

“No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate”

Vulnerability of children on the move
in the Horn of Africa

June 2019



THE UNICEF OFFICE OF RESEARCH – INNOCENTI

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FOREWORD

In 2017, UNICEF estimated that around 30 million children were living outside their country of birth, and 6 million were internally displaced. Children’s migration journeys – with family or unaccompanied – are driven by a combination of factors that include violence, distress and deprivation, as well as a search for new opportunities in line with their aspirations for better lives. Children and young people face multiple risks on the course of their journeys, shaped to a significant extent by their age and gender. Without adequate protection, they are vulnerable to physical and sexual exploitation and harm at the hands of smugglers and other adults.

Two recent intergovernmental agreements endorsed in December 2018 – the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees – commit signatory governments to placing children’s rights to safety and protection from violence, abuse and exploitation at the heart of the management of migration, both within countries and across borders. Robust evidence, particularly from the perspectives of children and young people, is central to understanding what they experience whilst on the move. Evidence is necessary to improve policies, programmes and investments in child protection systems to ensure that children’s rights are secured.

This report is part of ongoing research in the Horn of Africa. It provides key insights into the perilous journeys undertaken by children transiting and/or moving within and/or through Somaliland. Drawing on qualitative research with children, their families, and other stakeholders, the report highlights how children’s movement is driven by different motivations, exposes children to different forms of harm, and presents multiple barriers to accessing services. These barriers include lack of access to schools for refugees and internal migrants due to language issues, costs and distance from schools, even where access is promised through legislation and/or policy. For children embarking for Europe, violations often include arbitrary arrest and detention, deportation, rape and sexual violence, being held ransom by smugglers – at risk to their lives – and exposure to life-threatening natural hazards.

UNICEF’s imperative to study child migration pathways and experiences derives from its commitment to identifying the most effective forms of support that can be provided to children, their families and communities, to ensure that if they move, they do so safely and with dignity. The findings presented here support the implementation of global commitments to protect children on the move, by informing and recommending actions and investments of all stakeholders, including governments, the United Nations, civil society and other development partners.

Priscilla Idele

Director, a.i.
UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| List of acronyms | 5 |
| Executive summary | 6 |
| Introduction | 10 |
| Methodology | 11 |
| Constraints and limitations | 14 |
| Children's pathways: Which children are moving and why? | 16 |
| Internally displaced persons | 16 |
| Refugees | 18 |
| Undocumented migrants | 18 |
| Tahriib | 20 |
| Human trafficking | 24 |
| Returnees | 25 |
| Investigating the root causes: Why are children leaving on tahriib? | 26 |
| Push factors | 26 |
| <i>Employment</i> | 26 |
| <i>Lack of access to education</i> | 27 |
| <i>Family dynamics and diaspora</i> | 30 |
| <i>Lack of protection</i> | 31 |
| Pull factors | 32 |
| <i>Family dynamics</i> | 32 |
| <i>Seeking respect</i> | 32 |
| <i>Peer influence</i> | 33 |
| <i>The role of information and communications technology</i> | 34 |
| Vulnerability on the move: Protection risks for children on the move | 38 |
| Assessing risk | 38 |
| Mental health | 39 |
| Physical health | 41 |
| Discrimination | 44 |
| Lack of access to education | 45 |
| Detention and juvenile justice | 46 |
| Violence against children and insecurity | 48 |
| Sexual and gender-based violence | 48 |
| Smuggling and extortion | 52 |
| Child labour and exploitation | 54 |
| Lack of access to legal status | 55 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Responding to vulnerability: The existing framework | 56 |
| Legal framework | 56 |
| Services | 57 |
| Legal status | 60 |
| Detention | 61 |
| Birth registration | 63 |
| Mental and physical health | 64 |
| Education | 64 |
| Employment | 68 |
| Child labour | 71 |
| Trafficking and smuggling | 72 |
| Sexual and gender-based violence | 74 |
| Harmful traditional practices | 76 |
| Alternative care | 78 |
| Coordination and data management | 78 |
| Conclusions and recommendations | 82 |
| UNICEF Agenda for Action | 87 |
| Bibliography | 88 |
| Annex 1: Key informants | 95 |
| Annex 2: Key interview materials | 96 |

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|---|
| ACRWC | African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child |
| CRVS | Civil Registration and Vital Statistics |
| FGM | Female genital mutilation |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| HAKAD | Counter Human Trafficking and Smuggling Agency of Somaliland |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| MESAF | Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family of the Republic of Somaliland |
| SONYO | Somaliland National Youth Organization |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children are moving on a massive scale in the Horn of Africa. As elsewhere in the world, migration is associated with vulnerability. This is because many people are forced or pushed to move by unaddressed vulnerabilities, including poverty, persecution, disruption of their families or exposure to human rights abuses. Once they move, these people can be made more vulnerable by the disruption of social structures and coping mechanisms that would otherwise have a protective effect. The very fact of being on the move can disrupt access to services as individuals may be unaware of where to turn in a new location and service providers may, in turn, have difficulty accessing them. These dangers can be particularly acute for children, especially those travelling without their families.

Which children are on the move?

This study draws on research conducted in Somaliland as part of a larger study of children on the move in the Horn of Africa. There are hundreds of thousands of children on the move in Somaliland. The largest group being the internally displaced. Approximately 450,000 of Somaliland’s estimated 1 million displaced are children (defined as all persons under 18).¹ Most of these children have been forced from their homes by drought. Most move with their families but some are sent by their families to friends or relatives in larger towns while parents attempt to maintain livestock and other assets in rural areas. Once absorbed into these networks of friends and extended family, these children are often invisible and the families that host them are not given any special assistance to cover their educational or other needs. Thousands more children are refugees, typically fleeing with their parents from war in Yemen and conflict-affected parts of Somalia or from ethnically based persecution in Ethiopia. In addition, although disaggregated numbers are not available, a substantial number of the 20,000–90,000 migrants coming to Somaliland to escape poverty and work, primarily from Ethiopia, are children.

