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Refugee Economies in Addis Ababa: Towards Sustainable Opportunities for Urban Communities?



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Executive Summary

- Addis Ababa has only 22,000 registered refugees, out of a national refugee population of 900,000. They comprise two main groups: 17,000 Eritreans who are there on the so-called Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP) based on their capacity to be self-reliant, and 5,000 Somali refugees who are mainly there on the Urban Assistance Programme (UAP) because of specific vulnerabilities that cannot be met in camps. The UAP refugees receive financial assistance; the OCP refugees do not.
- Based on qualitative research and a survey of 2,441 refugees and members of the proximate host community, we examine the economic lives of the refugee communities and their interactions with the host community. In this report, we draw upon the data to consider the prospects for a sustainable urban response in the context of Ethiopia's adoption of the new Refugee Proclamation in 2019, which appears to provide refugees with the right to work and freedom of movement.
- Despite the contrasting basis on which Eritreans and Somalis have been selected to live in Addis, and their very different levels of education, both communities face extreme precarity. Prior to implementation of the new Proclamation, refugees have not been allowed to work or register businesses. 79% of Eritrean refugees and 93% of Somali refugees are unemployed. Even among those who work, average income levels are significantly lower than that of the proximate host community. Meanwhile, both populations have much worse welfare outcomes than hosts in terms of indicators like mental and physical health, and child school enrollment. The 'mental health' gap between refugees and the host community is especially striking, and requires further analysis.
- Of the tiny minority who work, 86% of Eritreans are employees and 14% are self-employed, while 57% of Somalis are employees and 43% are self-employed. The top employment sectors for Somali refugees are cleaner/maid, interpreter/translator, restaurant worker, hawking, and commerce. For Eritrean refugees they are beautician/hairdresser, mechanic, daily labourer, teacher, and carpenter. Where refugee businesses do exist, they are usually unregistered, do not pay tax, were created without significant start-up capital, and rarely employ staff.
- Given the absence of socio-economic rights and opportunities, refugees rely upon three sets of social networks: with hosts, other refugees, and transnationally. Hosts are generally sympathetic to refugees and some self-identify as having the same ethnic background as refugees. Ethiopians often register businesses on behalf of refugees in return for a share of the profits. They also serve as citizen 'guarantors', vouching for the ability of refugees to support themselves, a regulatory condition for OCP status. Other refugees provide forms of mutual self-help, and those with limited means often pool resources, including by living together. Meanwhile, in the absence of work, many refugees are dependent upon remittances.
- Both refugee communities feel a sense of boredom, idleness, and hopelessness. They regard the lack of economic opportunity as having a detrimental effect on their physical and mental health. In this context, most see no future in Ethiopia, and over 90% of refugees aspire to move onwards to Europe, North America, or Australia, although only 60% believe this is realistic, and an overwhelming majority would prefer to take legal rather than illegal migration routes.
- Logically, there seem to be three ways to meet the aspirations of refugees in Addis. First, to give refugees both the legal right and the opportunity to work within Addis. Second, to create more legal pathways for migration or resettlement. Third, to create socio-economic opportunities, including jobs for refugees, elsewhere in Ethiopia. We suggest that each of these options present challenges but that each one may have a role to play. Existing funding sources such as the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa), and the World Bank's Economic Opportunities Programme intended to support refugees and host communities in Ethiopia, for example, could be used to support better socio-economic opportunities for refugees and hosts in Addis Ababa.
- Developing a coherent urban refugee programme is important, we argue, because urban refugee numbers in Addis are likely to increase as a result of general trends in urbanisation, the government's commitment to expand OCP numbers, and the 2019 Refugee Proclamation's apparent expansion of socio-economic freedoms. Refugees, the Ethiopian Government, and the international community all have an interest in making urban refugee settlement sustainable.

1. Introduction

Ethiopia has an open-door policy towards refugees, for whom it is a destination and a transit country. It currently hosts more than 900,000 refugees, making it the second largest host country in Africa. This population comprises 422,240 South Sudanese, 253,889 Somalis, and 173,879 Eritreans, nationality groups that receive refugee status on a prima facie basis.

Nonetheless the country has for a long time operated an encampment policy towards refugees, requiring refugees to reside in designated areas. The Refugee Proclamation of 2004 also restricts a range of socio-economic rights. The legislation means that refugees have been unable to access formal employment, obtain business licenses, own mobile property, or open a bank account without a letter of permission from ARRA (Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs). This has placed significant limitations on refugees living in urban areas. Only 22,000 registered refugees reside in Addis Ababa, the majority of whom are Eritreans.

Two legal exceptions to encampment have allowed refugees to live in Addis: the Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP) and the Urban Assistance Program (UAP). For historical reasons, the former is exclusively for Eritrean refugees who are able to support themselves or be supported by relatives. The latter is for refugees with medical, protection, or humanitarian concerns that camp-level facilities cannot adequately address. UAP refugees receive a monthly stipend and health and educational support; OCP refugees do not. There are 17,000 OCP and 5,000 UAP refugees in Addis. In addition, there are an unknown number of unregistered refugees and some with other approved statuses, such as those approved for and awaiting resettlement.

Ethiopia has committed to change its refugee policies to allow refugees greater opportunity for socio-economic inclusion. In September 2016, at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in New York, it committed to '9 pledges' to provide more opportunities for refugees in the country. For example, it pledged to expand its out-of-camp policy by at least 10,000 places, provide work permits to refugees, provide access to irrigable land for crop cultivation, facilitate local integration in instances of protracted displacement (for the 14,000 refugees who have been in the country for longer than 20 years), and earmark a percentage of jobs within industrial parks to refugees (initially 30,000). In November 2017, the government launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Ethiopia to mobilise international support from bilateral donors and multilateral institutions including the World Bank in support of development assistance for refugee-hosting areas. In January 2019, the Government passed a new Refugee Proclamation expanding refugee rights in accordance with its earlier pledges. In theory, it creates the right to work and freedom of movement. In practice, however, the Proclamation contains

a number of possible restrictions on those rights, and their implementation depends upon follow-up legislation.

The question is: what difference will this range of legislative and policy changes make, both in general and, more specifically, in urban contexts? The change in national legislation has yet to be implemented. One of our research aims is to collect 'before and after' data to assess the impact of the change on refugees and host communities. It represents a unique methodological opportunity to assess what difference changes such as the right to work and freedom of movement may make to socio-economic outcomes. In this report, we outline some of the findings of our first, baseline wave of data collection in Addis, prior to implementation of the legislative and policy changes.

We explore the challenges faced by urban refugees in Addis Ababa, and the informal adaptation strategies they adopt in response. In theory, there are two distinctive groups of registered refugees in Addis, the OCP and UAP refugees, and in principle they occupy opposite ends of the vulnerability spectrum. In practice, however, they face a common set of constraints. Focusing on Eritrean OCP refugees and Somali UAP refugees, we show that both groups are currently in positions of extreme precarity, partly as a result of restrictions on the right to work, which leave them reliant upon the informal sector and vulnerable to exploitation. Consequently, refugees rely upon three sets of social networks: i) with nationals; ii) with other refugees; iii) transnationally as the basis of their economic strategies. Nevertheless, for most, this is insufficient to sustain an adequate level of welfare, most are left in limbo, and a significant proportion aspire to onward movement.

Overall, we show that although Eritrean refugees have several significant advantages compared to Somalis, such as more education and higher levels of integration within the Ethiopian society, both refugee populations face extreme socio-economic challenges, including low incomes, high unemployment levels, poor mental and physical health indicators, and low life satisfaction, for example, when compared to the surrounding host communities. As a result, the overwhelming majority aspire to migrate onwards or access resettlement, with a significant focus on Europe and the United States. The implication is that creating sustainable socio-economic opportunities, including through new job creation, will be crucial in order to improve welfare outcomes and offer alternatives to onward migration.

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2. Methodology

Our fieldwork in Addis Ababa took place between August and October 2018. It is based on a mixed-methods, participatory approach. We focused on registered Eritrean and Somali refugees. In our qualitative research, we held 10 focus group discussions and undertook around 30 semi-structured interviews with refugees from Somalia and Eritrea. In addition, we interviewed relevant non-refugee stakeholders, including staff members of UN agencies and NGOs, government officials in charge of refugee issues, and members of the local host community. We encountered challenges in accessing refugees; many were reluctant to be interviewed given the illegality of their economic activities, and almost all interviewees requested anonymity. All interviewees were compensated for their time.

In our quantitative data collection, we undertook a survey of 2,441 refugees and host community members (from 1,233 households) in Addis Ababa.

	Somali Areas	Eritrean Areas	Total
Refugees	417	693	1,110
Host Community	618	713	1,331
Total	1,035	1,406	2,441

Table 1: Sample size

Given how dispersed refugees are within the city, we chose to focus our study on the most significant Somali and Eritrean-hosting areas: Bole Michael and Gofa Mebrat Haile¹, respectively. In terms of sampling, we adopted different strategies for the different focus populations.

For Somali refugees, due to the limited size of the registered population of Somali refugees in Addis Ababa, we conducted a survey of all registered urban refugees in Addis Ababa's high refugee concentration Woredas (administrative subdivisions) Bole 1 and 2 (both in Bole Michael). We included all urban registered refugees and refugees on movement passes. All members of a given household were interviewed.

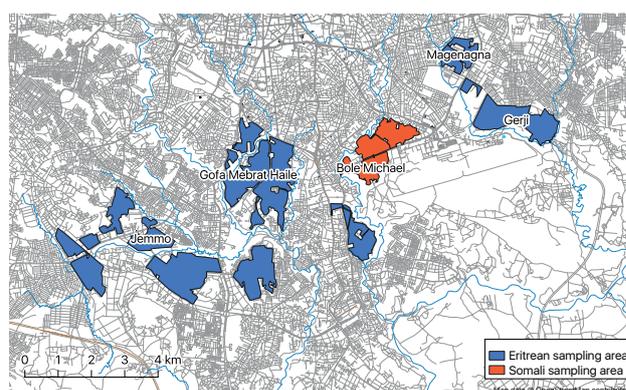
For Eritrean refugees, we focused on the high refugee concentration areas of Nifasilk Lafto 1 (Jemmo), 2, 5 (Gofa Mebrat Haile), 6, 9, 12, and Bole 5 (Magenagna/Haya Hulet) and 10 (Gerji). We selected a simple random sample of all registered urban refugees from the UNHCR/ARRA database. Many refugees on the list had subsequently moved and could not be reached via their registered contact details or refused to participate. Those who had moved within Addis were interviewed despite now living outside the selected areas. In every household, from which an individual was selected, we interviewed up to three adults aged between 18 and 65 years old, including the household head, the primary food preparer, and an additional randomly

selected person. For the host community, we focused on those living in our selected high refugee concentration areas. We employed a two-phase sampling strategy. In the first step, we spatially selected random mapping locations within the refugee sampling areas. In the second step, we randomly selected 15 households from the 50 households closest to the random mapping location. In the selected households, individual selection was identical to the Eritrean refugee sampling. Refusing households were replaced.

