition on Migration) have been established in Addis Ababa and Amhara with strong representation of five of our partners.
- Over **600 women and children** were reintegrated using a standard operating procedures model developed by our partner Agar.
- **638 women returnees** are earning sustainable new income from vocational training provided with the support of partners.

Child Domestic Work

- Over **6,500 employers** were reached through engagement activities, with partners' monitoring data showing improved behaviours and treatment of CDWs.
- A **norms and behaviour change campaign** was successfully launched with TV spots, a digital campaign and on-the-ground activation activities.
- **Referral systems to prevent child trafficking** were successfully set up in two bus stations with over 200 transport workers trained to detect cases of trafficking and consequently over 100 children referred to relevant services.
- **556 CDWs** were received at shelters and provided with after-care support.
- **205 CDWs** were provided vocational training.
- **361 judges, police, prosecutors and social affairs officers** have been trained on how to protect CDWs and enforce the rule of law.
- **14 convictions** against employers were secured.

PROGRESS TOWARDS HOTSPOT OBJECTIVES

Hotspot Objective 1: Prevent the exploitation of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers going to the Middle East

GI indicators Safer Migration	2022
# of beneficiaries provided with social and/or legal services	3,027
# of individuals graduating from vocational training	1,016
# of changes in policy	4
# of enforcement actions ordered against recruiters	178 enforcement actions (including 72 licences revoked)

Building community understanding of safer migration

- Partners like ANPPCAN worked with communities to **introduce by-laws at the kebele level** to prevent community members from sending any of their family members through irregular migration routes, as well as obliging community members to report possible traffickers.
- Partners including EDA, Hiwot and BDPO have been working on **changing media narratives** around migration and trafficking. This included enhancing the capacity of journalists to understand and interpret official migration and trafficking reports. Partners aim for migration and trafficking to become a mainstream issue in the Ethiopian media, and so to improve understanding nationwide of the extent of irregular migration and of safer migration options.
- Almost **20 schools** in Addis Ababa and Amhara are ensuring that migration and related issues become part of weekly discussion sessions among students to ensure that students stay at school and are discouraged from dropping out to take irregular routes to migrate.

Improving the functioning of the migration system in Ethiopia, such as supporting government responses, promoting fair and transparent recruitment practices, and strengthening law enforcement actions

- Our partner CVM has reported that since the rollout of a standard **monitoring tool for recruitment agencies**, the Bureau of Labour, Industry, Economy and Development, which is using the tool, has noticed an improvement in the transparency and accountability of recruitment agencies to comply with the laws on overseas employment.
- Through contributions from partners, the **Migration Partnership Coalition for Amhara region** now meets regularly and has requested from the government an assigned budget for human trafficking issues.
- The **Addis Ababa City Migration Partnership Coalition (MPC)** submitted a formal letter to the judiciary council in Addis Ababa requesting legal issues and prosecution of traffickers be handled at regional level. The task force continues to intercept trafficked children and conducts reunifications.
- As a result of the strengthened MPC in Amhara region, eight **human traffickers were prosecuted** in 2022 and are awaiting a judgement.
- The Addis Ababa MPC met with the mayor of Addis Ababa, to request a **budget allocation** and clear plan set by the coalition to better combat trafficking.
- **Training on safer migration and decent work regulations** was provided for the Bureau of Labour, Industry, Economy and Development, private employment agencies and domestic workers. This facilitated a face-to-face dialogue among these groups where each body was able to explain its challenges while engaging with the other participants. A number of issues were discussed including the inappropriate ways some government officials and agencies handle potential migrants' cases. These bodies also received further training on safer migration and decent work to enhance their understanding on these issues.
- Our partner BPDO worked with and supported local woreda level **MPCs in Amhara region**. The partner created a platform for the coalitions to meet several times to discuss and design their plans in response to human trafficking. The coalitions are now more proactive in responding to cases, and there is better investigation, follow-up and better reporting of actions. As a result, in the last quarter of 2022, the regional MPC was able to intercept 183 people in two towns, Kombolcha and Kemissie, in Amhara. Partners have confirmed that these people were being held against their will to be trafficked out of the country. This has led to four convictions for trafficking.
- More attention is being given by the **Government of Ethiopia** to the issue of irregular migration and to creating job opportunities for returnees/survivors. This is evidenced by a number of initiatives, including: a workshop held in Addis Ababa in November 2022 where both government and non-governmental actors in Ethiopia validated the National Referral Mechanism for the protection of migrants in vulnerable situations and victims of trafficking; the signing by the Ministry of Labour and Skills of an agreement with two service providers, First Consult Ethiopia and JAM-BO Cleaning Services, to facilitate the employment of 5,000 deported Ethiopian citizens.