Although precise statistics are unclear, both the field research and the surveyed literature indicate that there is a pervasive pattern of young people leaving Somaliland each month, seeking to make a better life for themselves abroad, most often in Europe but also at times in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Those who take this path cite better employment prospects and educational opportunities as reasons for choosing to migrate. They also talk about wanting to establish themselves and gain respect and recognition in their communities. Some of the youngest point to negative dynamics in the family – for example, a perceived lack of respect – as a reason for going. The phenomenon of youth movement is so pervasive that it has been termed a ‘national disaster’.² These journeys, known as *tahriib*, are most commonly undertaken by young people aged between 18 and 21, but a significant minority, 15 per cent according to one study, are under 18.³ Most of those who left before they were 18 were 16 or 17,⁴ but children as young as 10 at the time they departed were also interviewed.⁵ These children typically leave without the consent or knowledge of their parents.

This report presents the results of a qualitative research study aimed at better understanding the situation of these children. It draws on 282 individual interviews and focus group discussions with children and parents on the move, including internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and returnees. Within each group, the research examined why children move and the problems they face when they do. The

¹ International Organization for Migration, ‘Displacement Situation Report: Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Sanaag, Sool and Togdheer Regions (Somaliland)’, November 2017.

² Ali, N., ‘Going on Tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe’, Rift Valley Institute, Research Paper 5, 9 January 2017, <http://riftvalley.net/publication/going-tahriib#.WEWJCWKL5UJ>, accessed 20 March 2018, p. 7.

³ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴ Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

⁵ Interview with child migrant, Borama, July 2018.

research also examined what structures exist to protect children and whether they are effectively reaching children on the move and responding to the threats these children face. It then makes recommendations for strengthening child protection systems on the ground.

Protection challenges for children on the move

Children on the move in Somaliland, regardless of which of the above categories they fall into, face significant difficulties. Often living in the poorest and most insecure areas, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons are more likely to be poor, undocumented and unable to access education or other services. They are also more likely to be victims of violent crime, including sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), abuse and exploitation. Children and young people who attempt to emigrate also face serious protection risks. The journeys they undertake are generally facilitated by smugglers operating on a ‘go now, pay later’ basis – only to later face ransom and extortion from smugglers. Young people are often denied basic provisions (such as food and water) and endure uncomfortable conditions, travelling long distances on foot or in crowded cars or boats. If they are suspected of seeking to leave without parental permission, they can be arrested by the relevant authorities. Once abroad, they may be arrested by immigration authorities. While travelling, they lack access to education and may face discrimination, violence (including sexual and gender-based violence), work under forced or exploitative conditions. If they make it far enough that they need to pay for their journey, they may be held to ransom, beaten or otherwise abused to compel their relatives to pay. Frantic parents sell assets and beg the wider community for money to raise the necessary funds. If the children reach their destination, they may face long immigration or asylum procedures, uncertainty and discrimination.

Protection systems in Somaliland

There is an urgent need to put systems in place to protect all children in Somaliland, including children on the move. Legal protection for children in Somaliland is provided through a Juvenile Justice Law and Child Protection Policy, however, implementation remains extremely weak due to capacity and resource challenges. For example, the failure to define and penalize trafficking has undermined efforts to prosecute the crime. Where rights are incorporated in the law and policy, their implementation in practice falls short. For example, the law protects children against incarceration alongside adults but the lack of separate facilities makes this difficult to respect in practice. In addition, although as a matter of principle the need to respect the best interests of the child are recognized, decision-making procedures lack formal or systematic determinations of best interests and offer little scope for children’s participation.

The government and other actors are also working to address protection issues through service provision. For example, the Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF) provides social workers. However, at time of writing, there are only a dozen social workers to serve a population of millions. The government also strives to provide free and universal primary education and allows migrant and refugee children to access these systems—though, in practice, more than 50 per cent of children remain out of school. Civil society organizations endeavour to fill the gap – e.g. by providing psycho-social counselling to children who have been victims of sexual violence, and supporting hundreds of volunteer community workers with training and incentives, but their interventions are constrained by funding and other factors.

Concerted efforts must be made to address these gaps, reinforce institutions and institutional capacity, and promote more child- and migrant-friendly social and cultural attitudes. Regardless of the origin or destination of children on the move, they remain children first and foremost and, as such, are entitled to the protections available under international law. More must be done to ensure that these protections are made a reality.



INTRODUCTION

Somaliland is a territory of 137,600 km with a population of 3.5 million people bordered by Djibouti to the west, Ethiopia to the south, the Gulf of Aden to the north and Puntland to the east. Although there is ongoing conflict on the border between Somaliland and Puntland, the region remains relatively stable. Although the region remains poor, its gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was estimated at only US\$444 in 2015.⁶ By way of comparison, neighbouring Ethiopia has an estimated GDP per capita of US\$2,200 and that of Djibouti is US\$3,600.⁷ Poverty has been exacerbated by one of the worst droughts in decades, which began in 2016 and ran throughout 2017. Although the drought now appears to be abating, it has affected more than 1.5 million people, more than 50 per cent of the livestock has died and 80 per cent of the cattle in Somaliland has perished.

Against this backdrop, there has been massive population movement in Somaliland. The relative stability in Somaliland has made it an attractive destination for those fleeing war and violence in southern and central Somalia and Yemen, as well as political persecution in Ethiopia. Pockets of development in its cities have attracted large numbers of Somalis facing drought in rural areas as well as economic migrants, mostly Ethiopians. At the same time, a lack of opportunities and other factors have led a large number of Somalis to attempt to migrate to more developed areas in Europe and elsewhere. Together, these populations on the move represent more than a million people.