For Somali refugees, we mobilised the community in two stages. First, all refugees in UNHCR's database were contacted by a group of community mobilisers and invited to come to a local NGO's premises (in this case the Norwegian Refugee Council). Many of those within the database could not be reached via the given phone numbers. After the list was exhausted, community mobilisers went beyond the lists and also included refugees on movement passes, resettlement visas, or with other UNHCR/ARRA approved status. We ended the survey when our mobilisers could no longer identify possible respondents for several days in a row, implying that nearly all Somali refugees within the sampling area have been interviewed.

For Eritrean refugees, we needed to adopt an alternative approach. For the first two days, respondents were contacted using their phone details. Home visits were arranged. However, after slow progress, community mobilisers instead invited respondents to attend the NGO premises. After initially finding it hard to organise follow-up interviews with other members of a household, we invited all the selected household members to attend interviews together.

For host communities, we firstly selected our sampling areas by locating all of the refugee households GPS coordinates on a map. We then mapped out the remaining households within a certain geographical proximity to particular clusters, and from those, we randomly sampled 15 households for every 50 mapped. We then arranged household visits as the basis for interviews.



Map 1: Addis Ababa

¹ Throughout this report we use Gofa Mebrat and Gofa interchangeably, and they are also sometimes referred as Gofa Mebrat Haile.

3. Two Contrasting Groups

The majority of Eritrean refugees first came through camps in Tigray and applied to move to the capital using the OCP process. One Eritrean explained why he chose to come to Addis Ababa in 2016 after spending four months in a camp, saying: “Camp life was hard. It is very remote and there is very hot weather. There is a high incidence of malaria, and limited access to education. The living conditions were so poor.” OCP status has so far only been available to Eritreans in Addis. By having OCP status, Eritrean refugees are acknowledging that they are capable of self-reliance, and they must have a national sponsor who can attest to this.

Somali refugees mainly came to Addis Ababa due to medical or specific protection concerns, which could not be addressed in the camps. In one focus group with Somali refugees with UAP status, participants echoed: “Camp conditions are not good. There is poor security, bad sanitation, and few health and medical facilities. Addis is better in general. In particular, here we have better access to health services”. Put simply, Eritrean refugees are in Addis because of their relative capacities; Somali refugees are in Addis because of their relative vulnerabilities. But both groups tend to agree that, however hard urban life is, it is better than camp life.

As a result of their different legal statuses within Addis (Fig.1), Somalis are entitled to assistance while Eritreans are generally not. Somalis estimated that they received on average 750 ETB (\$26 USD)/month from UNHCR per household member, whereas Eritreans received virtually nothing (Fig. 2). However, across numerous indicators, the Eritrean community has greater capacity for self-reliance.

In education, for example, Somali refugees in Addis have an average of less than three years of education, compared to 10 years for the Eritreans, which compared favorably to that of the host communities (Figs. 3 and 4). And this is despite the fact that Somalis’ parents received significantly more education than those of Eritreans (11 years compared to 7). 51% of Eritrean refugees have completed vocational training compared to 13% of Somalis (and 22% of the host communities). The Eritrean community is also more likely than the Somali community to be proficient in English or Amharic, to own a mobile phone, have an e-mail address and use social media – all reflections of the contrasting basis on which the groups were selected to come to Addis.

Refugees in Addis tend to live in particular neighbourhoods where their fellow co-ethnic groups also reside. According to one Eritrean community leader, while Eritrean refugees are scattered throughout Addis Ababa, there are three main Eritrean clusters: Megenagna, Mebrat Hail, and Jemo. Eritreans are well-organised at a community level. For example, in each cluster, there are 5-10 community leaders who are selected through democratic elections organised by ARRA. Clustering is viewed as a way of avoiding isolation. A community representative in Gotera, part of Gofa, explained:

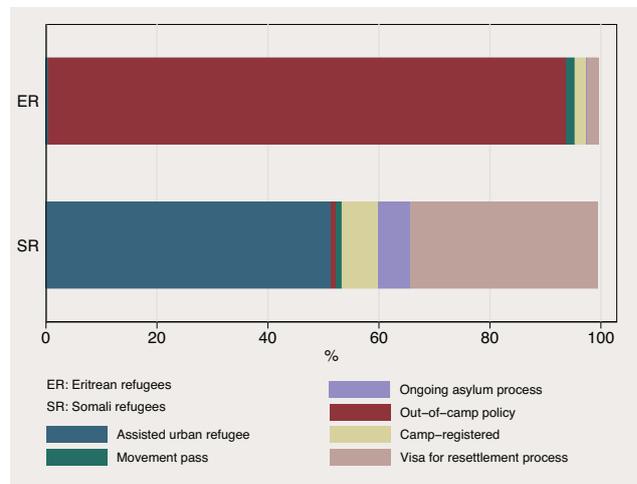


Fig. 1: Legal status

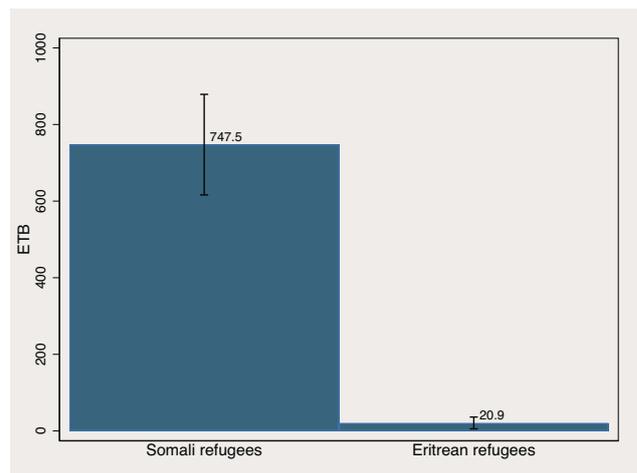


Fig. 2: Monetary assistance from UNHCR per household member

Gotera is a safe place [for us] because there are so many Eritrean refugees. Locals know refugees well. Here we can access communal support. We also have social life with other Eritreans. This is important for avoiding isolation.

Somali refugees in Addis are less geographically dispersed and concentrate mainly in the Bole Michael area – the city’s ‘Little Mogadishu’. A female Somali refugee who has been living in Bole Michael for five years said she chose to live in this area because she “had some relatives and friends living in this area so I joined them.”

According to some Somali refugees in Bole Michael, recently, more Somali refugees moved informally to the area after the conflict between Oromo and Somali Ethiopians increased. As in Somali areas in neighbouring country capitals, such as Eastleigh in Nairobi or Kisenyi in Kampala, Somali refugees in Addis are absorbed into a wider Somali society alongside Somali Ethiopians and other groups of Somali migrants. One

Somali Ethiopian explained why his family moved to the area from Jijiga:

Bole Michael is a Somali quarter of the city. There are so many Somali Ethiopians here so we came here. In my neighbourhood, there are a mix of many people, including Somali students, Somali business people, and Somali refugees.

While some refugees mentioned minor tensions with the host community, often with landlords, host-refugee relations were generally positive. In a focus group with Somalis, a refugee described the relationship as “very good and united”. Similarly, one of the Eritrean refugee leaders explained, “we have no problem with Ethiopian hosts. It is not easy to differentiate Eritreans from Ethiopians [based on differences in our features].”

“Put simply, Eritrean refugees are in Addis because of their relative capacities; Somali refugees are in Addis because of their relative vulnerabilities.”



Gofa Mebrat Haile Condominium

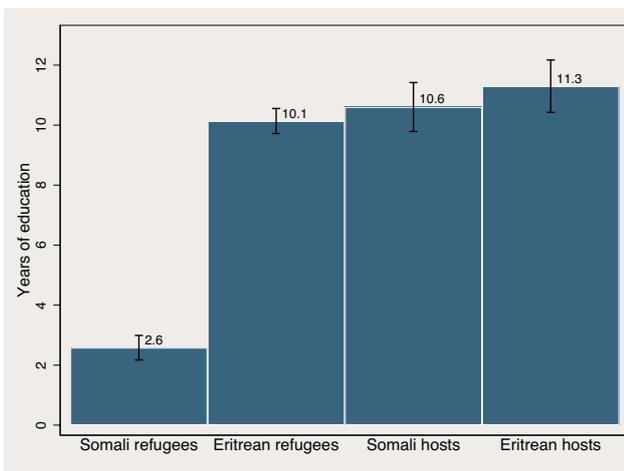


Fig. 3: Total years of education

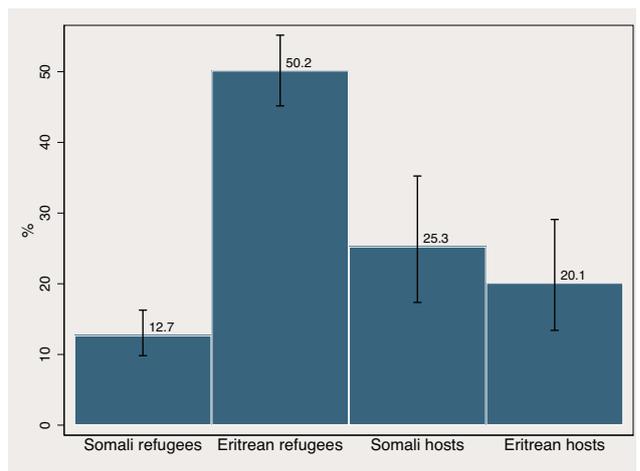


Fig. 4: Completed vocational training



Gofa Mebrat street

4. Precarity

Despite their different statuses, both Somali and Eritrean refugees face precarity. Pending the implementation of the new legal framework, refugees are not formally allowed to work or they are not allowed to register their own businesses. Although they find ways around these constraints working in the informal sector or engaging in business partnerships with members of the host community, their level of welfare is generally much lower than that of the host community.

In Ethiopia as a whole, the unemployment rate is around 14.5%, and it is estimated that around two million more people will enter the employment market each year. In Addis Ababa levels of unemployment are the highest in the country at around 23.5%, and the city faces pressure from rapid urbanisation. Unsurprisingly, we found that most refugees were unemployed (Fig. 5). 79% of Eritrean refugees and 93% of Somali refugees are unemployed, compared with 43% of the surrounding host communities. Of the minority who work, 86% of Eritreans are employees and 14% are self-employed, while 57% of Somalis are employees and 43% are self-employed.

As one NGO worker explained, “partnering with Ethiopians is the only way to get involved in economic activities”. Informal connections to the host community are the main source of both employment and self-employment opportunities. A 22-year old Eritrean explained how he got informal work through his networks.