Strengthening the capacity of civil society actors to influence and hold the government accountable

- Our partner CVM promoted and advocated for **recognition of domestic worker as a profession** through international, national, regional and local level platforms.
- CVM hosted a **national workshop on safe migration and decent work** to design a special law/regulation for domestic work and draft a standardised/model contract for private employment agencies and employers to use in both transnational and domestic settings, which would include basic provisions for decent work.
- Our partner EDA secured buy-in for new policies that improve the **pre-departure processes for prospective migrants**. Through technical and experience-sharing sessions, the Dessie City Administration agreed to a 15-day turnaround period for issuing certificates of completion for pre-departure training, thus minimising the wait for those who seek to migrate through legal channels.
- Partners are starting to **challenge corruption in the migration system**. One partner is currently supporting two investigations into illegal practices within government departments affecting prospective migrants. One investigation is looking at the soliciting of fees for pre-departure training certificates (which are compulsory for regular migration), while the other is looking at collaboration between unregistered recruiters and Ministry of Labour and Skills staff in sending migrants to the Middle East.
- The Ethiopian government is currently drafting a **new migration policy** and the Freedom Fund team in Ethiopia has been invited to provide input based on one of our programs as a model for comprehensive reintegration.
- Partners organised workshops that facilitated the **establishment of Partnership Coalitions** on migration – which were previously present only at the city level – at sub-city level, thus bringing the system closer to the communities.
- The Freedom Fund and our partner Agar were selected as members of the National Emergency Coordination Centre, a high-level national platform where organisations coordinate responses to crisis situations. This includes **crisis response for forced deportations of domestic workers** from the Middle East.

Improving access to and quality of reintegration services for returnees

- A lot of **advocacy work** has been done this year by domestic worker associations in Ethiopia to secure compensation for and improve the rights of domestic workers. This includes bringing legal cases for non-payment of wages. Domestic worker associations also worked with 97 private employment agencies in 2022 to improve recruitment practices. Additionally, Freedom Fund partner CVM organised a national workshop in early 2022 where guidelines on domestic work were presented by the Amhara region. These are intended to ensure the safety and security of domestic workers by pushing for formal recognition of domestic workers' rights and within that, the rights of young workers. During the last quarter of 2022, a couple of other regions produced a similar draft directive that they will implement in 2023.
- 90 women returnees were enrolled to join the **employment scheme** provided by Hope Enterprise and Sister Yemisrach service providers in 2022. The Bureau of Labour, Industry, Economy and Development at woreda level has proven to be an important partner in providing referrals for project participants. 96% of participants are referred by government.
- A number of **support services** that aim to remove barriers faced by survivors are being provided to participants, including day care, language skills, financial literacy and counselling.
- 159 women and children were **repatriated from Lebanon** and reintegrated in 2022. Of these, 55 women successfully completed a vocational training course and 37 women are now earning an income from employment and/or from a new business that they started.
- An additional 372 returnees – a large number were **deportees from Saudi Arabia** – were supported by our partner AGAR through the Freedom Fund's emergency response fund in 2022.
- The Freedom Fund also commissioned a **research study in Lebanon, Bahrain and Kuwait** which helped identify two organisations of migrant domestic workers that we started funding in the last quarter of 2022. The aim of this work is to support the migrant worker community with service provision and through advocacy work wherever possible.