Hundreds of thousands of children are among this group. Individuals on the move are often vulnerable because they are separated from the social networks that would otherwise provide them with protection and they are exposed to new environments, where unfamiliarity may limit their ability to protect themselves. Among these individuals, children are particularly vulnerable and face serious threats to their emotional and physical well-being. Regardless of their origin or destination, they are – first and foremost – children, and are entitled to the protections available to them under international law, such as the prioritization of their best interests in all decisions that affect them.

Motivated by concern about the scale of displacement and migration occurring in Somaliland and the child protection challenges associated with these movements, UNICEF’s Somalia Country Office and UNICEF’s Office of Research – Innocenti embarked on this research to deepen understanding of children on the move in Somaliland.

This report contains the first in-depth field research conducted on a broad range of protection concerns. By incorporating an understanding of the children’s own perspectives as well as those of their parents, it seeks to illuminate which children are on the move in Somaliland, why they are moving and what protection problems they face.

The research aims to better understand current response mechanisms by consolidating knowledge on the existing child protection systems, both formal and community-based. This is action-oriented research, intended to generate recommendations for strengthening the system and present the views of children, who are the intended beneficiaries of this system.

6 Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Planning and Development, National Development Plan II, 2017–2021, 2017, http://slministryofplanning.org/images/front-page/Somaliland_NDP11_Final.pdf, accessed 20 June 2018.

7 CIA World Factbook, ‘GDP Per Capita,’ available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html>, accessed 4 December 2018.

METHODOLOGY

The research began with a literature review and analysis of existing data regarding the situation of children on the move and their protection concerns in Somaliland.⁸ UNICEF then partnered with the University of Hargeysa to gain insights from children, social workers, community members and other stakeholders who are engaged in providing services to children along migratory routes in Somaliland. Data collectors from Hargeysa University were themselves young people (final year students or new graduates) in conformity with UNICEF’s Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategy.⁹ Co-creation with young people is at the core of UNICEF’s new Young People’s Agenda.¹⁰

UNICEF is committed to ensuring that all research and evidence generation programmes undertaken by the institution and its partners are ethical. For this reason, procedures and guidelines have been created – particularly for research involving children and young people, whose voices are critically important to UNICEF.¹¹ In this research, a child protection protocol was developed in line with UNICEF ethical standards, including strong provisions relating to gaining consent and the development of a resource base, which allowed data collectors to make referrals in the field if needed.¹² An ethics protocol was developed and ethical approval was obtained from the University of Hargeysa. As part of the research, 18 students from the university were selected and trained as data collectors; UNICEF offered training on data collection methodologies and the research protocols.

Interview maps were designed with the intention of guiding open-ended conversations, allowing interviewees to express themselves freely and tell their stories as they pertained to the research questions. A five-day pilot was conducted in Hargeysa, allowing the teams to test the interview maps and identify common misunderstandings. Following the pilot phase, strengths and weaknesses of the map were reviewed and revisions were made. This was followed by ten days of field research conducted in six research sites across Somaliland. These six sites were selected, in part, because of their strategic location on different migration routes.

- **Hargeysa**, the capital, is a major destination for migrants to Somaliland. It is also a significant source of migrants.
- **Burco**, Somaliland’s second largest city, is another migrant destination. It is also a hub on the migration route that leads through Caynabo.
- **Caynabo**, another research location (Sool region of Somaliland) where migrants cross the Gulf of Aden.
- **Borama**, Somaliland’s third largest city, is also a destination for migrants – especially those from Ethiopia – due to its proximity to the border. It also lies on a migration route that leads primarily through Tog-Wajaale.
- **Tog-Wajaale**, a small border town in Somaliland, where many migrants cross into Ethiopia or vice versa. Although the specific crossing points on these routes frequently change, hubs remain constant.

8 The review will be available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>

9 United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Adolescent and Youth Strategic Engagement Framework’, accessed 20 August 2018.

