

International
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Summary Report on Socio-Economic Assessment of Migration in Ethiopia



Introduction

This report provides a summary of the Socio-Economic Assessments that were conducted with the objective to increase the knowledge base on migration dynamics and the need to employ a sectoral approach to identify potential job creation and employment opportunities for migrants (both potential and returnees) and refugees. The assessment also mapped the existing stakeholders and development partners (national, international, and local) and their ongoing efforts to tackle labour market challenges. The findings of the SEAs aimed to inform the design of the Stemming Irregular Migration in Northern and Central Ethiopia (SINCE) project.

The summary report highlights the context of youth unemployment and irregular migration in Ethiopia. It presents the methodology of the assessment, as well as key findings on migration trends, information on access to education and training, labour market trends, the driving factors of migration, the role of various stakeholders in mitigating irregular migration, and policy recommendations to address the identified challenges.

Introduction to Youth Unemployment and Irregular Migration

Ethiopia is the second-most populous country in Africa, with an estimated population of nearly 95 million in 2017. The current 2.6 per cent average population growth rate is considered to be among the highest in Africa, and by the year 2022, the population of the country is expected to reach around 105 million.¹ More than 80 per cent of the country's population lives in the five populous regions which were selected for the Socio-Economic Assessments.

Youth employment presents a particular challenge to Ethiopia; using the 2007 Census as reference, projections made in 2013 estimate that the country's population aged between 0-29 years will reach about 73 per cent of the current (2016) total population. Additionally, the economic progress achieved in the last decades has not been accompanied by concomitant job creation, particularly for young people. Contrary to common understanding that higher levels of education are inevitably correlated with employment and increasing positive labour market outcomes for the youth, the number of unemployed educated youth has actually gone up over the past years. With approximately three million young Ethiopians entering the labour force every year, ensuring productive and sustainable employment opportunities for them poses a challenge in both rural and urban areas.

The population pressure—coupled with limited economic opportunities and livelihood options for youths—has resulted in significant increases in the rate and magnitude of out-migration of Ethiopians to different countries in the last few years. The most vulnerable to migration are youths aged between 15 and 35 years who are unable to secure a decent livelihood or engage in productive employment. In fact, the rate of irregular migration increased after the Government of Ethiopia banned regular migration to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries in 2013. The increasing incidence of irregular migration remains a challenge for Ethiopia despite a number of initiatives by the government and other stakeholders to manage this phenomenon. Migrants are smuggled and trafficked in significant numbers through three major migration routes—the Eastern route via Djibouti to Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries, and the Middle East; the Northern route that transits through the Sudan, Egypt, and Libya into Europe; and the Southern route transiting through Kenya, Tanzania, and other African countries to South Africa.

In this regard, under the SINCE framework, the ILO is implementing a project called, Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Ethiopia. The current socio-economic assessments were undertaken as part of this project to inform an understanding of youth labour migration dynamics from high migration-prone areas.

¹ CSA Population Projections for Ethiopia, 2007-2037, August 2013.

Methodology

The assessments employed a purposive sampling technique to select the study sample. The assessments were conducted in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, and South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional States, and Addis Ababa City Administration. The woredas selected for the assessment were: Kobbo, Kombolcha, and Kemise from Amhara; Limu, Silte, and Mesqan from SNNP; Adabba, Sinana, and Sentema from Oromia; Aferom, Rayya-Alamata, and Atsibi from Tigray; and Woreda 7 (Addis Ketema sub-city), Woreda 10 (Kirkos sub-city), and Woreda 2 (Arada sub-city) from Addis Ababa City Administration.

A total of 186 key informant interviews were conducted with: returnees (48), unemployed youth/potential migrants (56), government representatives (59), Eritrean refugees (5), and community elders (18). Fifty-eight focus group discussions were held with unemployed youth, returnees, and experts from various sectors, along with potential migrants.

Primary and secondary sources of data were used to understand the push and pull factors leading to migration. Primary sources of data were collected through the key informant interviews and focussed group discussions. Field observations were used to triangulate information obtained through both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources of data were collected from different federal and regional sources, such as: Central Statistical Association (CSA), Demographic Health Survey (DHS), Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED), Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA), and periodic national and regional labour surveys at different levels.

To arrive at the root causes for migration, the assessments analysed basic demographic, socio-cultural, economic, and political situations in depth through purposefully selected target zones and woredas. The existing labour market dynamics and trends were also examined, with an emphasis on public employment services and employment creation in the target areas.

The findings of the socio-economic assessments were validated in a workshop organised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May 2017. A total of 67 representatives of various local and international NGOs, the government, UN, and EU countries participated in the consultation. Their feedback and observations were included during the finalisation of the study.