I am working at a metal workshop that does welding and repairing for doors, and houses and fences. The owner of the workshop is Ethiopian. I got connected to him through my Eritrean refugee friend who has contacts with Ethiopians... There are five employees at this workshop and all of them are Eritrean refugees.

Similarly, the few Somali refugees who have found work have usually done so through the Somali Ethiopian community in Bole Michael. One of them is a Somali female refugee who works as a shopkeeper at a grocery shop owned by a Somali Ethiopian. When asked how she got this work, she replied: “The owner lives in my neighbourhood in Bole. I know he has a business so I asked him to give me a job”. Several Somali refugees reported that their employer did not know their refugee status.

The tiny number of self-employed refugees were generally reliant upon host community partnerships if they registered a business, or operating informally at very small scale. Of the Somali self-employed refugees we found less than 10% (in this case less than one person in our entire Somali sample) had a business licence, was paying taxes, or employed another person, and the proportions were only slightly higher for



Backstreets of Bole Michael

self-employed Eritreans (21% had a license or were paying taxes, and they employed an average of 0.4 people), while the majority of proximate host businesses were registered, paying taxes, and employing an average of 2.4 people. A major restriction to doing business was the absence of start-up capital. The self-employed host community had had an average of over 70,000 ETB² in start-up capital compared to 2,000 ETB and 16,500 ETB for self-employed Somali and Eritrean refugees.

The top five sectors of employment for Somali refugees are cleaner/housemaid (20%), language interpreter/translator (10%), restaurant (10%), hawking (10%), and small shop (10%). For Eritrean refugees they are beauty and hair (18.7%), mechanic (12.3%), daily labourer (5%), teacher (5%), and carpentry (5%). In both cases, the profile contrasts with that of the host communities. In the Somali areas, the proximate hosts with work are most likely to be: office workers (9.8%), small shop (8.6%), cleaner/housemaid (6.8%), taxi/bus (6.8%), and hotel/guesthouse (6%). For the Eritrean proximate host community, the top five are: office worker (22%), taxi/bus (9.4%), small shop (6.3%), carpentry (4.8%), teaching (4.1%).

Even for those with work, income levels are usually low, the median monthly income among both Somali and Eritrean refugee communities being 1,400 ETB and 1,500 ETB, compared with 3,000 ETB and 4,000 ETB for the respective host communities (Fig. 6).

Unemployment and low incomes create a major challenge in the context of high living costs. A 26 year-old male Eritrean

“The self-employed host community had had an average of over 70,000 ETB in start-up capital compared to 2,000 ETB and 16,500 ETB for self-employed Somali and Eritrean refugees.”

² 1,000 Ethiopian birr (ETB) is equivalent to around 34 USD.

OCP refugee, who works as a casual labourer at a laundry facility owned by an Ethiopian, conveyed how difficult it is to cover necessary living costs even with his informal employment.

I work eight hours per day and seven days a week. My salary is 1,500 birr per month...I am not happy with this salary but I never negotiated. I don't want to lose my work [by trying to negotiate a higher salary]...Life is very expensive. I am always under pressure to pay rent and other costs.

Most Somali refugees receive stipends from UNHCR; however, the amount they receive is not adequate to cover living costs. The head of a Somali refugee family household in Bole Michael told us: "Our family receives cash support of 3,350 birr per month for our entire family but this is too small to cover all expenses".

While there are of course differences in living expenditures across different locations, according to Somali refugees living in Bole Michael, the average living costs for one adult are about 2,500-5,000 birr per month, including rent of 1,500-3,000 birr (water and electricity inclusive) and food 1,000-2,000 birr. In general, Eritrean refugees seem to pay more rent. According to one refugee representative in Nifasilk Lafto, one of the most concentrated areas among Eritrean

"79% of Eritrean refugees and 93% of Somali refugees are unemployed."

refugees, the average monthly rent for one bedroom is between 4,500-6,000 birr.

Even from the perspective of the Ethiopian hosts, the living conditions of refugees appear much worse than that of Ethiopians. A 20 year-old female Somali Ethiopian who lives in Bole Michael and has Somali refugees friends in her neighbourhood explained:

Refugees face more problems than us. They don't have enough income and many of them cannot cover all necessary expenses in Addis...[their living standard is] Very low compared to hosts....They are barely surviving. I feel sorry for them that they cannot even meet basic needs.

Ethiopian hosts have more or less the same view about Eritrean refugees in their neighbourhood. The following is a comment from an Ethiopian national in Jemo:

The vast majority of refugees are poor; only a small number of them are wealthy because of large sums of remittances. Poorer ones live together to share the bill. Refugees don't have business licenses and cannot access good economic opportunities [in Addis Ababa].

Facing severe restrictions for accessing socio-economic rights, it seems unrealistic that refugees can contribute to the host community economically. When asked whether refugees are making any contributions to the host community, a Somali Ethiopian in Bole Michael, responded: "Many of them are in a state of hardship...They don't have enabling conditions to prosper. I don't think it is possible for them to make contributions [to the host economy]."

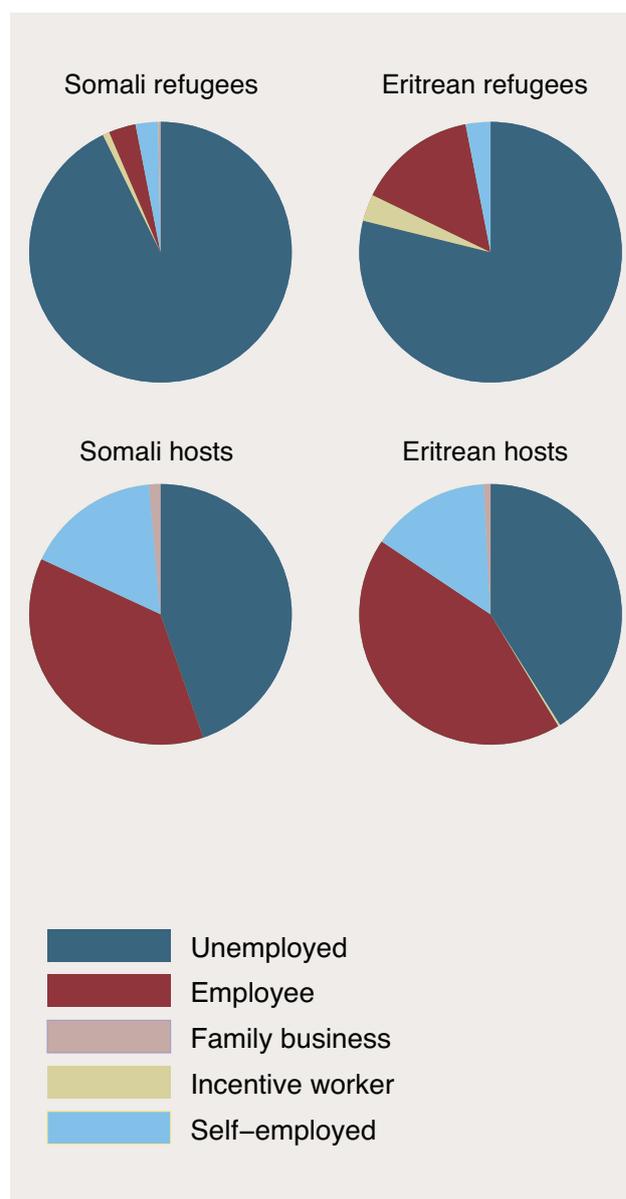


Fig. 5: Employment status, unemployed excluded (unweighted)

Aside from income levels, both communities are struggling significantly in relation to a series of other welfare indicators. For example, only 74% of Somali refugees has an 'acceptable' food security level, compared with 95% for Eritrean refugees, and an average of 99% for both host communities (Fig. 7). Reported physical and mental health levels were significantly worse for both refugee communities than for proximate host nationals (Figs. 8 and 9). Meanwhile, faced with significant economic pressures, parents in both refugee communities are far more likely than the host community to keep eligible children out of education (Fig. 10).

"For example, only 74% of Somali refugees has an 'acceptable' food security level, compared with 95% for Eritrean refugees, and an average of 99% for both host communities."

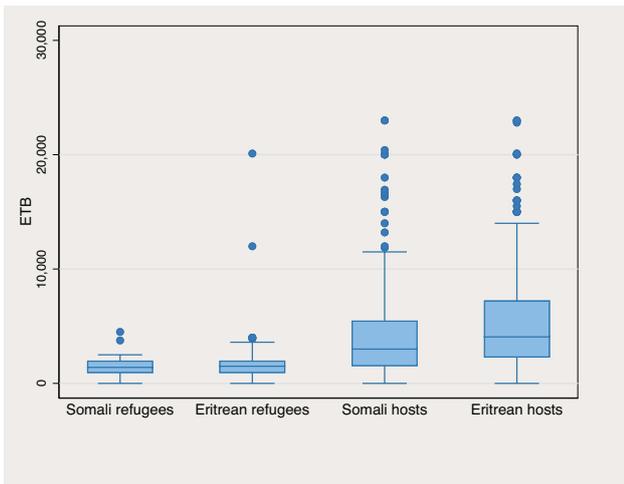


Fig. 6: Monthly income (only those with a job)

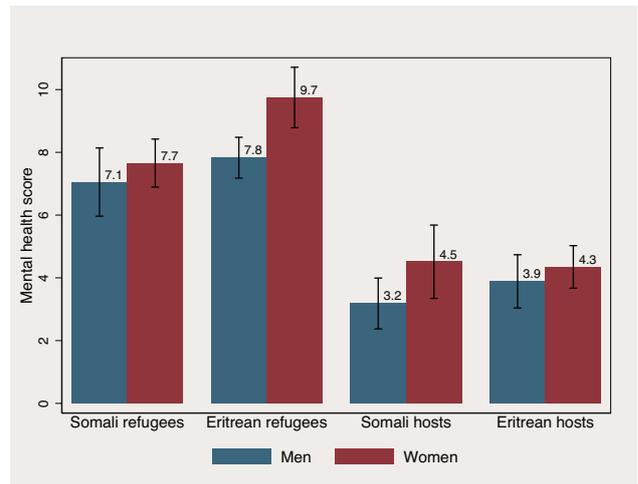


Fig. 9: Mental health problems - PHQ-9 score (from 0 "no problem" to 24 "all problems with max. intensity")