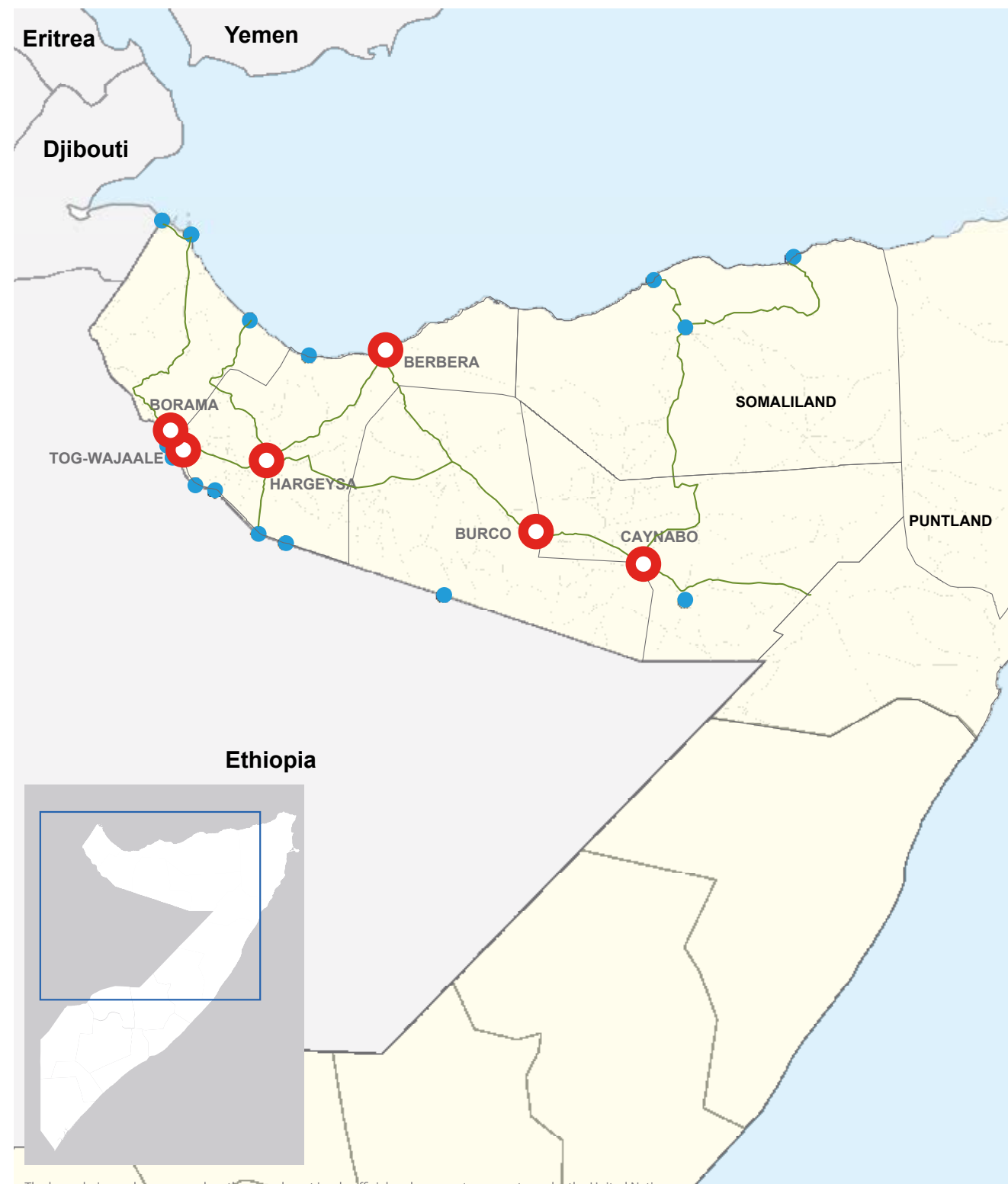
10 United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Young People’s Agenda: Plan for Young People’s Participation’, 31 May 2018, p. 3.

11 Powell, M. et al., ‘Ethical Research Involving Children’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2013, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/706-ethical-research-involving-children.html>, accessed 16 August 2018.

12 United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection, and Analysis’, 1 April 2015, https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF, accessed 16 August 2018.

Children on the move migration routes

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The boundaries and names used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

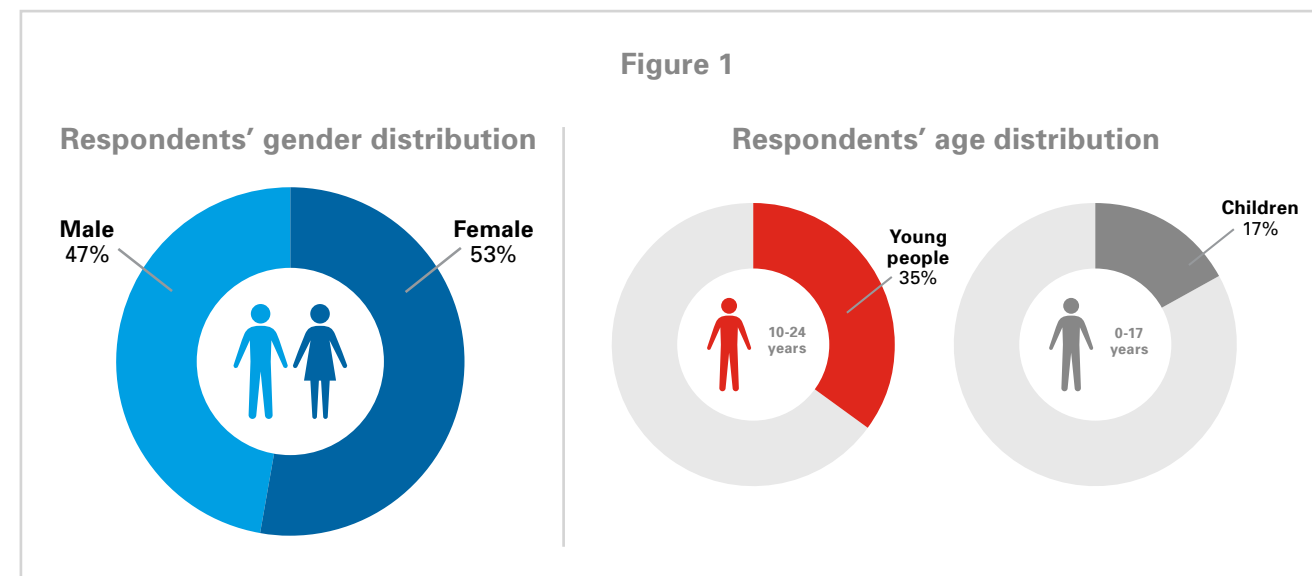
Legend

- Primary data collection sites
- Transit point
- Internal routes

■ **Berbera**, on the Gulf of Aden, is another important transit point. It is the primary landing point for Yemeni refugees and Somalis returning from Yemen as a result of the civil war. It has also recently become an embarkation point for individuals attempting to migrate by sea to Yemen, in transit to Saudi Arabia and other countries on the Arabian peninsula or to Sudan.