Hotspot Objective 2: Improve child domestic workers' working conditions and reduce domestic servitude of Ethiopian girls

GI indicators	January to December 2022
# of lives impacted	3,195
# of beneficiaries provided with social and/or legal services	2,327
# of children reintegrated	262
# of legal cases assisted	36
# of convictions	14

Influencing the behaviour of key stakeholders, primarily formal and informal recruiters, transporters and employers

- In 2022, partners worked with different stakeholders to **change the attitudes and behaviours of employers, community members and recruiters** of CDWs. Partners actively engaged community members, and employers in particular, through activities including community conversations, face-to-face meetings and direct outreach to employers. In total, over 6,500 employers were engaged with directly during the year. Outreach work is primarily conducted by community volunteers, with support from local staff of the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs in cases where there are abuses, protection concerns and/or resistance from employers.
- Over **5,000 employers** agreed during the reporting period to implement improved conditions for children in domestic work, such as letting them attend catch-up education classes or implementing better working hours.
- **CDWs reported improved working conditions.** For example, children reported being able to visit their families, or being invited to sit at the table for meals with the rest of the employer's family. One CDW said: "I'm currently attending extension/night school classes, but I have a promise of being transferred to regular school shift. That means a lot to me." One Freedom Fund partner interviewed 135 employers and 115 CDWs in the last quarter of 2022 and confirmed significant improvements reported by both employers and CDWs on matters related to payment of salaries or quality and quantity of food provided to CDWs. However, heavy workload or insufficient breaks were still being reported by almost a quarter of the children interviewed.
- The **social norms campaign** was successfully rolled out in 2022 with TV spots and on-the-ground activities. The campaign featured a sign-on pledge for employers to fill in and take home. The pledge included behaviours that had been underpinned by the messaging of the campaign, including limiting working hours for CDWs, supporting their access to essential services and enrolling them in school. Over 1,200 employers signed the pledge. Partners will follow up in 2023 to understand how employers have acted on their commitments.
- **Training and engagement of transport workers** in key bus station hubs in Addis Ababa has proven an effective approach in getting children at risk referred by transport workers. In 2022, 225 transport workers were trained and consequently, 103 children were referred by transport workers.
- **Local schools** were also engaged to help promote CDW rights. Our partner HCE-RDA carried out a campaign with two primary schools for World Day Against Child Labour on 21 June. The aim of the campaign was to create awareness about child labour and included poems, monologues, and short dramas by the students. Through this event, HCE-RDA engaged with a student parliament to raise awareness about CDW rights and protections.

Improving government ability to monitor child domestic workers' conditions

- Working with the **Bureau of Women and Social Affairs at the woreda level** has been critical in providing protection support to children at risk and/or in situations of exploitation. The Ministry of MOWSA is mandated to protect all children including CDWs, yet this group of vulnerable children has largely been left out, due to a lack of understanding of the risks associated with child

domestic work. Partners trained 174 social affairs officials in 2022 contributing to an increase in the visibility of the issue and in their commitment to better monitor the situation of CDWs. Some woredas have, for example, included CDWs in their annual workplan for the very first time, ensuring that resources (at least staff time) are allocated to work on this issue and to follow up on CDWs at risk.

- Our partners also strengthened bureaus' ability to monitor CDWs' conditions by putting in place **community structures** that link children at risk and/or in need of rescue with the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs. These community structures enable community members to identify children at risk – particularly those who have limited engagement outside the household – and report them to relevant government bodies. Our partner ECCSDCO, for example, helped set up **Child Protection Committees**, with members from community residents, Idir leaders and Bureau of Women and Social Affairs officials. Committee members are now working together to identify and report suspected cases of abuse. Another partner, PADET, selected and trained **Community Watch Groups** who visit employers' homes, conduct risk assessments, and jointly follow up on children at risk in collaboration with MOWSA representatives. A household is visited several times before a proper assessment of a CDW's situation can be done. During the year, the watch groups conducted 2,837 home visits and completed 893 assessments.
- More than **500 child victims of exploitation** have been referred to shelter services as a result of coordinated efforts from communities, local government structures and other key stakeholders.