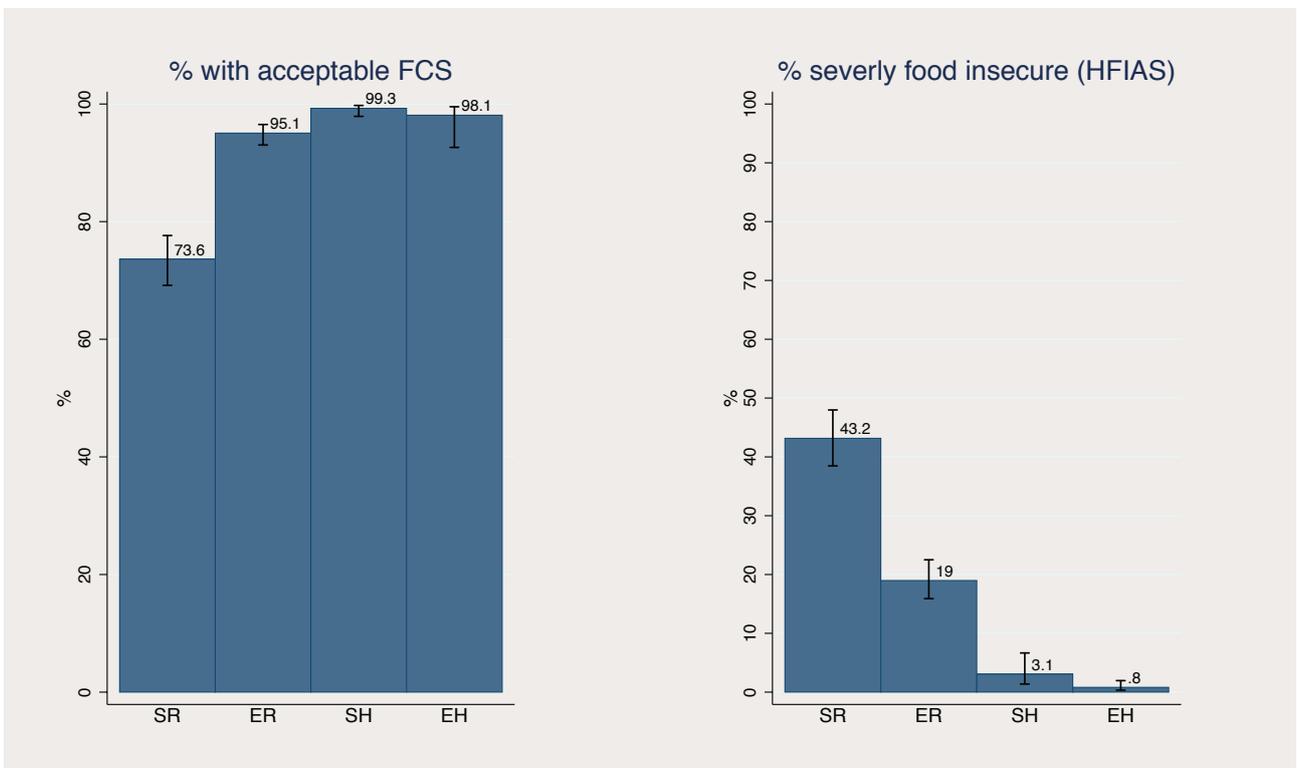


Fig. 7: Food Consumption Status (FCS) and Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)

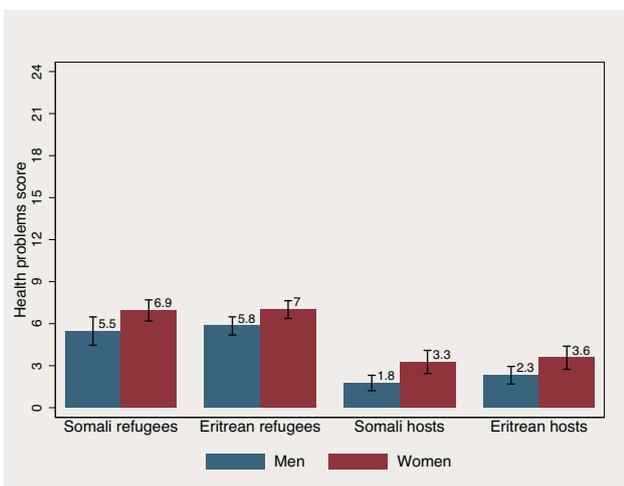


Fig. 8: Physical health problems (from 0 "no difficulty" to 24 "extreme difficulty")

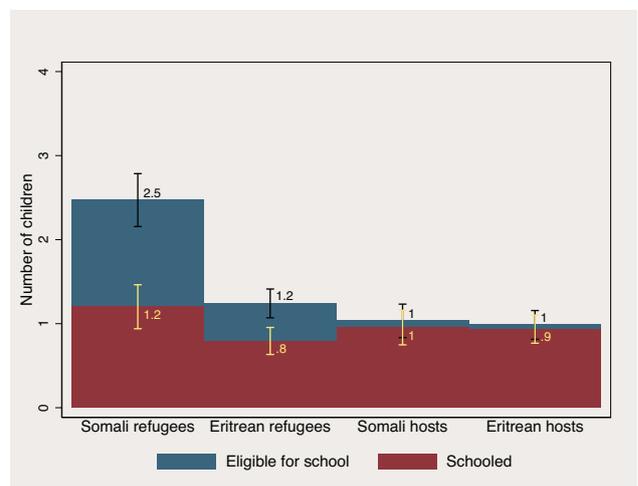


Fig. 10: Schooling

5. Networks

Given the regulatory constraint and the lack of economic opportunities, refugees in Addis rely upon their own social networks at three levels: with hosts, with other refugees, and transnationally. While these connections probably do not significantly raise overall welfare outcomes, they provide a crucial social safety net.

Networks With Hosts

The refugee-concentrated areas of Addis have two key features. First, they are extremely ethnically diverse, with no single group making up more than 50% of the population. Second, there is a proportion of the host inhabitants who have a common ethnic identity with the refugees. In the Somali area, 9.8% of the Ethiopian host community self-identify as ethnically Somali. In the Eritrean areas, 10.2% self-identify as Tigrayan (Fig. 11).

These connections are important for livelihood strategies. Refugees rely upon networks with Ethiopian nationals in order to obtain business licenses. This is a characteristic that is not unique to Addis but can also be found in other urban contexts such as among Somalis in Nairobi. For instance, a 40 year-old Somali refugee who is running a small shop that sells food items in Bole Michael told us:

I am selling different types of spices and sugar cane... The owner is a Somali Ethiopian national. He lives in my neighbourhood. I didn't know him before but got to know him in Addis.



Vegetable market in Gofa

Similarly, an Eritrean refugee who has been living in Gofa since 2013, told us:

I am running a bar in Gofa. I don't have a business license. The license belongs to an Ethiopian person but I am the one running this bar. I paid tax and additional fees to him to get registration on my behalf...I have secured initial capital from my cousins in the US. They sent some remittances to me...I give 16,000 birr [ETB] to the owner every month but I will keep the rest of the income as profit.

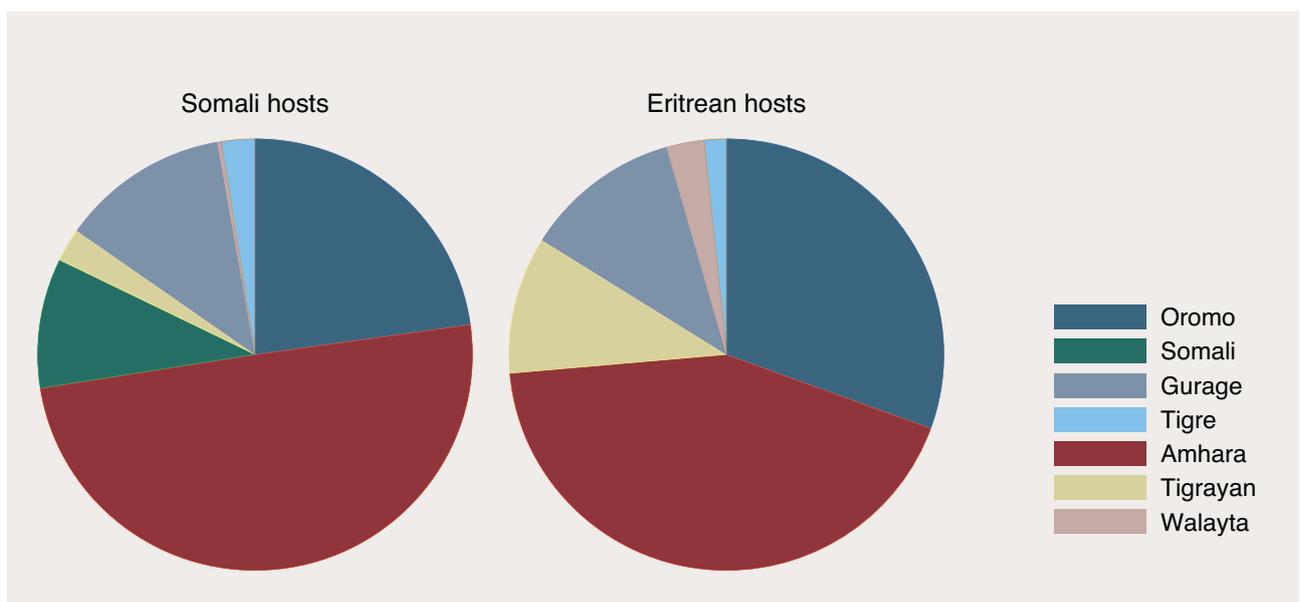


Fig. 11: Hosts' ethnicity

Nevertheless, a small number of businesses operate without these partnerships, and are largely tolerated. For instance, a Somali female refugee who has been selling camel milk for the last four years said:

I am hawking camel milk in Bole...In Bole, there are some Ethiopian traders who sell camel milk. I buy from them and sell to Somali refugees and Somali Ethiopians.

Similarly, a group of Eritrean refugees established a DVD rental shop in 2018 without it being formally registered. But by not working with the host community to secure a license, they incur a cost:

There is no Ethiopian involvement in this business. We have no license so we have to close down [the business] when government officials or the police are around. We also open up the shop very late until 10pm...I know we need an Ethiopian to register the business but I could not find a suitable person so we decided to go ahead without it.

Eritreans in particular require an Ethiopian ‘guarantor’ in order to obtain OCP status and be allowed to live in the city. The majority of these are based on relationships of friendship or kinship, but a small minority are through agents who provide the service for a fee (Fig. 12). The relationship with the guarantor sometimes extends into other areas. For example, 10% of Eritrean refugees live with their guarantor, 9% receive support from their guarantor, and a majority meet with their guarantor at least once a month.

An Eritrean refugee community representative who has lived in Addis as an OCP refugee for the last several years explained how crucial it is to have a relationship with a host guarantor:

To get OCP status, we need Ethiopian guarantors. Refugees often pay Ethiopians to become their host and guarantors. There are such agents who act as OCP guarantors.