Another transit point, Lawya Caddo – on the border with Djibouti – was also considered but was rejected for two reasons. First, it appears that this route is not used frequently in July (when the research was conducted) due to the heat, making it difficult to find interviewees. Second, the distance from Hargeysa (12 hours by road) would have reduced the time available for data collection and was considered too far from other viable research sites.

Ultimately, the field research team conducted 212 individual interviews with migrants, refugees, internally displaced and returnee children and their parents, social workers, religious and community leaders, and law enforcement personnel. Fifteen focus group discussions were also conducted. The interviews were intended to explore individual and family experiences of migration (samples of the interview maps used are available in the annex). Targets for the numbers of interviewees in each category were discussed in advance and the research teams attempted to find sufficient numbers in each category through introductions by community leaders and NGOs, and snowballing. Parents and children were selected from within the same communities but were not necessarily interviewed in pairs. In addition, UNICEF consultants and staff conducted 51 interviews with 55 government officials, civil society representatives and social workers. In all, 53 per cent of the interviewees were women and 47 per cent were men; 17 per cent of the interviewees were children and 35 per cent of the interviews were with young people.



Sixteen of the interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted in Caynabo, 32 in Berbera, 32 in Borama, 27 in Burco, 155 in Hargeysa and 16 in Tog-Wajaale. Of these, 86 were conducted with internally displaced persons, 20 with refugees, 24 with migrants, 85 with individuals who had experienced *tahriib* (either having gone themselves or through being the parents of children who had gone), 30 with service providers and 22 with government officials. Note that some interviewees fit into more than one category, for example some internally displaced persons had also attempted *tahriib* or had children who attempted *tahriib*.

Figure 2: Number of interviews per location

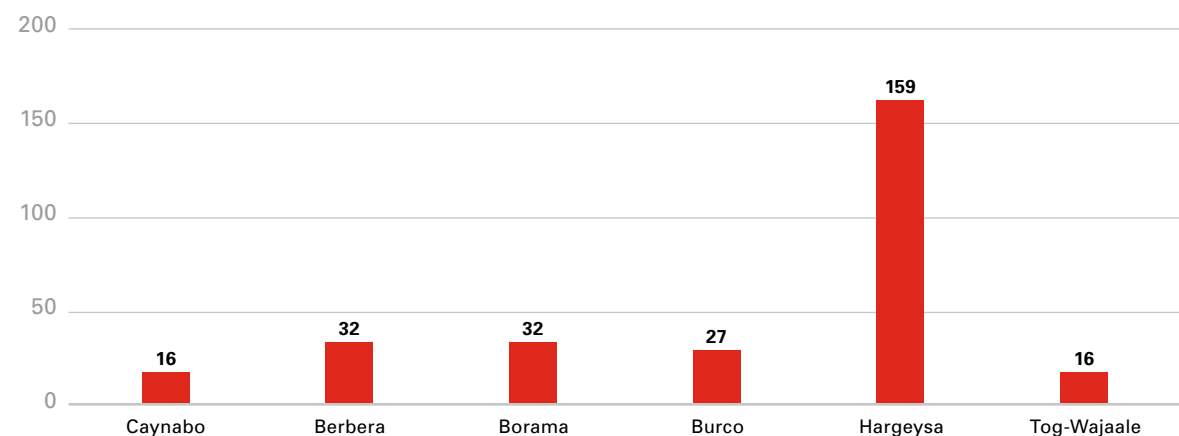
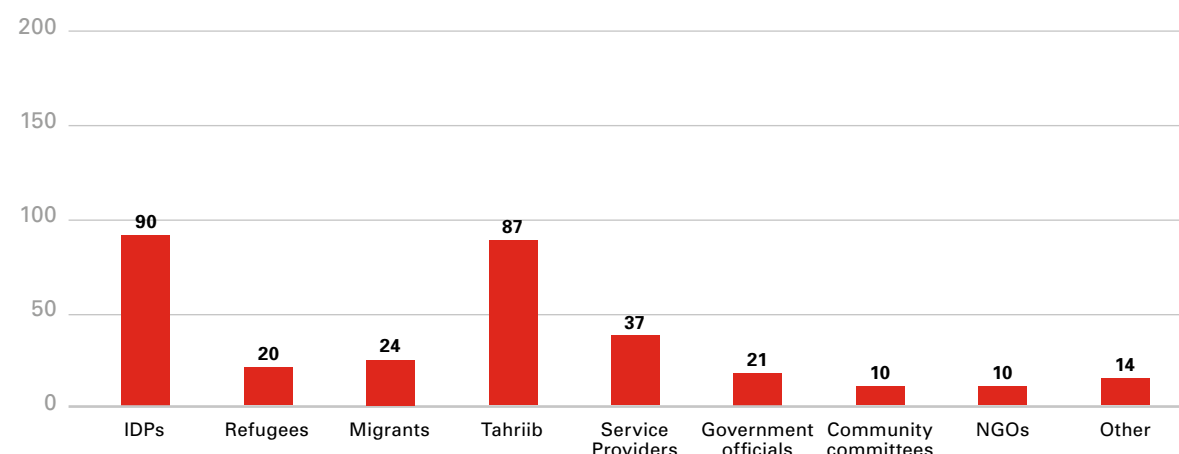


Figure 3: Number of interviews per respondent category



Constraints and limitations

The research also faced various constraints and challenges. First, it was exclusively qualitative. As such, it did not try to quantify phenomena but rather to understand the perspectives of those affected, including migrants themselves or their parents and communities. This limits the extent to which percentages and other mathematical representations can be cited. It also means that the generalization of these results must be treated with care.

Second, due to decades of conflict in the broader region, most of the available data has been generated through humanitarian actors which is limited due to access, coverage and methodological challenges. It is therefore difficult to analyse trends over time from the available data sets.

