

ONE YEAR ON: FINDINGS FROM WAVE I DATA COLLECTION

*Mid Term Report for the Process evaluation of Freedom Fund's
Ethiopia Hotspot Programme*

November 2017



Executive Summary

This report presents findings from both Ethiopia Hotspot programme sites (Amhara and Addis Ketema subcity) collected during 2017 as part of the process evaluation. In each site, data are collected every six months, and in Amhara region, programme areas are compared to similar locations in which there are no Hotspot activities. Methods include in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with implementing partner (IP) representatives, local authorities, community leaders and key informants, and programme beneficiaries. This report presents findings related to implementation of the Hotspot programme to assess its feasibility, coverage and acceptability, as well as emerging perceptions of its effectiveness.

Amhara Region

In both Dessie and Kombolcha, all respondents gave favourable reviews of the Hotspot, and this was consistent across vocational training/business grants, community based awareness raising activities, and school based programmes. Local enthusiasm for addressing migration was high. In schools, students were selected as peer educators. Participants felt this was appropriate given the high rates of out-migration by school girls and their preference for listening to peers rather than formal instructors. The only improvements suggested were to increase frequency of training, and extend it to other community members, particularly young men who also face migration-related dangers.

Women receiving business development support reported high levels of satisfaction for both the training and start-up grants. Furthermore, active involvement by returnees and other trainees in conducting “community conversations” was praised for being an extremely rewarding experience. Returnee women talked about how taking this role improved “morale.” Community members who attended information sessions identified that the Hotspot’s goal was to reduce *unsafe* migration rather than try to prevent all migration. The practicality of the messages was well received, but some participants continued to over-emphasise the safety of all legal routes, perhaps overestimating the assistance they might receive abroad if going through a licensed broker.

IPs described difficulties in gaining community trust at the beginning, but were ultimately able to establish good partnerships with local authorities, with which they shared goals and could work synergistically. IPs were clear that their role was to help shift attitudes away from messages about migration prevention to more nuanced understandings of migration safety. On the other hand, the ongoing lack of clarity around the legal status of labour out-migration in Ethiopia posed a barrier to disseminating these messages. Community members explained that until the ban was fully lifted, illegal migration was the only option for people seeking to leave as soon as possible.

There was a qualitative difference in the way community members talked about migration depending on whether they had been exposed to Hotspot activities. In intervention areas, participants accurately listed measures potential migrants could take to reduce their risks. This clarity was not present in descriptions of migration routes and hazards in comparison areas, where understandings of “legal” and “illegal” were more simplistic.

Findings from Addis Ketema

Hotspot activities in Addis Ababa focus on returnee migrants, providing residential programmes, business skills training and provision of start-up grants (in self-help savings groups). Participating women felt the training provided was high quality and helpful for developing their business plans. Both vocational training and business development bolstered women's confidence, gave them hope, and eased their anxiety about the future.

Participants in the start-up grant programme expressed disappointment at the amount of money provided (5000 Birr, roughly \$230). They felt this was inadequate for securing premises and establishing a small business in Addis Ababa, where costs are high. These women did admit their initial expectations had been too high, with some acknowledging that they needed to be realistic and accept whatever support was available.

Returnees receiving residential care are a particularly vulnerable group, often with mental and/or physical health problems. Again, beneficiaries were positive about the care and services received, but did not feel prepared to leave residential care and forge an independent life. Most women had already outstayed the official 8-month time limit and expected to return overseas.

The Addis Ketema Hotspot also works with school clubs and traditional funeral savings societies (*idirs*). Participants of these activities suggested the support they received was sporadic, but appreciated. School club members highlighted the importance of having their opinions and feelings validated through discussions and awareness raising sessions.

Overall, intervention activities in Addis Ketema appear to have been delivered as intended. Across different types of respondents, there was a shared perception that the topic of unsafe/illegal migration had been visibly raised, and had become a more prominent concern. By facilitating a network of organizations that share knowledge and resources, the Hotspot programme has consolidated local safe migration efforts.

Lessons Learned

In both Amhara and Addis Ketema, the Hotspot was acceptable to participants who felt activities were relevant, useful, and of good quality. Participation in activities appeared to increase women's self-esteem and confidence in sharing ideas. It also proved feasible to deliver, with IPs clear on their aims and objectives. IPs made concerted efforts to shift attitudes and norms toward a more health-promoting understanding of ways to migrate and the preparation required. Although beneficiaries' high expectations were early challenges, the Hotspot has been able to offer new perspectives to returnees and potential migrants on their life choices.

In Amhara, the Hotspot created a clearer programme identity, with good links between IPs and government bodies and between activities. Respondents on both sides of the IP-government partnership mentioned that effective cooperation and integration with formal initiatives were particular strengths of the programme.

The socio-political profiles of the two sites are extremely different, contributing to differences in intervention delivery. Despite being increasingly urban, Dessie and Kombolcha remain natural communities, where people are more likely to know those living around them. They are economically heterogeneous, with wealthier and poorer households intermixed. Addis Ketema is much more transient, and attracts people from across Ethiopia,

most of whom are among the poorest. They may be less likely to feel a sense of solidarity with one another. As the programme evolves, it will need to adapt to address specific local challenges and the changing socio-political landscape.

Introduction

This report presents findings from both Freedom Fund Hotspot sites (Amhara and Addis Ababa) collected during 2017. In Addis Ketema, data were collected in January/February, while in Amhara, data were collected in April/May, including in both intervention and comparison sites. The data were collected as part of the process evaluation of the Hotspot programme funded by The Freedom Fund and conducted by local implementing partners.

This report presents findings related to implementation of the Hotspot programme to assess its feasibility, coverage and acceptability, as well as emerging perceptions of its effectiveness. In the case of Amhara region, current findings can be compared to the baseline study to assess changes over time. In Addis Ketema, where no baseline data were collected and due to the area's unique context, there is no comparison site, the data were triangulated between types of informants (beneficiaries, implementers, local authorities and community leaders) to identify key facilitators and barriers of delivering the intervention as planned.

The report is divided into three sections: findings from Addis Ketema, findings from Amhara, and a brief discussion of similarities and differences between sites.

Methods

The process evaluation follows a qualitative framework agreed at the inception of the programme. In each site, data are collected every six months. In Addis Ketema, 4 local implementing partners (IPs) are being followed across a range of districts (woredas) and types of activities. In Amhara, a total of 3 IPs are being followed in both urban and semi-rural locations around Dessie and Kombolcha, with community level data also collected in comparison sites matched for geographical and socio-demographic profiles Tables 1 and 2 provide details of locations and IPs for each site.

Data collection methods consist 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) at each bi-annual fieldwork visit. Attitude ranking sessions are conducted in intervention sites bi-annually, and annually in comparison sites. This is to track small, nuanced changes in attitudes and norms potentially linked to project activities in intervention sites, and to identify larger scale and longer-term changes in comparison sites.

Table 1: Addis Ababa Intervention Woredas and Implementing Partners

	Woreda 4	6	7	8	9
AGAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
BRDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
FSCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
MCDP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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	BEZA
	Segno Gebeya Salayish Arada	EDA	Metene	
Comparison	Piasa Agergizat Dawdo Rorbit		Mitigrar Galeshia	

In Addis Ababa, we conducted 12 in-depth interviews (9 returnees and 3 school participants), 2 focus group discussions and 2 attitude ranking workshops with female beneficiaries of various Hotspot intervention activities, 2 focus groups with local key informants, and 4 interviews with stakeholders including 2 implementing staff, 1 Bureau of Labour & Social Affairs (BOLSA) representative and 1 Women’s Association representative.