One OCP refugee anonymously told us: “I used my brother’s cousin’s wife as a guarantor [for my OCP status]. Their family is from Eritrea but she was born in Ethiopia and has citizenship.” Indeed, there are strong historical ties between the two countries. An Ethiopian member of staff from a bilateral aid agency explained: “Eritrean refugees are almost like one of the minority ethnic groups in Ethiopia.”

However, it is worth noting that not all connections are pre-existing. Friendships are regularly formed between refugees and hosts. According to one Ethiopian national who lives close to refugees in Addis, “I have many Eritrean [refugee] friends. Some of them I met during my time at university. Now I meet them at church or salons, or at the bar. I sometimes attend their weddings, funerals, and baby showers.” An Eritrean refugee has found his current work at a laundry facility through Ethiopian contacts he made at church: “I found this job through my Ethiopian friend. He is a member of same church. We also belong to the same football team. I asked him to help me find a job.”

Somali refugees have also built connections with their ethnic counterparts through public or religious spheres in Bole Michael. During a series of focus group discussions with

Somali refugees, a number of participants highlighted that they made contacts at mosques and schools. One of them described the relationship with Somali Ethiopian hosts: “[our relationship is] not bad. We are of the same origin. We speak the same language. It is hard to distinguish refugees from Somali Ethiopians.” Overall, though, the data suggests that Eritrean refugees have higher levels of regular interaction with Ethiopian nationals than Somali refugees (Fig. 13). But across both communities, refugees and hosts have similarly generally positive regard for one another (Figs. 14 and 15).

Transnational Networks

Remittances sent by relatives abroad are crucial to subsidise the cost of living in Addis. According to one Eritrean refugee community representative, “those who have access to a good amount of remittances don’t need to work. Working is only for those who don’t have access to remittances or receive only small amounts of money.” Overall 31.9% of Somali refugees and 69.1% of Eritrean refugees receive remittances (Fig. 16), with an median monthly level of 2,500 ETB for Eritreans and 5,400 ETB for Somalis (Fig. 17).

Indeed, most refugees in the capital are not working but are reliant on remittances. A 24-year old Somali refugee who lives in Bole Michael with his mother, is one of those who benefit from regular remittances from her sister in the US: “From family in the US, we get about 200 USD per month. This is the only source of income for us because we do not have work here.” Since his arrival in Addis Ababa in 2014, he and his mother have been living exclusively on remittances. An Ethiopian researcher at Addis Ababa University explained: “In Ethiopia, access to remittances is essential because refugees are not allowed to work here. Their lifestyle is remittance-reliant”. Indeed, numerous refugees, both from Eritrea and Somalia, highlighted the significance of remittances as their “lifeline”.

“Eritreans in particular require an Ethiopian ‘guarantor’ in order to obtain OCP status and be allowed to live in the city.”

Receiving remittances is made possible by the transnational dispersal of families. For example, both Somali and Eritrean refugees have an average of at least one sibling in another

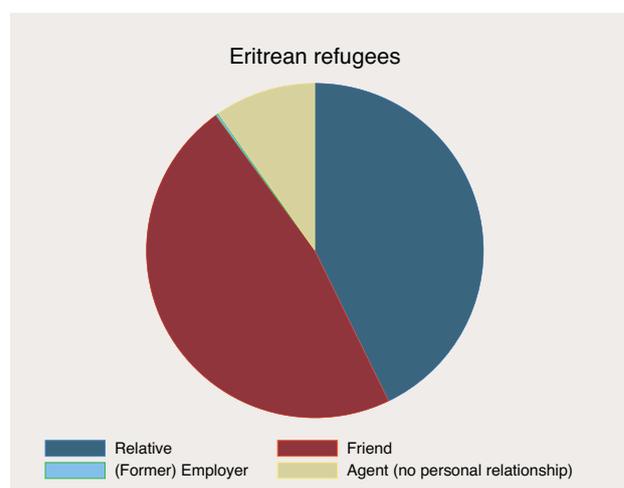


Fig. 12: Relationship to guarantor

country. And while their most likely place of residence is their country of origin, many have relatives in the US or Europe (Fig. 18). A smaller proportion have children or spouses abroad. Across every community, women are likely to be the main recipients of remittances, and they are more likely to hold a bank account than men.

As a sign of importance of international remittances, refugees regularly visit internet cafes to maintain their contacts abroad. When we organised a focus group discussion at an internet cafe that employs an Eritrean refugee as a shopkeeper, Eritrean refugees constantly came in to use Skype or to check e-mails. According to the refugee shopkeeper, “So many Eritrean refugees use internet cafes to remain connected abroad, as they need money for survival. They have to be in frequent communication”.

However, not all refugees can benefit from overseas remittances. During a focus group discussion with Somali refugees in Bole Michael, a respondent highlighted that access to remittances is the most important factor differentiating socio-economic statuses of refugees:

In the Somali community, the rich people are remittance recipients but not all refugees can access remittances. I know some refugees receive 50-100 USD every month... Poor refugees try to survive by doing casual labour like washing clothes, hawking, or working as porters.

Having relatives abroad does not necessarily guarantee access to financial support. A female Eritrean refugee explained why she does not get remittances from her sister overseas:

I have a sister living in UK but she cannot send money to me. She first needs to help our mother who lives in Eritrea. She is a single mother in the UK and her life is not easy. She gets very limited income there. I cannot burden her too much.

While some host community members also receive remittances, it is a smaller proportion. Two different Ethiopian nationals explained:

I think only a small number of locals here get remittance support. I don't think many locals have family members abroad so [they have] no one to send remittances to them.

Most Ethiopian residents here don't have access to remittances... We can work here so we don't need to depend on remittances.

On the other hand, in Bole Michael, a Somali refugee concentrated area, the number of refugees who have access to remittances does not necessarily seem to be higher than that of the host population. During a focus group interview with Somali refugees, one elderly refugee commented:

[Somali] refugees are not rich [as they don't receive remittances]. In Bole Michael, the rich ones are Somali migrants and business people. They came to Addis for better educations or economic opportunities. Some are waiting for family reunification. Most of them are supported by relatives abroad.

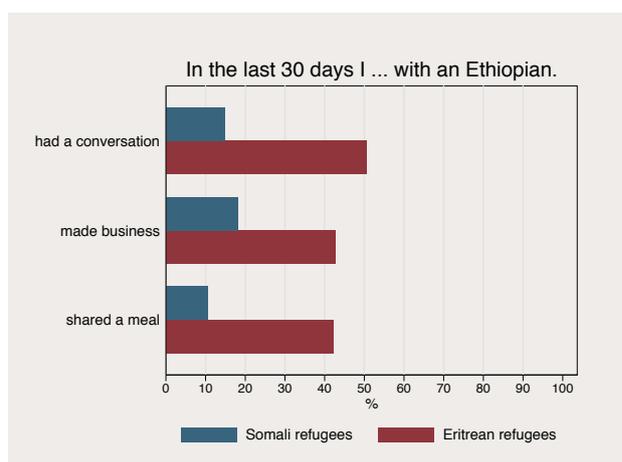


Fig. 13: Refugees' interactions with Ethiopians

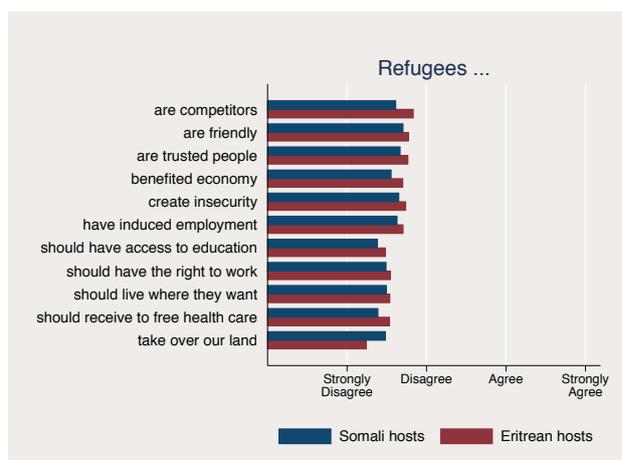


Fig. 14: Ethiopians' opinions on refugees

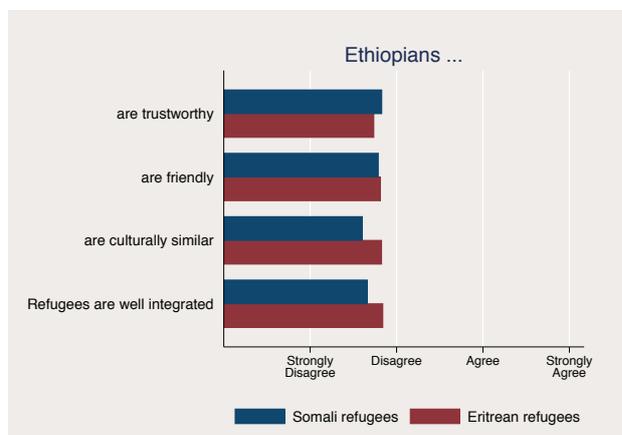


Fig. 15: Refugees' opinions on Ethiopians

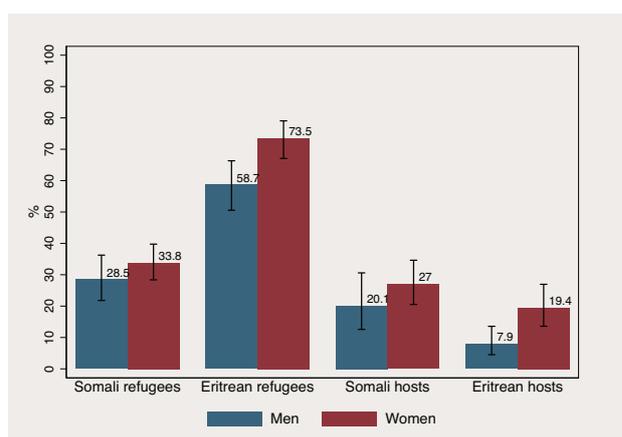


Fig. 16: Proportion receiving remittances

While overseas remittances constitute an essential economic channel for refugees in Addis Ababa, it can cause them to become overly reliant on their remitters. When we organised a focus group discussion with five Eritrean refugees aged between 30 and 40 years-old, all the participants expressed their frustration at being dependent on others.

All of us feel dependency. We have lost control of our own life. [It is a] very shameful lifestyle. We are still young and healthy. We can do many things but our days are wasted.

Remittances don't come automatically. We have to beg each time... We feel bad. Our relatives abroad have their own lives. They have to take care of their own living expenses. Sometimes we get in conflicts with [our relatives].

Reliance upon remittances results from a combination of regulatory constraints and a lack of opportunities. It might be thought of as a form of 'forced transnationalism', creating a feeling of permanent (inter-)dependency and resulting in a widespread sense of boredom, lethargy, and idleness amongst refugees.