Third, while the field interviews offered unique insights into what seemed to be the most prevalent reasons for movement (namely access to employment and educational opportunities), the research did not fully investigate some less prevalent motives. For example, although experts noted that girls and young women

may flee female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriages, the research teams did not ask directly about these issues and did not target those most likely to have suffered them. Moreover, the research design did not allow for the building of long-term relationships and rapport that would likely be necessary to garner information about such deeply sensitive issues. As a result, we are only able to report anecdotal information and can neither confirm nor refute the hypothesized connection between these violations of young women's rights and migration.

Research was further constrained in its analysis of clan and sub-clan dynamics and their impact on migration. Due to the sensitivity of asking directly about clan affiliation, this was not included in the interview map. As such, we were not able to analyse data through this lens or to identify whether certain groups might be more or less prone to certain types of migration, or whether there are any significant differences in the views and experiences of subgroups on these issues.



CHILDREN'S PATHWAYS: WHICH CHILDREN ARE MOVING AND WHY?

There are hundreds of thousands of children on the move in Somaliland, with a diverse set of movement patterns and motivations. Somaliland is a source, transit point and destination for those on the move, including internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and migrants (those who have crossed an international boundary for a reason other than persecution or war). Estimating the number of individuals in particular groups is complex and variations in definitions and calculation methods used by other researchers create significant differences in their figures, some of which are presented here as background. Moreover, the contested political status of Somaliland creates additional difficulties as some studies treat data from Somaliland individually while others integrate it into research from Somalia. Nonetheless, the available data presented in this section gives a sense of the patterns and scale of displacement in the country and provides context for the protection challenges that will be discussed in the next section. Much of the data draws on the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which compiles information on a variety of human movements, including internal displacement and returns.

Internally displaced persons

Estimates of the number of internally displaced persons in Somaliland range from 450,000 to more than a million and are difficult to verify.¹³ A recent assessment by IOM suggested that there are close to a million internally displaced persons in Somaliland and estimated that approximately 450,000 of these are children.¹⁴ Internally displaced persons are primarily individuals moving from rural to urban areas in

The main reason that we moved from Cuna-qabad was a severe drought... since our main income source was destroyed and we didn't have other sources to use for living, we decided to move to the urban area to survive.

response to devastating drought, "The main reason that we moved from Cuna-qabad was a severe drought... since our main income source was destroyed and we didn't have other sources to use for living, we decided to move to the urban area to survive."¹⁵ Another concurred, "Before the drought we had a lot of livestock, 350 sheep and 15 camels, but unfortunately all these things became zero and we faced the hardest situation of our life."¹⁶

A smaller number of internally displaced persons had previously been refugees abroad but lacked the means to go back to their original homes after returning to Somaliland. For example, a number of people

in the State House settlement in Hargeysa (one of the research sites) returned from the Hartesheikh, Rabaso and Abokor refugee camps in Ethiopia in 1999.¹⁷ One interviewee recounted how she had fled from Somaliland to Ethiopia in 1988 as a result of the war but had returned when the Ethiopian government asked refugees to do so in the mid-1990s. Lacking the resources to journey all the way back to her original home, she settled in an internally displaced persons area in Borama (near the border) and has been there

13 See a more detailed discussion of the various figures available in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.
 14 International Organization for Migration, 'Displacement Situation Report: Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Sanaag, Sool and Togdheer Regions (Somaliland)', November 2017.
 15 Interview with an internally displaced person, Borama, July 2018.
 16 Interview with an internally displaced mother, Caynabo, 29 July 2018.
 17 Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU/FAO) and UNICEF, 'Nutrition Survey Report: Hargeisa Returnees and IDP Settlements, Somaliland', September 2005, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rc=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwiuk8-ajO7cAhUDJoKHetCBYUQFjAAegQICRAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.fsnau.org%2Fdownloads%2FHargeisa%2520Nutrition%2520Survey%2520-%2520September%25202005.pdf&usq=AOvVaw0kXKihbYdUw4tl-XoQdSK5>, accessed 15 August 2018.

ever since.¹⁸ In addition, poor individuals also move into the internally displaced persons settlements to take advantage of the cheaper housing, though they would not generally be considered to fall within the internationally recognized definition of an internally displaced person.¹⁹

Internally displaced persons tend to cluster around camps at their destination where housing is available at little or no cost. Some, however, can be integrated into the community more readily if they have strong family connections. Internally displaced persons generally move as families but a significant minority become separated. A recent study showed that 10 per cent of such households had been separated in the prior three months.²⁰ This separation was generally voluntary, allowing adults to stay behind to care for livestock or to travel further in search of work, while giving children access to resources in urban areas.²¹ The field research reflected this: children were sent to live with relatives in urban areas where it was perceived that better care was available. One 12-year-old boy left his mother's home in response to drought and travelled to live with his father.²² A girl from a rural area in eastern Somaliland went to live with her aunt in Hargeysa and explained her journey as such, "I left my home because life was impossible. We had lost everything that we had, including our cattle. My parents told me to go to Hargeysa where I can survive. I travelled alone and I left my family there" (Somali, 16 years).²³

Before the drought we had a lot of livestock, 350 sheep and 15 camels, but unfortunately all these things became zero and we faced the hardest situation of our life.

One young man reported that he had travelled alone as a ten-year-old from his rural village to Tog-Wajaale in order to be able to attend school.²⁴ Though these children travel alone, they are typically cared for by extended family or friends on arrival. Once absorbed into these networks of extended family or friends, these children often become invisible to official structures and families and caregivers generally do not receive outside support to meet the educational or other needs of these children.

I left my home because life was impossible. We had lost everything that we had, including our cattle. My parents told me to go to Hargeysa where I can survive. I travelled alone and I left my family there.