In Amhara, fieldwork was conducted in both intervention and comparison areas within Kombolcha and Dessie. In Kombolcha, we conducted 1 interview, 2 FGD and 1 attitude ranking exercise with programme participants, as well as 1 FGD in comparison areas with young women. We also interviewed 1 religious leader, 1 idir chairperson, 1 local administrator, and 2 IP staff members and conducted an FGD with local authorities.

In Dessie, we conducted 9 interviews and 1 attitude ranking with programme beneficiaries and 9 interviews with young women in comparison sites. We also interviewed 1 idir chair, 1 religious leader, and 1 representative from each of the Women’s Affairs Bureau and local Youth Association and 2 IP staff members. A FGD with community key informants from comparison sites was also conducted.

Throughout data collection, implementing NGO or local BOLSA and representatives from the Women’s Affairs bureau assisted with recruitment for data collection. This contributed to desirability bias, particularly in Amhara region, where school based programmes predominate and teachers were keen to showcase the most enthusiastic, participatory and “successful” students. The fieldworkers found it easier to sample more randomly among the beneficiaries of vocational training/ skills support, as they attended the graduation ceremony and then independently contacted graduates to visit them at the site of their small businesses.

Results

Addis Ketema

Migration Aspirations and Preparation

In discussing current migration, respondents highlighted the diversity of the Addis Ketema population as well as differences across the target audience for Hotspot activities. Potential migrants are roughly divided into two categories: (1) locals who originate from this impoverished part of the capital city and seek to escape their poverty and (2) in-migrants from rural areas who either always intended to move overseas or who first found work in Addis Ababa (often as domestic and sex workers) and subsequently have decided to migrate.

Here in Addis Ketema sub city there are many women who migrate to Arab countries. However, if we ask the background of these women it is problematic. For example, there are women who are born and grown up here and decide to migrate. But the vast majority are those who first came as housemaids or waitresses or other low paid jobs and are saving the money to migrate to other countries. Hence it is a transitional place. [FGD with BOLSA and Idir representatives]

Returnees are a separate group for whom re-migration is a possibility. Indeed, among the 9 returnees with whom interviews were conducted, only 1 said she was not considering leaving the country again.

I have hope that I can change. Now I think I am talented to do one thing at least. I can grow in that and secure a good future. I do not want to go back by no means. I have suffered enough there. [Returnee, 24, unmarried with 2 children]

Experience of Hotspot Programme: Acceptability among Beneficiaries

Most Hotspot activities in Addis Ababa focus on returnee migrants, providing residential programmes and through business skills training and provision of start-up grants (in self-help savings groups). Women enrolled in these activities described the training to be of high quality, and beneficial for helping them to develop a business plan:

When we were attending the training, we were provided with money and refreshments. The training was very good, it was done in a good way and the trainers were professional. I remember one if the trainers came from Italy. The trainers were very knowledgeable and skilled. ... The training was more than sufficient it really did develop our skill. [Vocational training participant, 30, unmarried with 1 child, Addis Ababa]

The activities are relevant and useful for people who returned from outside of the country and need support. [FGD, returnees 18-30]

Respondents emphasised that being enrolled in the vocational training and business development bolstered their confidence, gave them hope, and eased their anxiety. Returnees described that prior to enrolling in activities, they felt despondent following poor migration experiences and worried about their future, but that being *chosen* for the programme made them feel valued and provided encouragement:

I want to thank this organization for thinking of us because now even our families are not doing that. It gave me hope, I was mentally hurt at some point, it is not only about money but the fact that they encourage us is a big thing. For the last one and half year they have been providing training and encouraging us when my family whom I was supporting was not helping me so I

want to thank them for that. [Vocational training participant, 30, divorced with 1 child, Addis Ababa]

I joined this program because I was happy that I got picked to be a part of the program, pure joy is what made me decide to join [FGD, returnees 18-30]

However, all the participants interviewed who were part of the start-up grant programme expressed disappointment at the amount of money provided to support business development. Each woman receives 5000 Birr, which she can spend as an individual or pool together with others. Several respondents described how their initial plan to work in a group failed, either due to inadequate funds for their business idea (such as opening a restaurant) or due to poorly matched skill sets:

First we were asked to organize ourselves as an association. But when we were organized in this group we had different level of skills ... Our skills are different level, for example I previously had computer training and I took another training again so that I don't forget what I already learned. I am interested to work in this field. So with the 5,000 birr I got from the organization and the money I already have I want to start to work in that field. [Vocational training participant, 30, unmarried with 1 child, Addis Ababa]

The programme was subsequently adapted to allow women to receive an individual grant instead of requiring group-based business development:

They don't want to work with others because they have to accommodate different behaviours. For example someone may not be as punctual and if I am punctual for work how can I tolerate it. ... There is still a lot of process before the money is released for them [as a group] and the others don't want to go through this process. We came to the decision to let the 12 work individually after a lot of discussion. [Ministry of Social Affairs representative]

The women we interviewed thus had elected to use the 5000 Birr on their own or with one other colleague. This proved a more flexible option that fit with local business opportunities:

Initially all 7 of us in the group wanted to work together and open a small restaurant but since the financial support was not enough we could not do that. Now me and my other friend, we work together next to our house selling tea while another girls works in a school club and there are others too. ... I had no interest to sell tea but I didn't want to be unemployed and waste the money. Our area is good for business since there are many people and we can succeed if we sell food, and especially the business skill training will be helpful for our work [Vocational training participant, 35, divorced with 1 child, Addis Ababa]

Several had not yet received their start-up grant, or did not feel they would be able to usefully invest it:

The livelihood program is a joke. Look, we have been coming to our self-help group saving and credit scheme for the last one year and none of us started using the money. What are we going to do with Et Birr 5000? It won't help us rent a kiosk/work space, let alone doing business. So, I think the organization needs to think about that. [FGD, returnees 18-30]

Vocational training participants admitted their expectations had been high, with some acknowledging that they needed to be realistic and appreciate whatever support was available, but others felt disgruntled with the programme as a result. Similarly, others who received skills training and were then expected to find their own employment struggled to

do so. Others experienced delays in receiving their graduation certificates (which are required for employment):

“I finished the driving training and passed the exam. But, I did not get any job. So, I feel I am just wasting my time. ... I have a driving license now but I do not get a job. I liked the training but if I cannot find a job, I will remain unhappy. ... We who participated in the housekeeping and cooking training also finished our training, and we have even taken the competency exams and passed. But, we are still in the organization, waiting for our graduation ceremony.”
[FGD, returnees 18-20]

Returnees receiving residential care are a more vulnerable group, who have been identified with significant mental and/or physical health problems on arrival back in Ethiopia. Again, beneficiaries expressed deep appreciation for the care and services received.