Above: Workshop participants.

Key Findings of the Assessments

This section highlights the major findings of the SEAs, and covers critical areas such as migration trends, the key drivers of migration, challenges in access to education and training, labour market trends, and the role of different stakeholders in mitigating irregular migration.

Migration Trends

- Cross-border irregular migration in search of better economic opportunities abroad is on the increase. However, it is difficult to know the exact number crossing the border each year due to the nature of migration. According to the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat of the Horn of Africa and Yemen, between 2008 and June 2016, more than 365,000 migrants and asylum seekers arrived in Yemen, of which more than 80 per cent were Ethiopians. All the study

regions display similar patterns of a continued increasing trend in irregular migration.

- A significant proportion of inward migrants (i.e., into Ethiopia) are refugees. Ethiopia is the second-largest refugee hosting country in Africa, with 735,165 refugees registered as of March 2016. By May 2017, the refugee population had increased to 838,722.² South Sudan refugees constitute the majority of the refugee population (42.71 per cent) followed by Somalis (30.46 per cent), and Eritreans (20.83 per cent).³
- The 2013 ban on migration by the government of Ethiopia following the massive deportation of Ethiopians from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also contributed to an increase in irregular migration numbers.
- The many reasons for outward migration from Ethiopia can be explained by the push and pull factors listed below.

Push Factors

Poverty

- There is high level of poverty in the regions (in Tigray and Addis Ababa, for example, the incidence of poverty is 23.4 per cent, and 18.9 per cent, respectively) which contributes significantly to out-migration.

Unemployment

- As per the 2013 National Labour Force Survey, the national unemployment rate is 4.5 per cent; urban unemployment is 16.5 per cent, and rural unemployment is 2.5 per cent

Low Payment/Wage

- The high inflation rate and lack of legislation to ensure a minimum wage rate acts as a crucial push factor.

²United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2017). Ethiopia Fact Sheet, May 2017. Addis Ababa: UNHCR.

³United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2016). Ethiopia Fact Sheet, December 2016. Addis Ababa: UNHCR.

Pull Factors

Socio-economic Opportunities

- West Europe is considered attractive because it offers a higher living standard, educational and job opportunities, and protection of political and human rights.
- For the GCC corridor, the main lure lies in the assurance of higher earnings and saving opportunities.

Family and Peer Pressure

- Social networks and support systems, such as migrant family members and friends, provide positive examples that spur migration.

Human Traffickers

- Traffickers propagate the positive aspects of migration. The risk aspects are characteristically glossed over.

The main destinations for Ethiopian migrants are the Sudan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, USA, Canada, and West Europe.

Education and Training

- The assessments show that the government of Ethiopia has ensured access to education across all stages of the education cycle (pre-school, primary education, general secondary education, TVET, and higher education). However, the following challenges were identified:

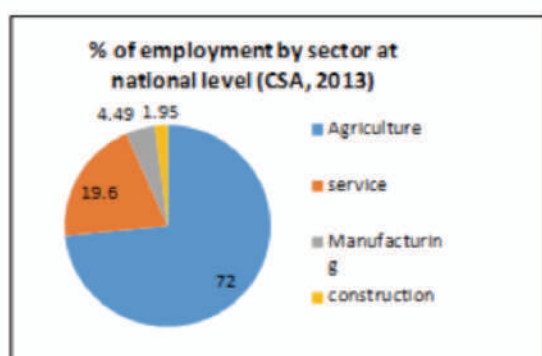
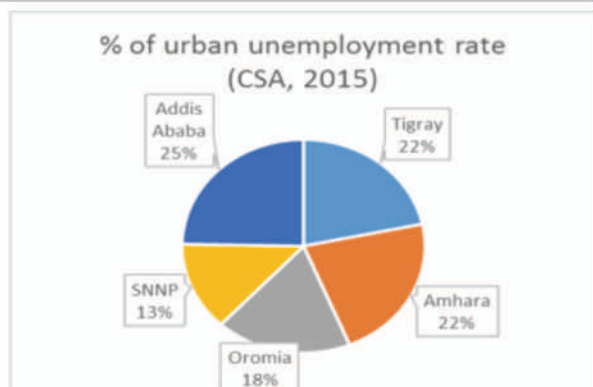
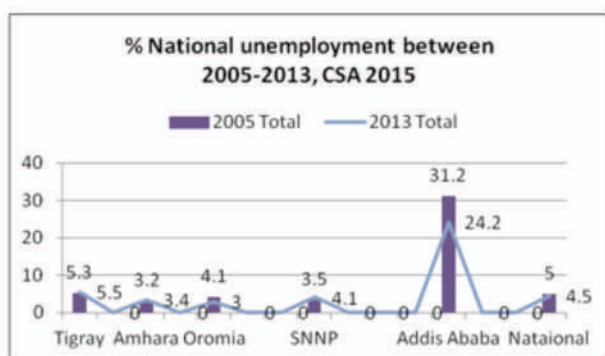


- 1) Low quality training and a trend towards “massification” of education;
- 2) Mismatch between education/training and labour market demands/requirements; and
- 3) Lack of integration and coordination between training and labour market information.