Finally, tensions between Somaliland and Puntland over the Sool and Sanaag regions displaced approximately 9,000 people in January 2018.²⁵ Further tensions would likely cause additional displacement.

18 Interview with internally displaced woman, Borama, 23 July 2018.
 19 Internally displaced persons are defined in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as "Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border." Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, available at <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/199808-training-OCHA-guiding-principles-Eng2.pdf>.
 20 REACH Initiative, 'Somalia: Drought and Protection Concerns in IDP Sites: Joint Partner Assessment', Report, April 2018, p. 2-3, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-drought-and-protection-concerns-idp-sites-joint-partner-assessment-april-2018>, accessed 20 August 2018; the research is described in more detail in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.
 21 Ibid.
 22 Interview with internally displaced child, Caynabo, 28 July 2018.
 23 Interview with internally displaced child, Cakaara internally displaced persons camp, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 24 Interview with young internally displaced man, Tog-Wajaale, July 2018.
 25 See a more detailed discussion of the tensions in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

Refugees

Somaliland is home to a sizeable refugee population. Of the 18,713 refugees registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), approximately 45.5 per cent are under 18.²⁶ However, instances of unaccompanied and separated children in this population are exceedingly rare with only 32 such cases registered by UNHCR in 2018.²⁷ Most refugees are from Ethiopia and Yemen and settle in Hargeysa.²⁸ The vast majority of asylum seekers are Ethiopian, as Yemenis are granted prima facie refugee status and thus generally avoid an extended status determination process.

There are also significant numbers of individuals who have fled from conflict affected regions of Somalia to urban areas of Somaliland in search of safety and stability. In the words of one, "Terrible activities have been going on in my country. Girls have been raped while boys have been killed."²⁹ Another young woman from Galkacyo, Puntland, referred to discrimination as a reason for fleeing.³⁰

However, UNHCR's data does not present the entire picture. In accordance with international protocols, UNHCR cannot recognize Somali people who have fled from conflict affected regions of Somalia as refugees, but as internally displaced persons. In contrast, the Somaliland government considers them refugees, though it does not subject them to any formalized refugee status determination. Without clear recognition of either status, their access to rights and services are compromised.³¹ No figures on the size of this population are available but in a previous study they constituted 6 per cent of one internally displaced persons camp.³² Although there may be many children among them, no specific information is available on how many and whether they are unaccompanied or separated.

Undocumented migrants

Although the size of undocumented populations is notoriously difficult to assess, estimates of the number of undocumented migrants in Somaliland range from 20,000³³ to 90,000.³⁴ Most of these are Ethiopians, Oromo or Somali and they predominantly live in Hargeysa and other cities.

When asked to describe their motivation for travelling, many spoke in simple terms. "I came here to work,"³⁵ said an eight-year-old Ethiopian migrant boy who had come with his family. Another said, "I was looking for a good life, food and clothes" (Ethiopian, 13 years).³⁶ Others referred to the lack of opportunity at home, "I have seen no benefit or future in staying and farming as my brothers do. I came here having dreams that

26 UNHCR Somalia, 'Refugees and Asylum-Seekers Statistical Report', 31 October 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-statistical-report-31-october-2018>, accessed 21 November 2018.

27 Ibid.

28 See a more detailed discussion of the numbers and reasons for flight in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

29 Interview with displaced person from South Central Somalia, Hargeysa, July 2018.

30 Interview with young woman from Puntland, Burco, 24 July 2018.

31 Human Rights Centre, 'Hargeisa's Unrecognised IDPs', Report, 2018, <http://hrccsomaliland.org/report-hargeisas-unrecognized-idps/>, accessed 15 August 2018; discussed in further detail in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

32 Ibid.

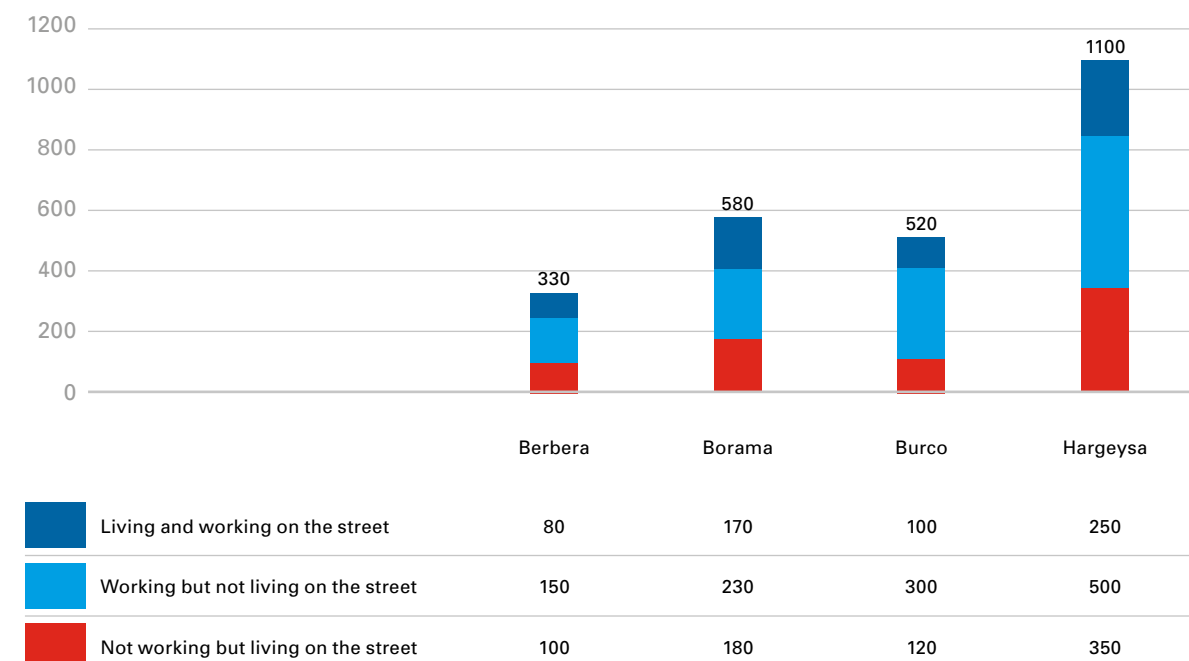
33 Danish Refugee Council and Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 'Somalia/Somaliland Country Profile', Report, Updated July 2016, <http://www.regionalmms.org/images/CountryProfile/Somalia/Somalila-SomalilandCountryProfile.pdf>, accessed 14 August 2018.