The service is good and I don't know what I would have done if I had not been introduced to this organization. I am so grateful to be a beneficiary of the services. I have 2 kids and without the support of this organization, I would have ended up dead and my kids would also either die or be orphans to spend the rest of their lives in destitution. ... This organization helped us and is still helping us when no one was there for us. [Returnee, 24, unmarried, 2 children]

I am so grateful to be part of this program. I came here straight from the airport. I would not have been able to provide food, clothing, and shelter both for me and my child if it was not for this organization. I am happy with the services. The staff members are also good for us. I also have good relationship with the staff and also the other beneficiaries. We have become friends. I rather call them sisters as we share our problems. [Returnee, 33, unmarried, 1 child]

But there was palpable fear about leaving the centre and trying to forge an independent life. Most women had already overstayed the official 8-month time limit and with one exception could not foresee leaving the centre except to return overseas. Every woman living in a residential facility to whom we spoke expressed reluctance to depart:

I don't want to leave this organization. To what? Where would I go? Even if I get to have a job. How much is it going to pay in my qualification to afford life? You know the rent prices, right? How can I afford to rent a place to live, eat, and buy basic materials to sustain my life? Plus, I have a child to feed. What am I going to do with her? I don't want to leave. I just want to stay here. ... I don't feel confident about leaving here and standing on my own. How do I change myself? With what? If the opportunity brings itself, I would want to go back [to Arab countries]. [Returnee, 29, separated with 1 child]

The services are good here compared to nothing. However, some of us are used to the life abroad and facilities that are available there. If we think about that, it is a little difficult to get used to this life. Whether we have suffered and traumatized there or not, it is still better than Ethiopia. ... But if I get the chance, I would want to try my chance one more time to go back [abroad] and look for better work opportunity [Returnee, 23, single]

I would not have anything to live on if it was not for this organization. I have everything I need here in terms of food, clothing, and shelter. However, in order for me to rise on my own, I need money. ... I do not want to leave now. ... I cannot afford life if I leave. ... I still feel dependent on the program because I do not have anything to look forward to. [Returnee, 21, single]

A smaller component of the Addis Ketema Hotspot involves work with school clubs and traditional funeral savings societies (*idirs*). Interviews with participants of these aspects suggested that support was less intensive, more sporadic, but equally appreciated. The 3 school girls we spoke to were enthusiastic participants in the migration-themed clubs and school-based competitions sponsored through the Hotspot, and felt these were relevant to their experiences and local issues:

In the neighbourhood where I am living, there are illegal brokers who often convince people to migrate. Hence I have decided to struggle such incidences by joining such initiatives. We have learned that lots of things are happening to those people who are migrating to Arab countries. Hence this has to stop and to stop that first we need to have the knowledge. ... I got knowledge about illegal migration. The discussion made me a better person. It is a good experience and I have a lot to share [School girl #1, Addis Ketema]

I know that many people especially from south region would like to migrate and change their life. I have learned this from our housemaid who is a returnee. She has told me lots of things happened to her while she was migrant in Arab countries. ... When you look at how such things happen to someone who is close to you it is very difficult. Hence what I have observed around myself made me want to participate [in school activities]. [School girl #2, Addis Ketema]

I contributed my poem to the student population so that they can understand about illegal migration. In addition participating the training provided by this organization was very good and informative. [School girl #3, Addis Ketema]

Similar to the psychosocial benefits of participation expressed by vocational training students, the school volunteers also described the importance of having their opinions and feelings validated through group discussions and awareness raising sessions:

What makes me happy is getting the chance to express myself. [School girl #1, Addis Ketema]

It was quite enjoyable that I express my feelings in my own words. [School girl #3, Addis Ketema]

On the other hand, they did not feel close to programme staff, and some felt the level of engagement was inadequate to sustain momentum for changing social norms:

We don't have formal communication with the staff members of this organization. One of the women usually says 'hi' to us whenever we meet on the street. Other than that we don't have any other relationship. They want us to do what they want. We hadn't had a chance to have a conversation to tell them what we need. [School girl #2, Addis Ketema]

It wasn't coordinated ahead of time. ... This is a very big issue for the country. We need to give it more attention. Two communications per year is a joke for me. We need to have such events once or twice per month. ... Their engagement should have been more than these. Visiting schools twice a year is not enough. [School girl #3, Addis Ketema]

Idir representatives describe their role in raising awareness among their membership, mainly through arranging meetings specific to the topic of migration and conducting outreach to households in which prospective at-risk migrants have been identified.

What we can do is encourage people to come to the meeting and during that meeting we often invite knowledgeable people to teach about the consequences of illegal migration.

... What they don't understand is there are different possibilities for change. Today there are many women they have changed their life with coffee selling on the street corners. [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

The messages promoted by Idirs about unsafe migration and alternatives in Ethiopia are backed up by BOLSA sponsored community education, provided outside of Hotspot funding. By harnessing different social and administrative networks, local authorities and Idirs work together to explain the laws and discourage use of illegal brokers:

What we are doing now is trying to convince the elderly association, the youth association, and the different leagues to collaborate with us and to expose illegal brokers to be presented in the eyes of the law according to the new legislation. [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

Idir members considered their influence limited, however, and explained that their own family members regularly migrate abroad. They felt that economic conditions in Addis Ketema were not good enough to realistically expect young people to remain:

There are many daughters of our Idir members who migrated to Arab countries. One of the major reasons could be unemployment. In addition, when parents see their neighbours' daughters sending money to their families, they demand their children to do the same. Even though there are many women who came back from Arab countries facing lots of problem, there are many more who would like to migrate. Even those who came back after facing lots of problems are aspiring to go back. They usually go to these countries to get something better than here [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

Overall, local authorities and Idir members were pessimistic. They felt the services available to vulnerable young people were insufficient, and the trainings did not lead to employment.

They also felt some participants, such as sex workers, could earn significantly more per day previously than in the vocations for which they were being trained. These were not criticisms of the Hotspot intervention *per se*, but rather frustration at the limitations of a small-scale approach in the face of large scale social pressures to earn money:

... They [IPs] provide trainings on sewing clothes, hair making, and computer. However, the trainees expect some payment to be made. What this organization is providing is 10 birr per day [for transport]. How can they survive a day with 10 birr, especially as most of them might have children and other dependants? Some of them might think she can spend her day in street vending, she might make more money. ... The type of trainings might vary from one organization to the other. The training process often takes about one year. After one years of training it will be followed by making groups for different business activities. Within this one year they will get only very limited amount of money. This process is tiresome. [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

Feasibility of Delivery: Perceptions of Implementers and Stakeholders

Intervention activities appear to have been delivered in Addis Ketema as intended, with a few adaptations to take into consideration realities identified during its delivery such as the preference among vocational students for independent (rather than group based) business development. Implementers were themselves well aware of the need to manage expectations, and the fact that beneficiaries hoped for greater financial support, or in the

case of returnees in residential care, the difficulties in “graduating” them into independence:

Beneficiaries seem satisfied with what we provide them. ... Of course we can only provide them with limited services. ... We cannot provide them with everything, so sometimes they may be dissatisfied with what we tell them when they demand some things. ... Sometimes they demand things that we do not have or cannot provide. For example, they want us to provide them with large amount of money that would enable them to establish a business. We cannot provide this due to shortage of resources. This may create some level of dissatisfaction on their part.... Furthermore, the returnees often are not willing to return to their families. They want to stay here, which could be an unintended effect of the program. [Addis Ketema IP staff member #1]

There is a huge gap between the intervention and what they actually expect. In most cases, they are not satisfied with the intervention and outcome. For instance, if we support them get skills training, they expect [us] to give them a job. [Addis Ketema IP staff member #2]

The ability of implementing partners to select participants and identify eligible beneficiaries is compromised by the influence of local authorities over the process. Idir members believed themselves to be best placed to identify returnees and vulnerable women. They felt the involvement of BOLSA and Women’s Affairs reduced transparency of the selection process and could result in favouritism, for example, giving friends or neighbours the opportunity to receive business support:

We as Idirs are often asked to send the list of people who fulfil a certain criteria for different purposes. However the final decision and refinement will be made the different government organisations. Even if we send the list to BOLSA, often they choose people who have close contact with them rather than accepting our priority recommendation. ... They don’t convince the real individuals who need the support to come and apply they should avoid working with friendship. [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

It is BOLSA and Women’s Bureau who recruit the people and the associations for us. Our targets are female students, members of Idir, are trainees. ... it is BOLSA who can send us the list. But sometimes the list might not have the right people for the training. [Addis Ketema IP staff member #3]