Supporting CSO advocacy capacity to improve government responsiveness and the legislative framework, including mechanisms for children's participation in advocacy work

- Partners at shelter level have put in place child participatory mechanisms mirroring the **children's parliament model** that exists in Ethiopia. CDWs meet once a week to debate issues relevant to their life at the shelter and provide feedback on the service they receive. Children are encouraged to express any grievances and share suggestions for improved services.
- A new partner was contracted in 2022 to set up **community-based safe spaces** for CDWs as a way of providing a space outside of the household for CDWs to connect with each other, build skills – including non-formal education and life skills – and crucially, to build CDWs' voice and confidence over time.
- The Freedom Fund has continued to support advocacy efforts among partners for the recognition of domestic workers and the inclusion of domestic workers – and young workers – in the **Ethiopian Labour Law proclamation**. A number of policy requests have been made in 2022 by the Confederation of Ethiopian Domestic Workers Unions to include domestic work in the government review of occupations that should be entitled to minimum standards and working conditions under the Labour Law 1156/2019. This would ultimately offer an avenue to advocate for the rights of younger CDWs legally allowed to work under the law.
- During the year, partners continued to engage and work with government and **law enforcement bodies**. In total, 136 police officers and 51 prosecutors were trained in 2022 on anti-trafficking laws and the linkages with CDWs. The aim of the training is ultimately to increase investigation of suspected cases of trafficking and/or abuse of CDWs and prosecution of perpetrators. 61 cases of abuse and exploitation were identified and lodged with enforcement bodies this year, with 36 legal cases assisted and 14 convictions secured. However, despite the successful convictions, none of the sentences related to human trafficking due to the difficulty of investigating and prosecuting cases that take place within Ethiopia under P1178.

Improving the quality of services provided to at-risk child domestic workers and survivors, especially access to education and vocational training

- 556 children rescued from exploitation received **shelter services** this year, with 262 children successfully reunited with their families. Families who struggled economically received additional support including **seed grants**. This aims at ensuring that children can go to school and reduces the risk of remigrating as a coping mechanism.
- 535 children at risk of domestic servitude received **catch-up classes** which include numeracy, literacy and life-skills training.
- Partners worked with *woreda* officials and community volunteers to identify CDWs who could receive **vocational and life skills training**. The process was at times challenging due to employers'

resistance, but there were some significant achievements with, for example, one of our partners successfully enrolling 44 CDWs into a 10-day life skills training course. Another partner worked with the DAMAT Hotel and Business College to give CDWs vocational training that will improve their future livelihood. The college, inspired by the partnership, has invested in providing more sponsorship opportunities for vulnerable teenagers and has also agreed to source **employment opportunities** for the CDW students who show excellence in their studies.

- In total, **205 survivors of domestic servitude** received vocational training this year with 20 children who successfully graduated from the course now earning a sustainable income, six months after completion of their training.

Main challenges across hotspots

- Internal **security issues**, in some areas, continue to be a challenge for programme implementation, especially in conducting family tracing and reintegration. This leads to people staying longer in shelters, thereby preventing potential new admissions to shelters.
- The **cost of living and high inflation** has impacted all projects. Partners have been able to continue with activities by employing cost-saving techniques such as using different hotels with lower conference rates, purchase of goods from centres subsidised by the government or purchasing in bulk, and negotiating price reductions where possible.
- **Government restructuring and reshuffling of staff** is a specific challenge that has affected both the coordination of, and consequent uptake of, training sessions. The continued shifting of people from Gender Desks, Child Protection Units and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Units means that there is rarely long-term application of the training received.
- **Lack of recruitment agencies in Amhara region** continues to be an issue in relation to successfully promoting regular ways of migration, as people living in Amhara must make the journey to Addis Ababa to access a legally registered recruitment agent.
- **Resistance from employers to let children attend vocational training** remains an issue to be followed through in 2023.

CASE STUDY

Densere Adugna's story

Densere, aged 13, is from Gojam province in Amhara region in northern Ethiopia. Despite resistance from her parents, she left her family home to go to Addis Ababa when she was promised a job as a domestic worker. She says:

My uncle came to Gojam for a wedding and told me he would get me a job as a domestic worker in Addis Ababa. I was told by my uncle to follow him as he returned to Addis. He promised my life would change and I would get a lot of money. At the time I could not wait to go to Addis and experience the city life. Both my mother and father were not happy for me to go with him; my mom had lived in Addis for a few months and told me it's not how I imagined it, but I decided to go with my uncle anyway.