Labour Market Trends

- The share of the economically active population shows an increasing trend between 2004 and 2014 as opposed to the demands of the labour market.⁴ Agriculture continues to the largest employer at the national level.

⁴CSA, Labour Force Survey, 2013.



Role of Stakeholders in Mitigating Irregular Migration

- While the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs are engaged in registering, compiling, and documenting labour market information for dissemination, this is not done on a regular, ongoing basis. By the same token, the Bureau of Youth and Sports Affairs (BoYSA) is not only engaged in the registration of unemployed youth but also conducts surveys to collect labour market information. This indicates that BoLSA and BoYSA are in competing roles where the registration of unemployed youth and youth livelihoods promotion is concerned. This calls for effective coordination mechanisms to rectify the doubling of effort.

- A number of NGOs are working along with the Bureau of Youth and Sports Affairs in implementing various projects on aspects of youth development. These projects assist the already-existing efforts of the government in empowering the youth through skill-based trainings and provision of seed money for starting up businesses. However, the assessments found that NGO interventions on job creation is infinitesimal and limited when compared to the magnitude of irregular migration faced by the country.

- Coordination and synergy between different government bureaus and agencies and non-governmental organisations who are playing an active role in the generation of employment was found to be inadequate. Hence, even youths who have established their enterprises face challenges with regard to access to working space, finance, and market opportunities.

- Public employment services in the regions have limited their functions to merely registering the unemployed. Furthermore, the registration of the unemployed is not comprehensively captured. At the same time, public employment services at the federal (MoLSA) level and in the regions are unable to capture, on a regular basis, labour market information in the private sector and/or establish coordination mechanisms for market linkages.

Policy Recommendations

- National policies and programming in the area of employment and economic development should promote collaboration between: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Ministry of Education; Technical and Vocational Education and Training agency; Ministry of Women and Children; Ministry of Youth and Sports; and also with NGOs, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), Ethiopian Employers' Federation (EEF), and the private sector.
- The Labour and Social Affairs and the Youth and Sport Affairs Bureaus have competing roles when it comes to assessing unemployment and labour market information at the zonal and woreda levels in the regions. Assigning either bureau as a lead agency for engendering job creation and to streamline the mandate will address challenges such as duplication of effort, and the wastage of time and resources.
- Establishing an effective and efficient Labour Market Information System will strengthen information exchange and utilisation at the federal and regional levels.
- Linking the broader economic plans of the country and respective regions can potentially close the gap between knowledge and practice, and can enable the establishment of mechanisms to connect job seekers to employers.
- One of the driving factors of irregular migration for youth are the pre-existing attitudes and perceptions wherein going abroad is seen as a panacea that will address economic problems. The assessments found that the awareness raising interventions of the government and non-government stakeholders are inadequate and hence not able to achieve the intended results. Coordinated and focused awareness-raising efforts around irregular migration and the inherent risks therein are key to changing behaviour.
- Incentivising interventions through development partners and private businesses has the potential to ensure public-private partnerships and enhance the role of private institutions in job and employment creation.
- Revisiting the MSE registration requirements and the microfinance policy in order to make the system youth-friendly is essential, as is revising the lending policy of microfinance institutions that requires 20 per cent pre-loan savings. The necessary amendments would serve as an incentive to promote youth entrepreneurship.
- Action items that improve the capacity of public employment services to register and document job seekers and vacancies, provide career guidance and counselling, and which also remove bureaucratic procedures in accessing working spaces and setting up enterprises will make the system more responsive to the needs of the country's youth.
- Promoting safe and legal labour migration and lifting the ban on labour migration can create an enabling environment for safe and informed out-migration.
- Over and above strengthening coordination between different government line bureaus and other stakeholders, it is also important to establish a platform for sharing best practices in job creation within the region and across the country.

- Industrial parks have the scope to create a large number of jobs and open up economic opportunities resulting in a rise in productivity and consequently, positive contributions to the nation's economy. It is thus recommended that industrial parks be placed at the centre of national employment generation programmes.
- Organising consultations between the government, employers, and workers and holding social dialogues to create awareness on the need to have national laws on minimum wage could accelerate the formulation of relevant legislation.



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