Finally, some aspects of the local environment were seen to pose challenges to successful implementation of Hotspot components. For example, local police did not allow street vending or fined new businesses without the requisite permissions. Not only did this make it difficult for women to set up their newly initiated businesses in the locality (e.g. coffee stalls), it generally created an atmosphere of low opportunity, adding to residents’ belief that migration offers better options than staying in Addis Ketema:

There are many people selling items in different corners in this area. However, the treatment they have got from the police and guards is very bad. There is lots of humiliation, which makes people to change their aspiration to make a living and change their life in here. ... Why aren’t they allowed to sell items at least for certain hours? [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

Former sex workers appeared particularly likely to attract negative attention from the police:

Sometimes when they [sex workers] try to change their engagement and start selling items on the streets, they are hunted by police officers so that it is very difficult for them to change their job. [Addis Ketema IP staff member #3]

On the other hand, the broader policy environment could be seen to be conducive to implementing the Hotspot programme due to prioritization of migration as a national issue. Labour migration continues to be a “hot” issue in media and politics, providing an entry-point for the programme’s “safer migration” messages and a good match between the Freedom Fund’s and government priorities:

The current working environment greatly contributes to our accomplishments so far. Since we work in line with the government priority areas, one of the government’s top development agenda is rehabilitating returnees. Also, although the budget is small, the donor’s interest to promote safe migration contributes to our success in promoting safe migration. [IP staff member #2]

Perceptions of changing trend

Across different types of respondents, there was a shared perception that the topic of unsafe/illegal migration had been visibly raised, and had become a more prominent concern in community discussions.

I think this organization has brought attitudinal change regarding illegal migration in the community through education. They create a condition that even in their absence we often discuss about migration and returnee issues in our idirs for about 265 members. [FGD, BOLSA and Idir representatives]

The Hotspot’s ability to increase awareness in ways that instilled trust in community members was noted.

Through the coffee ceremonies, both mothers and fathers participate and gain awareness on illegal migration, this is very helpful since in many cases parents themselves are pushing their children to migrate illegally. [FGD with community key informants]

There were also anecdotal examples of how local people re-considered their plans to migrate:

After having the training from this organization I have communicated my family members to know about the issue. Because of this I remember that one girl from the neighborhood canceled her decision to migrate. [School girl #1, Addis Ketema]

The likelihood of legal migration channels being re-opened gave a sense of urgency to the work of the Hotspot:

Furthermore the trainings are provided not only for returnees but for potential migrants, and the quality of the trainings are very good with professional trainers. The government has approved this project because it is in line with the current social problem. ... The government plans to lift the ban on legal migration, it is taking long because it is a complicated matter which needs careful analysis and may expose people to dangerous situations. I think the ban might be lifted in about a months’ time. [FGD with community key informants, Social Affairs Representative]

The Hotspot programme provided a mechanism through which a network of organisations involved in migration-related activities could come together and share knowledge and resources. For example, one IP illustrated how

Our major accomplishment is in networking, where we wanted to establish a forum among migration related issue implementers from government and non-governmental organization. Since 2015, we helped to establish a network among organizations working in Woredas ___ and ___. In addition to establishing the forum, we developed a training manual on safe migration and shared it among different stakeholders currently working on migration issues i.e. government offices and NGOs. Those NGOs working in Addis Ketema Sub City are using the training manual we already developed. [IP staff member #2]

Another IP staff member took a very pragmatic approach to questions of potential effectiveness of the programme so far, highlighting that normative change can take time, but that the role of the Hotspot to date has been to set the foundations for future change:

I don't think it is time to measure this [change]. So far there is no major change among the community members. ... After we educate them, even the next day they might support someone to migrate. They prefer migration than their current status. They think that there are no opportunities in here. ... However the training showed that there is hope for change. There are people who would like to change their existing situation. [Addis Ketema IP staff member #3]

Addis Ketema: Lessons Learned and Ongoing Challenges

The diversity and transience of Addis Ketema make it a challenging environment in which to work. Entrenched poverty, high turnover of residents, and unsupportive policing practices work against a cohesive approach to addressing out-migration. Nonetheless, the Hotspot package of activities appears to have built a network of awareness creation efforts that together have increased the profile of “safe migration” as a concept. Cross-cutting work with families (often contacted through day or night school students) and idirs are widely acknowledged as coalescing with government efforts to improve community understanding of the risks of illegal migration.

The quality of trainings and skills-building activities is overwhelmingly perceived to be high, and the services considered both useful and in line with community need. However, many participants felt the programme fell short of its potential, mostly due to resource constraints. Most notably, women enrolled in vocational training and business support did not consider the start-up grants to be sufficient. This could reflect a natural respondents' bias – i.e. that interviewed women hoped they would receive more money by complaining. Certainly 5000 birr (about \$200) is a considerable amount of money in Ethiopia and could realistically be used to start a viable business, assuming it was sensibly invested. It is thus also possible that the content of the training did not give participants enough foundation in how best to make use of the grants. There was also initial confusion about whether graduates would have to group together and work collectively. While this was the initial intention, the restrictions were eased to adapt to participant's preferences, which demonstrates that IP were willing to adapt to circumstances.

The sense of inadequacy persisted across the programme, however. School girls felt there were too few events and meetings and that these were controlled by school authorities rather than participatory. Residential care recipients did not feel able to leave the programme after the scheduled 8-month cycle. Again, these respondents were enthusiastic and grateful for the services and activities they received, and thus would have been motivated to express hope for more. Residential care for the rehabilitation of returnees in Addis Ketema involves addressing their complex psychological and material need in a time-

limited way. Both programme staff and beneficiaries highlighted that turnover from residential programmes was extremely low, and few women were equipped to start independent lives following one year of care. Furthermore, many continued to see migration as their only viable option.

Some logistical issues appear to have hampered delivery of the intervention, mainly delays in providing trainings, graduating participants, and setting up business opportunities. The government provided space for start-up businesses were widely perceived to be too small and poorly situated. Perhaps more serious were allegations that selection criteria for women recruited into trainings and work experience were not always transparently applied, and may have favoured friends and families of the local authority staff tasked with identifying eligible participants.

Motivation for both delivering and participating in Hotspot activities is high, and IP staff appear realistic about both the challenges they face and the time it will take to demonstrate community level change. Stakeholders also showed willingness to actively engage with the programme and could see how it met local needs and reflected political priorities. There appeared to be a shared sense of responsibility for the programme, with officials, IP staff, and community key informants all identifying roles for themselves in addressing unsafe migration and reflecting on how best to work toward positive change.

Amhara Region

Migration Aspirations and Preparation

In setting the scene for how migration patterns are currently understood in Dessie and Kombolcha, respondents focused on the *kinds of situations* potential migrants found themselves in, rather than the *kinds of people* they were. The fact that it's not necessarily the poorest who choose to migrate continues to be stated, reflecting findings from the baseline assessment in the same area:

[Women migrate] when they are kept from receiving an education or when they are upset about the situation that they are in. They are upset when they are detained from their education repeatedly. {FGD, students, Kombolcha, comparison}]

Maybe there is a disagreement with the parents. She may not be comfortable with them and the parents themselves may look at her in a negative way. Because of this, she will decide to migrate [School girl, Grade 5, Dessie, comparison]

Respondents had mixed perceptions about the level of migration over time, with some believing out-migration was increasing while others felt it was decreasing. Actual numbers are impossible to track, but local authorities were more likely to believe that government efforts over the past few years reduced out-migration, while community leaders believed little had changed or the number was increasing as a result of poor economic opportunities locally.