After arriving in Addis, her uncle did not keep his promise and she did not get a job as she expected. She recalls:

I came to Addis and waited for my uncle to get me a domestic work job, but he kept on delaying it. While I was waiting, I helped my uncle's wife by cleaning the house, washing dishes, and washing clothes. I was very tired of asking him repeatedly to find me a job because I did not promise to work for him when we came. I also told him to send me back to Gojam, but he held me against my will. When he realised that I'm stubborn he began beating me to keep me quiet, so I decided to run away from his house.

Densere did not have enough money for transport, so she decided to walk to Gojam. She had no idea how far it was. She says:

After I began walking, I found a lady on the street and asked her which was the way to Bahir Dar [the capital city of Amhara region]. She was stunned to hear I planned to walk all the way to Gojam. So she took me to the police station and the police referred me to [Freedom Fund partner] Bethany's shelter.

During her stay at the shelter, Densere received counselling and life skills training. She says:

Everybody in the shelter cared for me as if I was their own child. I always found the advice I was given useful. I have learned to control myself and to accept others.

After a challenging search, Bethany helped to trace Densere's family and arranged for her reunification. They organised transport for her, and are continuing to provide follow-up support as she stays with her family in Gojam. Both Densere and her family were overjoyed to be reunited, and Densere says:

I have learned a lot from this experience. Now I want to learn and teach others. I aspire to become a teacher when I grow up.

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Four research reports were published during 2022:

- [**Towards safer recruitment of Ethiopian women into domestic work abroad:**](#) Early findings from the Meneshachin 'Our Departure' qualitative study. This qualitative study of the migration process aimed to better understand the recruitment process as well as the formal policies in place to regulate migration. Based on interviews with labour recruiters, migrant domestic workers, and stakeholders working on migration and trafficking issues, the study was conducted with the Population Council and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. The findings will inform data collection in a second phase of research that is being conducted at regional, district and sub-district level to better understand community perspectives.
- [**Lived realities of sustained liberation for survivors of trafficking in Addis Ababa**](#) explored the reality of liberation as experienced and described by women and girls who were trafficked as domestic workers. The study was conducted with the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab.
- [**The role of agents and brokers in facilitating Ethiopian women into domestic work in the Middle East**](#) investigated how women plan their migration and the roles played by formal recruiters and informal brokers in the migration process. The report highlights urgent actions needed from governments, UN agencies and recruitment industry bodies, such as improving the speed and ease for migrants to obtain the official documents required for regular migration. It also calls for community-level interventions for more accurate information about conditions and wages for domestic work in the Middle East.
- [**The prevalence of domestic servitude among child domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.**](#) This study, which forms a baseline report for the Freedom Fund's CDW program funded by the US Department of State Program to End Modern Slavery (PEMS), drew on interviews with 3,000 CDWs (all girls) in Addis Ababa. The study, which found significant evidence of exploitation, aimed to measure CDWs' awareness of their situation and their rights, and to build a picture of their working conditions and types of exploitation. The results are striking for their validation of the types of interventions that Freedom Fund partners have been working towards, and will be used to advocate for better working conditions and better services for CDWs, and to challenge the norms that allow exploitation to continue.

VISION

Our vision is a world
free of slavery.

MISSION

Our mission is to mobilise the
knowledge, capital and will
needed to end slavery.

The Freedom Fund (US)

315 Flatbush Avenue
#406
Brooklyn, NY 11217
USA
+1 929 224 2448

The Freedom Fund (UK)

Lighterman House
30 Wharfdale Road
London, N1 9RY
UK
+44 20 3777 2200

The Freedom Fund (Ethiopia)

Mayswi Building 7th Floor
Ethio-China Ave
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
+251 (0) 976 - 80 0506

 www.freedomfund.org
 info@freedomfund.org
 [@Freedom_Fund](https://twitter.com/Freedom_Fund)

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