Networks Among Refugees

Not all refugees have access to transnational networks or remittances and even when they do, they are often inadequate to cover all living expenses in Addis. One Somali elder commented: "If you don't have remittances, you have to rely on other fellow Somali." One way of creating mutual support is co-habitation within so-called 'fictive households'. During a focus group discussion, one Eritrean refugee highlighted:

If one does not have remittances, he must develop his own survival strategy. Usually he relies on other Eritrean refugees who receive support from abroad. This is why we have so many fictive families. We live together and share resources. We divide daily tasks like washing, cleaning, cooking, and split all payments.

While this strategy is observed both in Somali and Eritrean refugee populations, Eritrean refugees employ it with greater frequency. For instance, a 34-year old male Eritrean refugee moved to the Ethiopian capital as an OCP refugee after living

in a refugee camp in Tigray between 2011 and 2015. He commented on his lifestyle: "I am now staying with 3 other Eritrean refugees. I met them in the camp. I don't have any biological ties [with them]...Now we are renting one bedroom for 3,000 birr."

A 33-year old Eritrean refugee who lives in a suburban area of Addis arrived in

Ethiopia in 2016 through the Tigray region. He stayed in the camp for about seven months and decided to move to Addis Ababa with the OCP status. In an interview, he explained his current lifestyle in the capital:

Now I am living with two Eritrean refugees. We share all the living costs. Rent is 2,300 birr. Food [for 3 people] is 1,500 birr per month. Water and electricity is 30 birr and 100 birr per month.

In one focus group discussion with Eritrean refugees in Gotera, one of the major concentrated areas for Eritrean refugees, one male participant explained how his group, consisting of seven refugees, shares the monthly living expenses:

We divide the monthly rent of 7,000 birr. For food expenses, each of us put in 400 birr. If one has no money, he needs to borrow from others. Or he needs to do the others' extra work like cleaning, cooking, and washing...Movement between different households happens often. If someone migrates onward, then the others must find someone to replace that person.

As the comment above indicates, the notion of 'household' among Eritrean refugees in Addis is very different from a family with biological ties. A 'household' is often a loose grouping of people, including both related and unrelated people, who came together based on their needs and complementary activities.

Even beyond the 'household', refugees perceive their primary source of social protection as coming from either 'family and friends' or 'the community'. When asked a series of questions about who they would go to in the event of an emergency, a shortage of food, or in search of a jobs, family, friends, and community eclipse any recourse to formal institutions (Fig 19).

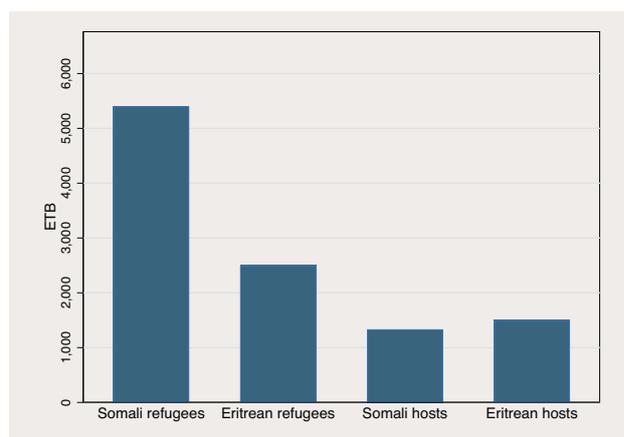


Fig. 17: Median monthly remittances (for those receiving remittances)

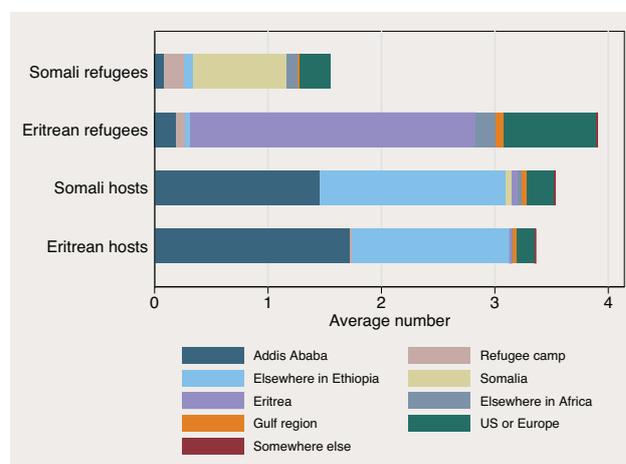


Fig. 18: Brothers and sisters outside household by place of residence

“One way of creating mutual support is co-habitation within so-called ‘fictive households’.”



Gofa condominium

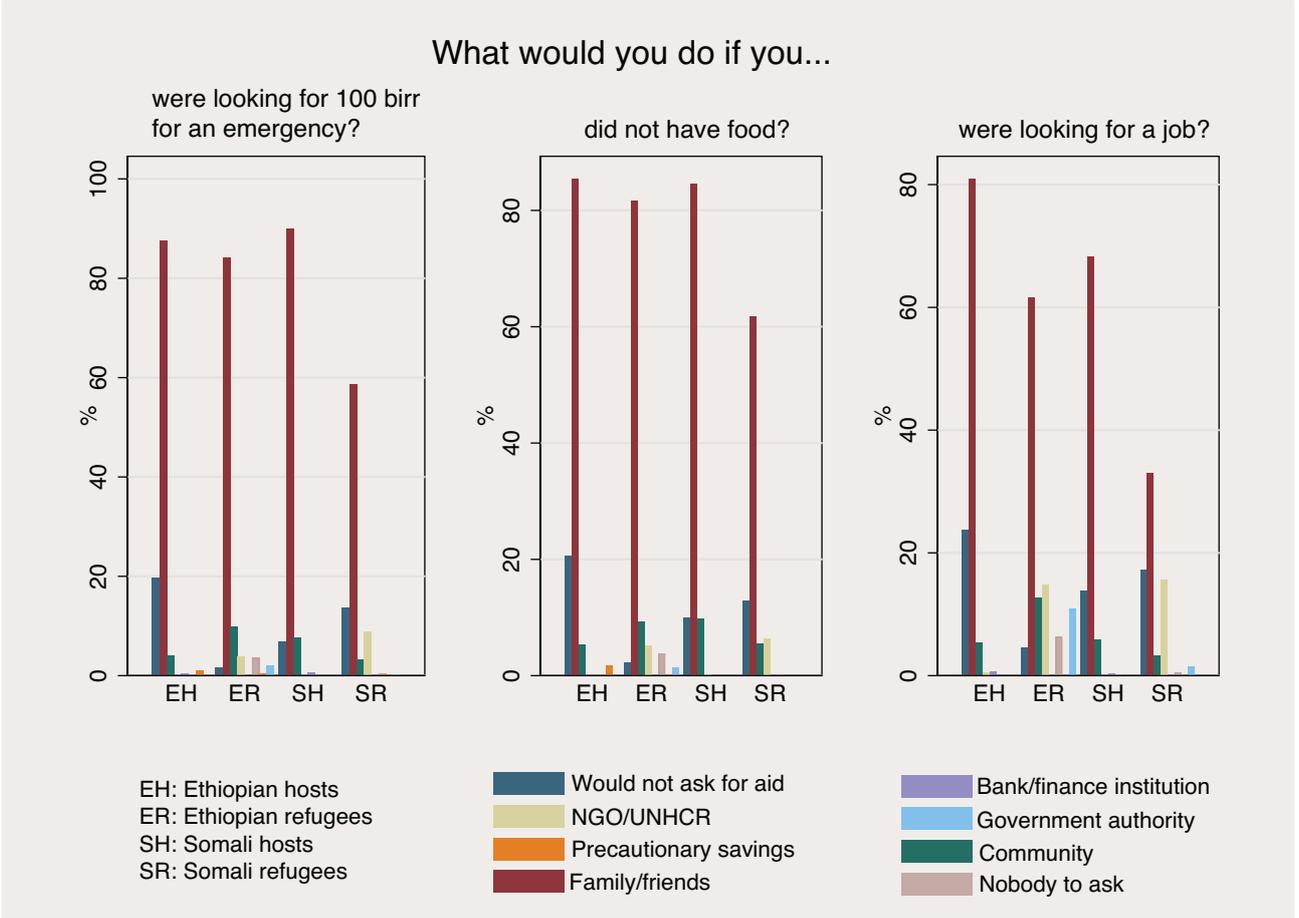


Fig. 19: Social protection

6. Limbo

Many refugees in Addis have a sense of limbo. Throughout our research one of the most frequently addressed challenges facing refugees was boredom, idleness and hopelessness, stemming from their perception of leading unproductive lives in exile. Among refugee youth we repeatedly heard “we are not being able to work or to go to school”. Among the comments we heard:

Here life is boring. We stay at home, sleeping, chatting, drinking coffee, doing sports like volleyball and football. We are all young but we are killing time every day. We want to move out of dependency but we have no way out.

We spend every day with boredom. We kill time. Sleeping a lot. Internet cafe or game shops if we have money.

We have to kill time here. We see movies, DVD, watch TV, play football, play on the PlayStation, and read. I had hope before to move to the US where I would have access to education, freedom, betterment. But hope is diminishing. I cannot go back to Somalia yet. I feel hopeless.

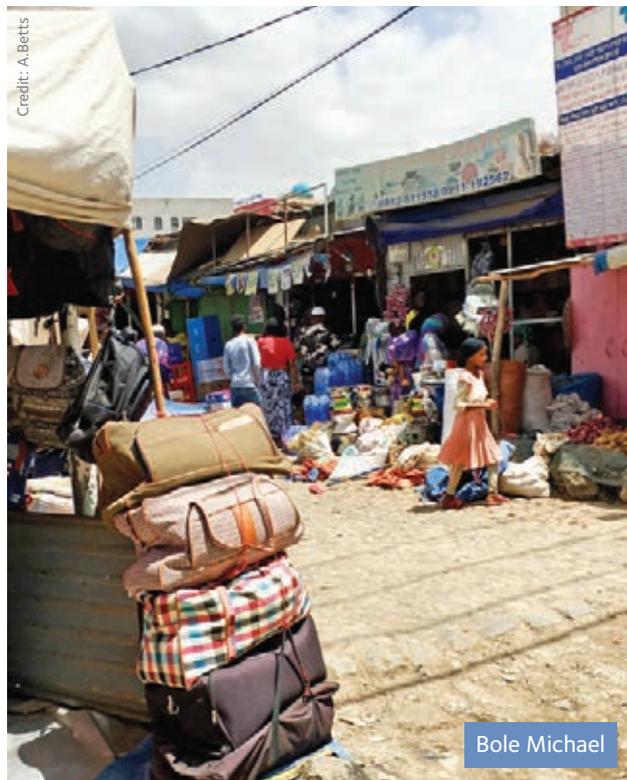
As the comments show, these refugees repeatedly mentioned that they have to ‘kill time’ every day even though most of our interviewees were healthy, able-bodied and relatively young people aged between 20 and 40. Most regarded ‘doing nothing’ as detrimental to their mental and physical wellbeing. In one focus group with eight Eritrean refugees in their late 20s and mid 30s, one male refugee described his daily schedule:

I sleep until 12pm. Then I go to my friends’ places. We chat and have coffee until the evening. If we have some extra money, we see a DVD, use the internet and Facebook, and eat something. We kill time until we go to bed.