As of my observation in my living area, the number of migrants slightly decreases from the previous time. In my opinion, the lobby to provide information about the danger of illegal migration helps to reduce the number of migrants. ... We won't say it totally stopped because they still they do it in secret. But it seems to be less through the follow up of the government. [Idir chairperson, Dessie]

The number of migrant women in our community was high before the awareness creation, but now every member of the community is aware of the issue and the number of migrant women has been declining from time to time. [Women's Affairs representative, Dessie]

Even if I don't have evidence, it hasn't decreased. It has increased because the immigration office is crowded with the people who need passports. We see people starting their migration through different ways. There is also a housemaid shortage in the area. According to this, it doesn't decrease it and it needs more efforts [Priest, Dessie]

Arrangements for migration, such as meeting brokers and obtaining a passport, occurred in Dessie or Addis Ababa. Community members in Kombolcha claimed not to know any brokers, and emphasised that they worked in urban areas, so potential migrants first had to travel to a city in order to contact one.

Experience of Hotspot Programme: Acceptability among Beneficiaries

In Amhara, all respondents gave favourable reviews of the Hotspot programme, and this was consistent across vocational training/business grants, community based awareness raising activities, and school based programmes. There appeared to be real enthusiasm for addressing migration, with appreciation for the practical information provided on the differences between legal (safe) and illegal (unsafe) routes.

Both Dessie and Kombolcha have school based awareness raising programmes, and the students engaged in them and other community informants felt these were appropriate, informative, and contributed to diffusion of useful messages from students themselves into the wider community, particularly other family members i.e. parents and older siblings.

With this training, we are not the only people that benefit from it but also so many people around us benefit, like our family, our friends, the community and our country itself. So, the project is very good. ... We should use this awareness throughout our lives individually, not only with the organization. For example, I can teach my friend and my family. We can support and change individuals' lives by sharing ideas. This will continue in my life. [School girl, 9th grade, Dessie, intervention]

Some students were selected as peer educators, and trained to talk to their schoolmates. Participants felt this was appropriate given the high rates of out-migration by school girls and their preference for listening to their peers rather than formal instructors:

I have participated in the awareness creation program, but I also share [the information] with my friends. Especially on peer pressure and life-skills, I have gotten good knowledge. I didn't get this kind of education before. We were trained ... and we provided training for [other] students ... In each training, I had 25 students. ... When I was trained on the issue and I shared it with my friends, I have gotten satisfaction. ... Since the discussion is within age mates, it is more acceptable and interesting. [School girl, grade 9, peer educator, Dessie, intervention]

The training process in Dessie and Kombolcha was considered well-organised, of high quality and with good follow-up. Students also highlighted that it was participatory and engaged them in sharing their own knowledge and ideas:

There are students who were selected as trainers. They taught us and there was discussion amongst the groups. Any one who wasn't afraid of their requests answered their questions. I think it is an advantage of peer education. It was participatory. So, it was good. [School girl, school club participant, Dessie, intervention]

We discussed clearly. All of the ideas were not from their side. They dug out our knowledge through discussions and different questions. ... they understood our interests. If they hadn't, they could've stopped after the first training. But they didn't leave the school. They also provided the second round training. They've checked our training through trained students. They came and visited before inviting us for a second training. [School girl, grade 9, peer educator, Dessie, intervention]

Relations between trainers and students was characterized as close and positive, "like family." Respondents felt the trainers really cared about young people's future. The students said they believed they could turn to project staff for advice in future.

Not only during trainings, but they also come and visit the services that are provided from their organization. They investigate what our needs may be in the future. [School girl, 9th grade, Dessie, intervention]

They were very good. They are our friends. We all know the trainers. They participated in so many things. We explained our ideas without fear. If the discussion was with the teacher or other person, we may be afraid and not explain our ideas properly. But they are our friends and we are free. [School girl, awareness raising training, Dessie, intervention]

Following trainings of peer educators, trained students were supported to organize their own awareness raising and discussion workshops. These were also well organized, with a clear structure and adequate logistical support. Those that occurred weekly were considered frequent enough to reach large numbers of peers and sustain their interest:

After we returned back to school, we registered students. For peer education, we discussed with 15 students each. But for community conversation, 100 people for the first round and it decreased to 80 for the next time. During community conversation, ten men can be involved. For our peer education, all participants should be female. Our training program is on Tuesday. We have covered one topic for one day. For example if today is Tuesday, our topic may be what the causes of unsafe migration are and we will discuss on it in detail. For the next program, there is also another topic. Always we do have soft drinks for both trainers and trainees. We are two facilitators and each of us has 15 trainees. [School girl, peer educator, Kombolcha, intervention]

Comments for improvements mainly focused on increasing the frequency of training, and extending it to other community members, particularly young men who also face migration-related dangers:

It may be more effective if the training is provided repeatedly. And also, it will be better if male students also participated. Still, the training is for women. If 75 percent of migrants are women, the remaining 25 percent are men. They will also be affected if they go illegally in different ways like the selling of their organs, hunger, thirst, etc. I'm not the only person that thinks this, but during the training, they [other trainees] requested that males also participate in the program. ... If it expands more and men and family participate it will be better. [School girl, awareness raising training, Dessie, intervention]

Turning to Hotspot activities to support returnee migrants in the vicinity, respondents described a well-organised system for recruiting returnees into livelihood support activities. One means of identifying eligible participants was through a local register of jobless individuals and their circumstances. One woman who had lived 5 years in Saudi Arabia but had been unable to save her earnings described how she was recruited into the small grants scheme:

There are women who register jobless people. When they registered my name, I told them that I have an interest in working. After I came from there [Saudi Arabia], I haven't had a job and I also lived with my family. Then, they called me when this opportunity came to the Kebele. ... Then I received the training 3 times.... It was within 15 to 30 days difference and each of the trainings took 3 days. So I have been trained for 9 days. ... They showed us how we can work in our country and if our decision is to go abroad, how we can go legally. They also showed us how we can start businesses with a small amount of money. [Returnee, 29, married, Dessie, intervention]

Other participants were referred by other community members who had heard about the programme, such as their neighbours:

One of my neighbours heard about the registration of returnees and registered my name. He gave them my phone number and told me to go when they called. I was not interested at that time. But he convinced me that it may have a benefit or some type of training. Then I changed my mind and went for the training. ... Now, we are working good jobs. [Returnee, vocational training participant, 25, Dessie, intervention]

As in Addis Ababa, vocational training and business development skills were provided to returnees and potential migrants, followed by a start-up grant. In Amhara, training graduates received 6000 birr each, and there did not seem to be the same stipulation about working collectively. Recipients were highly satisfied with both the formal training and the support they received as they started up their businesses, particularly when they confronted early problems:

When we need something, they support us. ... if we face a market problem, they advise us on how to create a better system. ... The knowledge they gave us is more than money. [Returnee, 29, married, Dessie, intervention]

They provide trainings on business skills. I have been trained for the second time. It was very good. Now if I start a business, I will be successful. I am very happy with the training. By the way, I was a businesswoman before but I lost my money and I decided to migrate. Now, I have a good knowledge on business management after the training. So, I know how I can run a business properly. ... It is more than I expected. During that time, the idea of leaving was in my mind. But after the training, I can easily understand that I can work by myself even with a rental home and change my life. So, I think that they showed us the direction. [Returnee, business grant recipient, Dessie, intervention]

A professional trained us. It taught us how to record our income and expenses and how we can do business with what we have. It was very nice. If I have gotten this training before, I wouldn't have lost my money. [Returnee, underwent business training but has not received grant yet, Dessie, intervention]

One aspect of the programme that received particular praise was the active involvement by returnees and other trainees in conducting “community conversations” and other forms of awareness raising. It seemed that the IPs managing livelihood support also conducted community-wide dissemination of information about migration and expected the beneficiaries to contribute to this activity. Participants found this to be an extremely rewarding experience and talked about how taking this role gave them “morale.” They described how it made them feel that they could give back to their communities and provide useful knowledge to others:

We participated in community conversations in eight sessions for two months. ...It is just a discussion with the community. We discussed both sides of migration with mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers. Our leaders were with us, but we told them what we saw there. There are mothers who influenced their children to migrate. When we told them about the risk, they changed their minds. ... It benefits me because I get to teach others. [Returnee, vocational training participant, 25, Dessie, intervention]

The awareness raising activities in Amhara seemed to be wide-reaching and popular with community members. Several respondents stated that it made them think about the issue of migration more critically, and that they were confident of the facilitators’ accurate knowledge and authority on the topic:

The awareness creation program was held twice. Their presentation was so nice. ...We understand that it is also our responsibility. They were prepared well. ... Data based research papers were also presented. It created awareness for the participants. We regret that we haven’t done it before. ... I myself benefited from the awareness creation training. It brought change to my counselling services [Priest, Dessie, intervention site]

One IP staff member expressed surprise at the positive response to community conversations and high attendance:

If we plan to do for a 100, the number of participant may be 120. ...When I saw the community conversation in the proposal, I was thinking ‘how we can be effective in it?’ But when we went through and heard the community response, it is more than my expectation. [Dessie IP staff member #1]

Community informants who had attended these sessions appreciated that their aim was to reduce *unsafe* migration rather than try to prevent it altogether. The practicality of the messages was well received:

The training is provided for women and youth to reduce illegal migration. But we [community members] never stop. Since there is no comfortable condition here, the training will be provided to protect [us] from unsafe migration but not forbid migration itself. We discussed with a development group and 1 to 5 group [women’s development model frequently used throughout Ethiopia] on this issue. They provide awareness training for the community. They teach the community to go with legal way. But they can’t stop the migration. [FGD, returnees and potential migrants, 19-30, Kombolcha, intervention]

Even if can't stop the migration, increase the awareness and safe from illegal one. [school girl, peer educator, Kombolcha, intervention]

Even government authorities, such as a kebele-level administrator in Kombolcha, agree that practical information on migration is more effective than blanket warnings against all migration:

It will be better if they include the awareness on legal migration for people who decided to go and work there. If someone wants to go, [he] has to know his right and obligation there. ... If they facilitate training on language and awareness on currency change for women who are ready to go, it is better. [FGD local authorities, Kombolcha, intervention]

While participants felt confident in describing what they had learned regarding safe and unsafe migration, some tended to over-emphasise the safety of all legal routes, which could give them a false sense of security regarding assistance available to migrants confronting problems abroad. For example, school programme participants expressed a highly dichotomised view of the consequences of “legal” vs “illegal” migration:

I have participated on illegal migration training. If we go legally, we are safe and if there is any challenge we can tell the police, but if we go the illegal way, we may lose our life while travelling. So I have learnt, now I share my knowledge with my family, friends and community. ... If we go legally, our embassy can do many things for us and if we have got harm, we will come back to our country without any problem. When we go illegally, we will suffer different problems like rape, travelling problem, etc. [FGD, 13-18 girls, Kombolcha, intervention]

Feasibility of Delivery: Perceptions of Implementers and Stakeholders

Interviews with Hotspot staff members and direct observation of activities (such as a vocational training graduation ceremony) demonstrated the dedication and motivation of IP and local authority staff. IPs described difficulties in gaining community trust and support at the beginning, but slowly gaining ground through concerted efforts to make the programme locally relevant and effective:

The main problem that we have seen in the members of the community was dependency. They expect more handouts. ... So, that expectation of a handout or support in kind was a big challenge during the time. [Dessie, IP staff member #1]

There is supervision. The organization supervision ensures the program. Community mobilizers are there. We all check. ... As a new project, our organizational structure creates an opportunity to do our best. There is a large staff and all staff are involved with this work. ... Since it is a new pilot project and the issue is individually sensitive, all are engaged. As an organization, we built strong team spirit. [Kombolcha IP staff member #1]

Early efforts to ensure the programme was interesting to community members through consultation and participatory planning eased delivery of difficult messages. Community stakeholders (local authorities from the different bureau) affirmed that concerted, step-by-step efforts helped establish a strong foundation for Hotspot activities and make necessary adaptations when certain aspects of delivery did not work well:

The preparation was good. As you know, our community expects many things in kind from NGO's to participate in the program. ... Before they arrange the program, the organization

assesses what the community needs with the support of different women development groups, which are elected by the community. ... The program was prepared to be interesting and to make the participants feel free. [Youth Affairs representative, Dessie]

When we started the program, peer education was in the kebele and in school. Community conversation was at the kebele. The plan was to get 100 people once per week. But it was difficult to get those 100 people again and again. It was not controllable and it didn't keep the quality. So now, we are doing peer education only at school. [Kombolcha IP staff member #1]

We planned to address 10,800 people. It is 108 groups and each group has 100 members. According to our agreement, it has one contact. But currently it is not manageable. So the organization evaluates the situation and now the number of one group members decreases to 30. [Kombolcha IP staff member #2]

Implementers described good partnership between IPs and government initiatives delivered by local authorities. Both sides identified their shared goals and common approach, and thus worked together synergistically.

We are working with [the local IP] on job creation. ... We work jointly ... on providing training for returnees and potential migrants. ... So, the city administration prepared the place and [the IP] subsequently fulfilled the materials. [City administrator, Kombolcha, intervention]

The last [of our 3] objectives is strengthening the existing government structures that are directly related to the activities of our program. If these structures do not exist, we establish and strengthen them based on the government structure. [Dessie, IP staff member #1]

We are integrated with the government body. Since we have a good image in the area, we can do anything at any time with the collaboration of government.... We have discussions with Women and Children affairs, Police, Justice, small enterprise and city administration. We see together what are the problems and the process. [Kombolcha IP staff member #2]

With regard to the government, labor and social affairs follow up the implementation of the law and proclamation in order to prevent illegal migration. And also provide awareness rising on the legal requirement. In our side, we facilitate the forum for government and provide trainings. [Dessie, IP staff member #2]

Furthermore, there was clarity among IPs regarding the goal of the Hotspot, and their role in shifting attitudes away from messages about migration prevention to more nuanced understandings of migration safety. IPs looked for opportunities to disseminate this message and influence other migration campaigns.

We will talk about safe migration, what are the government's new rules especially in 923. It [new legal proclamation] is very smart and it provides so many rights for migrants. So they [community groups] will discuss in four sessions. They will develop their plan and do different activities. So about safety, it is written clearly in the manual. How can they migrate safely? what is expected from them? These are mentioned in the manual. [Kombolcha IP staff member #2]

There also appeared to be agreement on how to recruit eligible participants. As in Addis Ababa, government bodies were tasked with identifying returnees and/or potential migrants. In Amhara, IPs felt comfortable with the process and also could influence decision-making.

The sub city has a list of beneficiaries. They have list of returnees, orphans, etc. They prioritize the target beneficiaries within the sub city based on the type of the problems they

faced. After the screening process has been completed and confirmed, we asked them for the implementation [Dessie, IP staff member #1]

We will request from Women and Children Affairs office the criteria we need [for beneficiaries] and they will select and send us the list - we will comment on it. If it is not appropriate for our interest, we will return back. [Kombolcha IP staff member #2]

The good working relationship between IPs and local authorities, and their shared objectives, were seen to create an enabling environment for the Hotspot. There was a common perception among respondents that community need, government policy, and Hotspot aims all coincided.