Many Eritrean refugees depicted their exile in Addis Ababa as a ‘transit’ period. Because of this sense of being in transit, refugees often do not see any reasons to invest in their precarious lives in Addis Ababa. An Eritrean refugee who runs a bar in Gofa in partnership with an Ethiopian, explained that: “The business is running well but I have no interest in investing in this business. This is a temporary survival means for me in Ethiopia. I have no plan to stay here.” An Ethiopian staff member of an international NGO also confirmed this point by saying:

For Eritreans, Ethiopia is not a place for long-term investment. They don’t invest in education, relationship building. On the other hand, Somali refugees are more settled here... They make more investments in Addis and pursue opportunities here.

However, Somali refugees too highlighted the sense of being in limbo. One focus group participant said: “We see no hope but at least it is still better compared to living in camps”.



Bole Michael

Aspirations and Onward Migration

So what aspirations do refugees in Addis have? Despite the historical peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2018, and some signs of returning normality in Somalia, most refugees do not see repatriation as a realistic option. During a series of focus group discussions with Somali refugees, the vast majority of participants agreed when suggested “Repatriation to Somalia is not an option. There is no peace there”. Almost all Eritrean refugees also expressed that they have no intention to return to Eritrea now. One of them affirmed: “I don’t have any plan to go back to Eritrea. I don’t trust the government there.” Indeed, some Eritrean refugees believe the peace deal does nothing to fundamentally change persecution risks in Eritrea, and may even lead to greater risks within Ethiopia:

“We see no hope but at least it is still better compared to living in camps”.

This is problematic for Eritrean refugees. They [Eritrean Government] can come and search for refugees in Ethiopia. They can send secrete services more easily. This is another reason why I don’t want to stay in Ethiopia. This country may not be safe for us.

Caught in limbo, a significant number of refugees did not hide their strong desire for onward migration to the Global North. When asked where they hope to live in three years’ time, more than 90% of refugees selected Europe, North

America, or Australia (Fig. 20), although the proportion goes down to 60% when asked where they realistically expect to live in three years' time (Fig. 21).

One renowned Ethiopian academic who has been working on refugee issues showed his concern as follows:

This [onward migration] is really a big issue. So many refugees seek secondary movement for betterment... There are many smugglers and traffickers here. They are an established business here.

One Eritrean gave us an account of refugees' persistent hope for migration to the wealthier North:

Returning to Eritrea is not an option and living in Ethiopia is too hard for refugees... This is why they are interested in secondary migration. Going to Europe becomes a greener pasture or the only avenue to escape anxiety.

This Eritrean refugee representative explained recent 'trends' of this secondary movement to Europe:

Many youth try to make a travel plan to Europe, but the cost is prohibitive as a whole trip costs around 6,000 USD. The usual route is from Ethiopia to Sudan and then Libya. Smugglers take them to Libya and there they ask for more money to cross the sea. If refugees cannot pay, they will be put in jail. They have to work as slaves in order to be released by smugglers. I know at least 2 Eritrean refugees who worked in Libya for 8 months and then moved to Europe.

During our interviews with refugees, especially Eritreans, we were often shown photos of Eritrean youth refugees who were stranded in Libya after they ran out of money. In one focus group discussion, one of the participants asked whether we could help his Eritrean friend who was arrested in Libya or transmit this information to UNHCR or another aid organisation.

To a lesser extent, young Somali refugees also expressed their intention to move to the Global North, either via resettlement or the Mediterranean route to Europe. One Somali refugee in Bole Michael told us:

The interest in moving to Europe or other Western states is still strong. Refugees see no future in Ethiopia. Even though risky, many want to travel, especially the youth. They say [that it is] 'changing life'. Even after completing university education, we get no jobs [in Ethiopia]. We cannot return to Somalia now. We feel stuck here.

This refugee highlighted his concern about the visible presence of human traffickers in Bole Michael: "They are visiting Bole Michael often. They especially talk to young Somali refugees. I think they [traffickers] are both Ethiopians and Somali Ethiopians." But our data shows that when considering alternative pathways to migration, most refugees would far prefer legal pathways to illegal options.

Compared to refugees, there is a lower aspiration of onward migration among Ethiopian national hosts. A Somali Ethiopian national in Bole Michael explained decreasing interest in onward movement amongst Ethiopians:

Before it was very strong amongst Somali Ethiopians but no longer so. Libya is very risky. Now the Ethiopian Government is tightening up borders. Even after reaching Europe, it is not easy to stabilise your life... Just reaching Europe does not guarantee good life.

In general, whereas Ethiopian hosts are interested in moving to the Global North, they seem to see migration more objectively and place more weight on the risks than refugees. During a focus group with Ethiopian host populations in Gofa, some participants attributed this lower desire for onward movement amongst Ethiopian nationals to better access to opportunities in Ethiopia by saying: "We can work here and we know we can change our lives with our own efforts."

Logically, there seem to be three ways to meet the aspirations of refugees in Addis. First, to create more legal pathways for migration or resettlement. The challenge is that this relies upon the willingness of primarily Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia to expand these options, and most Northern states are currently reluctant to increase immigration. Second, to create greater socio-economic opportunity for refugees and host communities within Addis, in terms of both lifting regulatory restrictions and investment in job creation. Indeed, while the new legal framework may resolve the regulatory challenge, Addis already has extremely high unemployment levels and urban job creation is challenging. Third, to create socio-economic opportunities, including jobs for refugees, elsewhere in Ethiopia.

The current dominant strategy for achieving this is to offer refugees the option of employment, alongside host nationals, within the country's expanding industrial parks model. With around 500m USD funding from the

World Bank, the European Union and bilateral donors such as DFID, the Government of Ethiopia agreed in September 2016 to build new industrial parks and to reserve some of the jobs for refugees. Although currently still at the feasibility study and design stage, some commentators have raised concerns about employing refugees in special economic zones, including relating to 'low wages', the fit between the nature of the work and refugees' existing skills, and whether the work and complementary infrastructure will be adequate to meet aspirations and provide a sense of purpose. However, when we asked refugees in Addis, 56% of Eritreans and 28% of Somalis said they would be interested in moving to an industrial park to work. The question, though, is whether they would be willing to do so at a wage rate that makes the industrial parks commercially viable.

"When asked where they hope to live in three years' time, more than 90% of refugees selected Europe, North America, or Australia."