As for me, the existence of law and proclamation numbers 909 and 923 can be considered as a favorable condition. ...Labour and Social Affairs office take the [migration] issue as [one of its] key duties and responsibilities, and it is also stated as one of its missions. The Government also assigned focal persons at woreda level to follow up the issues. In addition, religious leaders are also working in a coordinated effort with all concerned institutions. ... Currently, the situation is very good and encouraging. [Dessie, IP staff member #2]

On the other hand, the ongoing lack of clarity around the legal status of labour out-migration in Ethiopia (and incomplete lifting of the ban) posed a barrier to disseminating the messages of the Hotspot programme as IPs would have liked. Following the formal lifting of the 2013 ban, several “proclamations” have been issued without yet clearing the path for official means of departure.

The lack of expansion of the legal travelling process is one of the issues. Since the legal one is narrowed, people may prefer the illegal. If the legal travelling is facilitated, people may compare the difference between clearly and prefer the legal one. [FGD local authorities, Kombolcha, intervention]

As a challenge, we teach about illegal migration but we don't have options. We teach them the safest way of travelling for those of who want to migrate but it is closed. It is a challenge for us anywhere. We hope that it will be open but the major challenge for us is this. [Dessie, IP staff member #1]

The difficulty of encouraging potential migrants to wait for removal of legal impediments was highlighted as a challenge to the awareness raising approach. Participants admitted that until the ban was fully lifted, the only possible means of migration are currently illegal, and thus would continue to be used by people seeking to leave as soon as possible:

Youth don't want to listen. They accept the training but they don't stop migrating because there is no job opportunity here. So they prefer to go there and try their chance. ... They go illegally. Because now they say the legal route has started but there is a very long row [queue] for passports in Addis Ababa. So they don't want to wait and prefer to go illegally with brokers. [FGD with returnees and potential migrants, 19-30, Kombolcha, intervention]

Perceptions of changing trend

Many participants state that they have “changed their mind” and want to stay in Ethiopia following some aspect of the Hotspot, most notably returnees who undertook business development training and received the 6000 Birr grant.

It changed my aim. I was thinking of going back to an Arabian country before the training, but now I've changed my mind. [Returnee, vocational training participant, 25, Dessie, intervention]

Here in Ethiopia, the life is very difficult. So, my decision was to go back again, going by any way (whether it be legal or illegal). But with their detailed information and training, I've changed my mind. When they asked me eight months after the training about what I thought at the moment, I replied saying, "I want to work here and change my life." I have a profession now. . [Returnee, vocational training participant, Dessie, intervention]

We do have reports and we can share with you. Also in kebele _ one returnee who is ready to go for the 3rd time stopped her migration after the discussion. Normally within 9 and 10 months, we would not have expected that outcome. [Kombolcha IP staff member #2]

Some of these declarations of changed ambitions are likely to partly result from desirability bias, wherein grateful programme recipients feel they ought to demonstrate positive impact. Nonetheless, participants also are able to clearly state the prerequisites for safe migration, and show that they have acquired accurate information that they can refer to in future and pass on to others:

I understand the major things that should be done in order for it [migration] to be legal. If someone tells me that she wanted to go, I will tell her the following things: you should be above 18 years old, you have to have finished, at least, your 8th grade education, you have to take trainings to learn technique and you have to go to a vocational school and also agree with social affairs. So, starting from the beginning up to end, the migration should be with the recognition of the government. [Returnee, vocational training participant, Dessie, intervention]

I have gotten better information on how I can protect myself from illegal migration. First of all, I don't want to migrate anymore. But If I want to, I won't do my previous mistake again. For example, I will open my own account and put my money there. I will also advise others to open their own account. [Returnee, underwent business training but has not received grant yet, Dessie, intervention]

Similarly, in a FGD among 19-30 year old women (both returnees and potential migrants) in one of the intervention sites in Kombolcha, participants shared a nuanced understanding of safe vs. unsafe migration, although they still used the terms "legal" and "illegal" to differentiate them. They understood, however, that travel by plane or with a passport did not in themselves confer legality:

Migration means the movement of people from one country to another. Migration has two ways. It is legal and illegal. In legal migration, there is government involvement from start up to end. Illegal means with brokers. It may be through the sea or with passport. But it is not known by the government [FGD 19-30, Kombolcha, intervention]

Before I got the trainings, I had no knowledge that there is illegal migration while being on an airplane. I used to think that in order for the migration to be illegal, crossing the sea was the only way it could be carried out. If someone told me that I had a passport, a visa, a ticket, and that I will go with an airplane, I will agree without a doubt. But now, I understand it may not be legal. [School girl, peer educator, Dessie, intervention]

Legal migration means with the agreement of both the country's government and the Embassy alongside obtaining the correct visa. It is not a matter of going to an airplane. The government should recognize it. There is migration through brokers without the recognition of government. If the government recognizes it, it has so many processes. You will go to social

affairs. Your working hours are limited and decided with the agreement of your employer. So, going with the legal way is very good. [Returnee, married, Dessie, intervention]

The availability of comparison areas in Amhara region provides an opportunity for some indication of whether perceived positive changes in the community are greater where the Hotspot programme is being implemented than where it is not. Individual interviews with returnees did seem to suggest that women in the intervention areas were less likely to consider re-migration their best option. While the numbers are small, it is nonetheless the case that the only returnee to identify re-migration as her best option was in a comparison site:

I, myself, want to return back but I am sick. Life is very difficult for me. So my option is migration. At least I will live with a clean environment there. [Returnee, Dessie, comparison area]

There also appeared to be a qualitative difference in the way residents talked about migration depending on whether they had been exposed to Hotspot activities. As documented earlier, many participants gave clear definitions or criteria of safe/legal migration, and listed measures potential migrants could take to reduce their risks. This clarity was not present in descriptions of migration routes and hazards by non-participants. Among these, there was a more vague and simplistic understanding of “legal” and “illegal”:

Respondent: Legal and illegal are the two types of migration. I believe that the legal route is best. ... The legal one is better.

Interviewer: Why it is better?

Respondent: If you are not comfortable with the employer, you have a chance to change three times. The other thing is the fact that you don't go across the sea. It is directly with an airplane. You have support from the government. If you go illegally, no one is responsible for you. [Community woman, Dessie, comparison area]

It is about who is recognized and not recognized by the government. If you are legal, you can call an Ethiopia agency and they will discuss with the other country's agency. If you are illegal, no one will remember. You might get raped, killed or arrested. [Prospective migrant, 29, Dessie, comparison]

Another cue to the success of the Hotspot programme in broadening understanding of safer migration as a concept comes from comparison of public information posters seen by fieldworkers in intervention and comparison sites respectively. Poster 1 translates into “We all need to stop trafficking of women to prevent severe exploitation” and was found in a comparison site while Poster 2 says “Migration without adequate information or preparation can be unsafe.”

Poster 1



Poster 2



Not all key informants in intervention areas knew about the Hotspot activities, however, nor had absorbed the more nuanced understandings about migration. For example, one Idir chairperson was unclear on what was being offered in addition to government-sponsored activities, and also did not clearly understand what safe or legal migration might entail:

We tell them that when you go with a sea you may lose your life. Another thing our country Ethiopia also has enough resources so let's work together and benefit ourselves. ... We hear on the news that when migrants go with the sea, the boat crashes and many of them lost their lives. [Idir chair, kombolcha, intervention]

Amhara: Lessons Learned and Ongoing Challenges

The Amhara programme benefits from good working relationships established across stakeholders and a sense of shared purpose between community members, local authorities, and IPs. There is direct collaboration between government initiatives and IPs, leading to collaborative delivery of different activities. Dialogue has been established such that even though specific government bodies are responsible for tasks such as recruiting participants, IPs feel able to intervene if they are not satisfied with the process or its results.

There also appears to be effective integration of activities, such as engaging vocational training and business skills development students in conducting community conversations. This participatory approach is also seen within the school-based programme, where

students are trained as peer educators and organise student group discussions as well as try to disseminate new knowledge among family members. This strong participatory component appears to be very effective in building participants' confidence, willingness to speak in public and share their experiences, and leads to both satisfaction and a sense of ownership over the programme.

Support structures and supervisory follow-up by staff have been put in place so that returnees and other vulnerable women starting out with their new business feel they have expertise to draw on if they confront problems. Similarly, school club members enjoyed ongoing contact with trainers, and felt they could seek assistance in future. Thus the Hotspot in Amhara feels like a more permanent presence in the community rather than a series of one-off activities.

This is not to say there weren't difficulties at the beginning of the programme, including unrealistic expectations by beneficiaries and overly ambitious targets for some aspects, e.g. support group membership. However, there appears to be widespread agreement that these challenges were overcome with time, and through multi-sectoral efforts. It also appears that the Hotspot programme was introduced at a time when community members generally seemed receptive to information and advice about migration, possibly due to the coinciding loosening on the ban and subsequent issuing of legal "proclamation" that are quite complex and not executed in full. This provided a window of opportunity for the Hotspot intervention to offer new ways of thinking and talking about migration, moving beyond simplistic associations, i.e. "legal = safe = airplane" and "illegal=unsafe=sea."

Discussion: Similarities and Differences across Hotspot Sites

There are obvious similarities in delivery of the first year of the Hotspot programme in its two locations, Amhara and Addis Ketema. In both sites, the intervention has mostly been implemented as planned, with a few delays and "teething difficulties." Participants appear satisfied and appreciative of activities and describe most components as being useful, relevant, and high quality. IPs are clear on the aim and objectives of the programme, and are working to shift attitudes and norms toward a more health-promoting understanding of different ways to migrate and the preparation required.

In both sites, participation in activities appears to serve to increase young women's self-esteem and confidence in voicing and sharing their ideas. Many beneficiaries of the different types of activities expressed their pride in teaching others, engaging in thoughtful discussions, providing a useful service to their communities, and being able to take care of themselves and their children. Even women who expressed fears about their independence in future or admitted they were considering migration made references to having developed new "hope" and self-belief. The Hotspot appears to offer a different way for returnees and potential migrants to look at their personal situations and choices. Young female students also felt valued when their opinions were sought, and when they saw themselves as potential peer influencers.

High expectations by potential beneficiaries were early challenges in both sites. Managing such expectations is always difficult, and requires transparent procedures and clear dialogue. Respondents in Amhara ultimately seemed more satisfied with the level of

support they received than in Addis Ababa, and in parallel, there were some concerns raised in Addis Ababa about selection of beneficiaries and allocation of resources.

Finally, across the programme, managers showed willingness to adapt the intervention during delivery in order to address emerging challenges or refine aspects of the programme that were not working well. In Amhara, this related to number of groups set up and membership numbers, while in Addis Ababa the most noteworthy change was to the requirement that women pool their start-up grants and develop group-based businesses. In both cases, flexibility and negotiation clearly led to programmatic improvements that were noted by community members, programme participants, and stakeholders alike.

There are also significant differences between the Addis Ketema and Amhara Hotspots. Some of these are due to the slightly different focus in each location, as activities in Amhara focus on building community-wide capacity for interpreting accurate information about safe and unsafe migration, delivered variously through school based activities, vocational training and business development curricula, and larger public forums. This overarching aim is supported by economic strengthening activities directed at returnees and potential migrants, including both start-up costs for new businesses and assisting girls with school retention. While all these components are also present in Addis Ketema, there is more of a focus on rehabilitation of returnees, including a residential component for the most vulnerable, and there does not appear to be the same participatory engagement with all programme beneficiaries nor similarly cross-cutting engagement of different kinds of beneficiaries in community education. Longer term involvement with participants seemed more marked in Amhara, where participants felt they had access to trainers and staff. In Addis Ababa the activities appear to be delivered a bit more perfunctorily, with participants (especially school girls and business development graduates) feeling they were neglected after having served the needs of the programme.

In Amhara, the Hotspot programme has created a more cohesive identity, with clearer links between IPs and government bodies and between activities than in Addis Ababa. Respondents on both sides of the IP-government partnership mentioned that effective cooperation and integration with formal initiatives were particular strengths of the programme to date. Despite the fact that in both Hotspot sites local authorities are tasked with identifying eligible participants, in Amhara this was seen to be consultative with IPs and no complaints were raised regarding favouritism. In Addis Ababa, means of recruitment into Hotspot activities raised concerns about lack of transparency.

The socio-political profiles of the two sites are extremely different and undoubtedly account for some of the differences in intervention delivery. Despite being increasingly urban, Dessie and Kombolcha are both still natural communities, where people are more likely to know those living around them. They are economically mixed, with wealthier and poorer households intermixed. Addis Ketema is much more dynamic and transient, and attracts individuals and families from across Ethiopia, most of whom now inhabit the lowest economic strata. Reflecting this heterogeneity, the IPs also come with distinct priorities and areas of expertise (providing psychosocial support to severely mentally distressed returnees, offering vocational training to vulnerable women, working in schools).

The Addis Ketema environment, therefore, is less cohesive and thus conducive to the Hotspot strategy. The police are not constructive partners, and many participants are either

incredibly vulnerable (such as the returnees in rehabilitation facilities), or somewhat adapted to urban survival (e.g. through sex work), and thus have either greater dependence on the services provided or higher expectations of what they require to make changing their current livelihoods worthwhile. They may be less likely to feel a sense of solidarity with one another, hence the reluctance of recipients of start-up grants to develop collective businesses.

The local context is thus a critical component in facilitating or posing barriers to activities funded through the Hotspot programme. Taking an incremental approach, looking for windows of opportunity to introduce new concepts related to “safer migration,” and taking advantage of local interests demonstrably appear to help achieve the Hotspot aims. This is most clearly visible in the differences in how local people talk about the risks of migration in the intervention areas compared to the comparison sites in Amhara.

From a research perspective, reliance on IPs and school or vocational training administrators to select respondents for the process evaluation results in a positive bias that is difficult to quantify. Quite naturally, organisations are keen to showcase their most “engaged” and vocal, dedicated students or participants. In future, additional efforts will be made to try to meet “random” participants. This is easier with returnees who have started up small businesses or community members who have attended awareness raising, as fieldworkers can approach them directly.

Conclusion

As the Ethiopia Hotspot programme continues to evolve, it can learn from its own experiences and adapt to changing circumstances. Although standardised messages and approaches help to guide the programme and ensure IPs share the same aims, the local environment clearly plays a key role in shaping the intervention.

There are already positive signs of identifying local opportunities and responding to emerging challenges, such as managing community expectations, accommodating other stakeholders, and changing the structure of activities to better meet participants’ needs. By reflecting on lessons learned in the first year, these kinds of adaptations can continue to be made to strengthen the programme in both Addis Ketema and Amhara.

The social, economic and political landscape of Ethiopia also continues to change, creating broader contextual factors that influence social norms, attitudes and behaviours related to migration. The Hotspot programme will inevitably need to respond and adapt to these, but is also in a position to influence them and contribute to new understandings and practices.

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