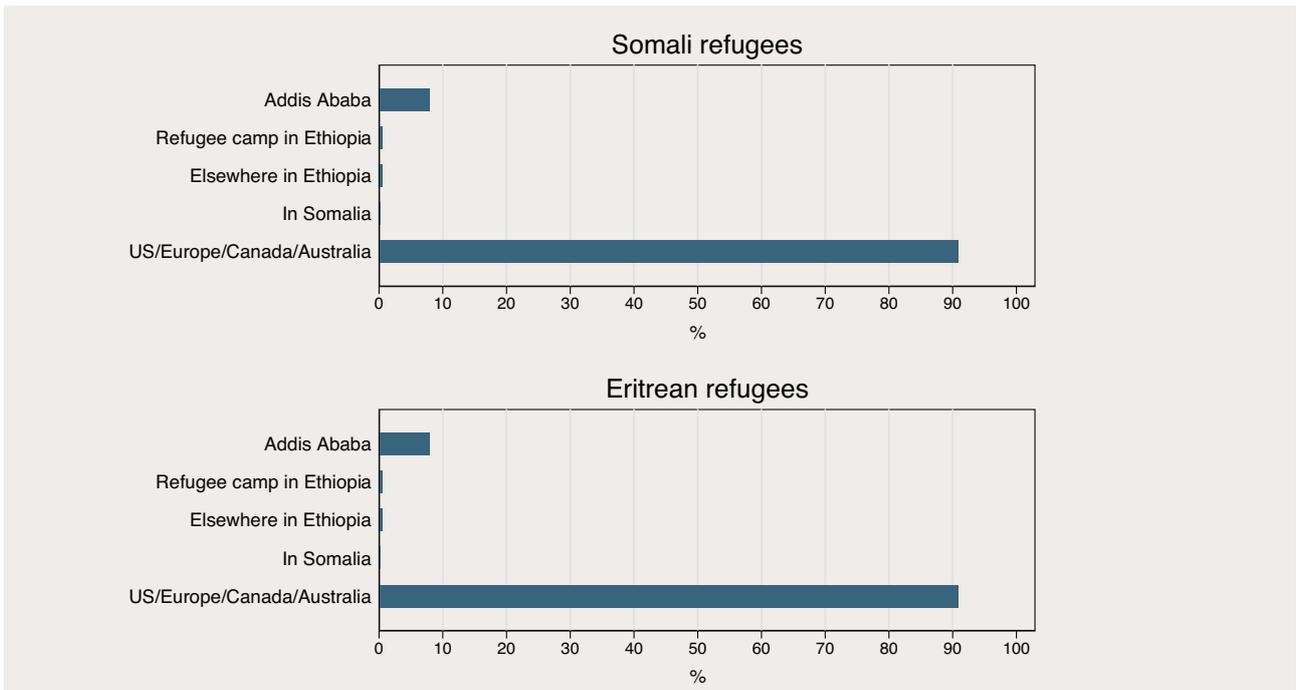


Fig. 20: *Where do you hope to live in three years?*

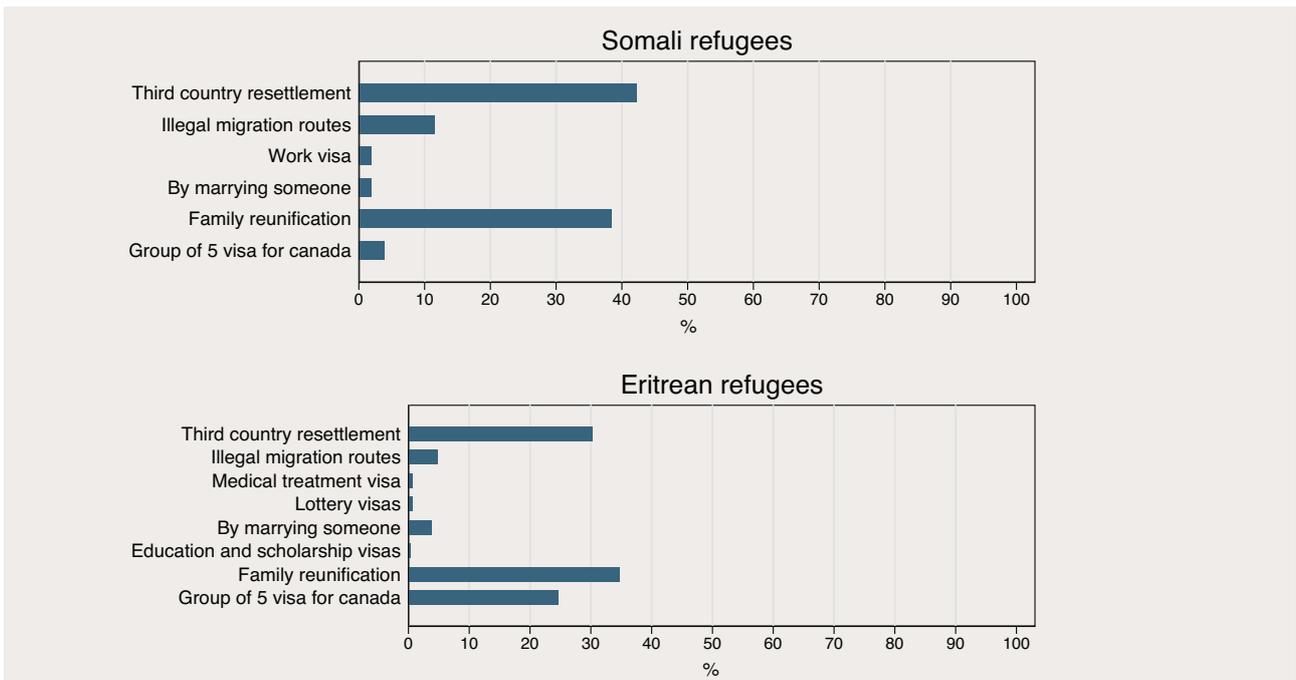


Fig. 21: *Where do you realistically think you will live in three years?*

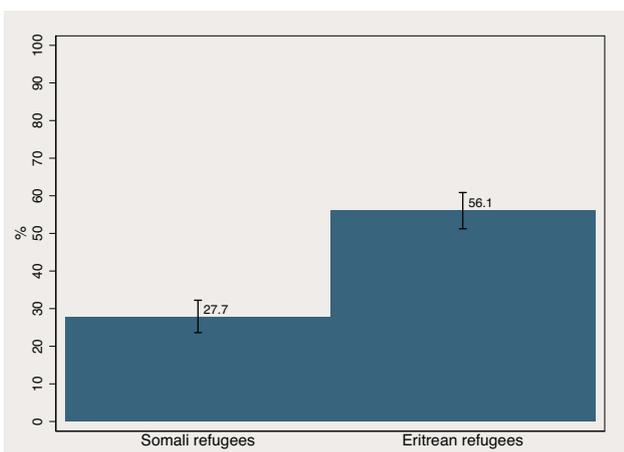


Fig. 22: *Plans to move onwards to another country*

“Our data shows that when considering alternative pathways to migration, most refugees would far prefer legal pathways to illegal options.”

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Following the Government of Ethiopia’s announcement of change to its refugee policy and legislation at the New York Leaders’ Summit in September 2016, the cabinet and parliament have passed a new refugee law. The Proclamation, agreed by the House of the People’s Representatives in January 2019, appears to offer refugees the right to work and freedom of movement. It provides “liberty of movement and freedom to choose residence, as well as freedom to leave the country at any time”. It also offers “the right to engage in wage earning employment, self-employment (in agriculture industry, small business, handicrafts, and commerce), and the right to establish business organisations”.

This provision of these socio-economic rights is exceptionally progressive, and has rightly been welcomed and rewarded by the international community. However, it will still require a

“We offer a series of recommendations for areas in which we also believe major donor countries and the Government of Ethiopia have convergent interests.”

series of implementation laws, and it remains unclear what, if any, restrictions may be added to these commitments. For example, will refugees have the same employment rights as citizens or simply as other foreign nationals? Will the government continue to designate places for refugees

to live? And will access to work rights be limited to projects like the industrial parks that have been jointly designed with the international community? These are questions that are being raised by commentators in Addis, and for which there are not yet clear answers. But the answers will have significant implications for refugees in Addis – both in terms of the numbers of refugees likely to come to Addis and the rights available to them.

However, irrespective of how the Proclamation is ultimately implemented, two things appear likely. First, in line with national and global trends, there is likely to be an increase in the refugee population choosing to live in Addis. This is the case not least because most refugees in Addis acknowledge

“There are currently relatively few refugees in Addis but this may change.”

that however challenging city life is, it is a better option than the camps, meaning that, given the opportunity, we might expect greater urbanisation. Second, in addition to the right to work, there will be an urgent need to create greater opportunities to work, for both refugees and the host community.

And given the high, and growing levels, of unemployment in Addis, the only sustainable way to achieve this will be through significant investment to create new employment for both refugees and Ethiopian nationals.

Given these trends, there is a lot at stake for refugees, Ethiopia, and the international community. Refugees in Addis face serious protection risks relating to most indicator



Streets of Bole Micheal

of welfare. The government faces a jobs crisis in Addis, and, from the international community’s perspective, Addis is an onward migration hub. With that in mind, based on our research, we offer a series of recommendations for areas in which we also believe major donor countries and the Government of Ethiopia have convergent interests, and which offer the prospect of improving the welfare of both refugees and the host community.

1. Provide opportunities as well as rights

The legislative change in Ethiopia is potentially transformative. It potentially represents one of the most sudden and progressive changes in national refugee policy anywhere in the world. However, even if it is eventually implemented in full, opportunities are needed as well as rights. Socio-economic entitlements will mean little unless they are turned into effective rights through investment. The irony is that the legal framework may exacerbate urbanisation, and without access to employment, this may in turn exacerbate onward migration. The only way to make the legislative framework sustainable is for international donors and the business sector to invest in jobs creation for both refugees and the host communities.

“Socio-economic entitlements will mean little unless they are turned into effective rights through investment.”

2. Build upon what already exists

At the moment, refugees in Addis survive mainly through their own networks and social capital. In the absence of

“Our research reveals serious and significant protection gaps that are not being systematically addressed by the international agencies.”

work, many refugees depend almost exclusively on remittances. For work and business registration, they rely upon connections with the host community. And in the absence of any other opportunities, they often engage in mutual self-help, including the creation of alternative (or ‘fictive’) household structures. Many of these are strategies of last resort. But they reveal socially cohesive communities.

The existing socio-economic lives and

strategies of the communities need to be understood as the basis for designing urban interventions.

3. Create an area-based urban programme

There are currently relatively few refugees in Addis but this may change, not least given the Government’s commitment to expand the OCP programme. As it stands, the urban

“Creating new jobs is not easy but a variety of strategies can be used.”

humanitarian programme is extremely limited. Somali UAP refugees receive access to cash assistance from UNHCR but OCP refugees are supposed to be ‘self-reliant’. However, it is clear that very few refugees in Addis are fully self-reliant. Employment rates, income and expenditure levels, food security, mental and physical health indicators, child school enrollment and, asset ownership, for example,

are all significantly worse for refugees than for the proximate host community. Our research reveals serious and significant protection gaps that are not being systematically addressed

by the international agencies. But the challenge is not just to meet humanitarian needs, it must also be to create sustainable opportunities, in order to address a pervasive sense of boredom, idleness, and hopelessness. In order to ensure ongoing social cohesion, such a programme should include both refugees and the host community, working with Addis’ municipal authorities to focus on high refugee concentration areas like Bole Mikael and Gofa.

4. Invest in urban job creation

Addis as a whole has a jobs crisis. It has a growing unemployed youth population. That trend is magnified within the refugee communities, where 79% of Eritrean refugees and 93% of Somalis are unemployed; meanwhile the proximate host communities have higher unemployment rates than the city average. Creating new jobs is not easy but a variety of strategies can be used. Investment can be made in start-up finance for small business creation; fighting corruption will lower investment risk;

vocational training can be offered to increase the global competitiveness of refugee and Ethiopian labour; international donors can create infrastructure within high refugee concentration areas that can encourage investment and dynamic economies; integrated training, grants, and mentorship schemes can help build capacity in areas in which refugees and proximate hosts are currently employed. To support this, the World Bank’s Economic Opportunities Programme (EOP) intended to support refugees and host communities in Ethiopia, and similar programmes might be extended from the camp context to the urban environment.

“While not an adequate solution by itself, expanding opportunities for resettlement and alternative migration pathways could complement a primary focus on solutions within Ethiopia.”



Streets of Bole Micheal

5. Strengthen opportunities outside Addis

Many refugees in Addis say they came to the city because it was better than the alternative options available elsewhere in Ethiopia. The risk is that if this continues to be the case then increased freedom of movement will lead to unsustainable levels of refugee movement to Addis. In order to mitigate that, socio-economic opportunities, including new job creation need to be available in other parts of Ethiopia. One important means to achieve that could be to focus the CRRF on employment creation in the border regions that host most refugees, for example, around Dollo Ado, Shire, Gambella, and Jijiga. There may also be opportunities to consider refugees within the development strategies of secondary cities within Ethiopia's other regions. Another complementary option is to strengthen the industrial zones model envisaged by the Ethiopia 'Jobs Compact'. For example, questions have been raised so far regarding the relatively low wage rates, the fit between refugees' backgrounds and the type of jobs available, and the additional infrastructure available to support family life. However, as one Ethiopian commentator told us, "the industrial parks deal is the best investment deal Ethiopia has ever done with the international

community", creating 30,000 jobs for refugees and even more for Ethiopians based on new investment. Many refugees in Addis, including more than half of all Eritrean refugees, are enthusiastic about relocating to the zones, provided the incentives are right.

6. Consider alternative migration pathways

Our research reveals that over 90% of refugees in Addis aspire to move onwards to Europe, North America, or Australia. The data suggests that this is significantly due to a lack of socio-economic opportunity within Ethiopia. And so creating that opportunity may reduce the demand for onward movement. However, in the absence of adequate employment creation, there will continue to be irregular movement. But we also learn from our data that most refugees would prefer legal migration pathways, and most understand the extreme risks of embarking on dangerous journeys with smugglers. In principle, the EU Trust Fund, from which Ethiopia has received around 250m Euros so far, might also be used in support of enhancing legal pathways. While not an adequate solution by itself, expanding opportunities for resettlement and alternative migration pathways could complement a primary focus on solutions within Ethiopia.



Streets of Bole Micheal



Addis Ababa under construction

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