34 Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, National Child Protection Policy, 2013.

35 Interview with an Ethiopian migrant child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

36 Interview with an Ethiopian migrant child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

Figure 4: Street children



*Source: Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (MESAF)

one day I will be in a position to support my family and my country" (Ethiopian, 16 years).³⁷ A significant number also said that they had moved as a result of drought in their home areas.

Although statistics are hard to find, it appears that children on their own constitute a substantial portion of this group. A number live as street children, with boys being more visible than girls.³⁸ According to a recent census conducted by MESAF, there are an estimated 2,530 street children in Somaliland.³⁹ Within this group, some are using Somaliland as a transit point to continue to Europe or the Arabian Peninsula, particularly Saudi Arabia. This is consistent with data which show that the majority of unaccompanied children travelling towards Saudi Arabia are Ethiopian (14,000 out of 18,000 per year).⁴⁰

37 Interview with an Ethiopian migrant boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

38 United Nations Children's Fund Somalia, 'Child Protection Strategy Note 2018-2020', <http://files.unicef.org/transparency/documents/Somalia%205.%20Child%20Protection.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2018.

39 Email communication with MESAF, 24 August 2018.

40 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 'Young and on the Move: Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa', Mixed Migration Series Study 10, Save the Children and Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 2016, https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/young_and_on_the_move_sep_2016.pdf accessed 20 May 2018.



Tahriib

Another major movement pattern is the outward migration of Somalis, usually to Europe and – to a lesser extent – the Arabian Peninsula. They move alongside other migrants from Puntland, Jubbaland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Benadir, South West State and Ethiopia, who transit through Somaliland along the same routes. This pattern of migration has come to be referred to as ‘*tahriib*,’ derived from an Arabic term for smuggling, which lends a strong sense of illicitness to the journey.

Migration and movement has a long history in Somali culture, which is rooted in a pastoralist tradition of moving to the greenest pastures. Somalis also have a more recent history of movement, both fleeing war and seeking jobs and education abroad. However, different types of journeys are termed in various ways depending on the nature of the journey. The key markers of *tahriib* are uncertainty and illegality. In the last five to ten years, this has come to be strongly associated with the journeys of youth towards Europe.⁴¹

The extent of the phenomenon is difficult to measure. The secrecy and irregularity of the movement mean that the majority of those undertaking it do not want to be seen or counted. Moreover, in countries of arrival, Somalis whose origin is Somaliland are not typically disaggregated from other Somalis. Thus, previous studies have given an extremely wide range of estimates: between 50 and 700 Somalis undertake the journey each month from Somaliland.⁴²

41 For a detailed anthropological discussion of terminologies for types of movement in Somaliland, see “Chapter 3 Ways of Moving: the Genealogy of Mobility” in Simonsen, A. ‘Tahriib: The Journey into the Unknown’, PhD Dissertation 2017, <https://www.lrdigital.dk/Tahriib-The-Journey-into-the-Unknown-9788793476929>, accessed 4 December 2018.

42 See a more detailed discussion of the available data in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

While exact numbers are difficult to establish, *tahriib* is clearly pervasive. Many individuals interviewed for this research pointed out that every family has been affected and many recounted personal stories. Some argued, however, that the phenomenon reached its peak several years ago and was now less prevalent. One immigration officer suggested that “it is not as huge as it used to be, but it still exists.”⁴³

Tahriib is more strongly associated with young men, who appear to be the majority of those who travel, than young women. A recent study carried out by the Heritage Institute estimated that 72 per cent of those who travelled were male, and 28 per cent were female.⁴⁴ In this research, despite an effort to interview equal numbers of boys and girls, we were only about 30 per cent of those who talked about their own *tahriib* journeys were women, as researchers reported difficulty in finding adequate female respondents, supporting the notion that more men than women undertake the journey. However, this may also reflect a bias in the research sampling: Although an effort was made to interview an even number of females and males in order to ensure that the experiences of girls and women were well understood, the research team had trouble identifying a sufficient number of female respondents.

The routes taken on *Tahriib* journeys are varied. In the words of one civil society actor, “If the border is tightened, the young people change routes. They are taking the routes planned and managed by smugglers and traffickers.”⁴⁵ In response to law enforcement efforts to impede migration, smugglers constantly adjust their routes but tend to offer variations on several main options based on the stories documented in this research and conversations with social workers, immigration officers and others who interact with children en route. Some people move east through Laas Caanood in the Sool region or Ceerigabo in Sanaag to the port of Bossaso in Puntland. Some reflected that the construction of a new road through Sanaag encouraged migration along that route, while fighting near Tukaraq has pushed people away from routes through Sool and towards Sanaag.⁴⁶ Others move through Lawya Caado to Djibouti and still others depart from the Somaliland ports of Berbera and Lughaye. Regardless of the route to the sea, most individuals cross the Gulf of Aden to Yemen, continue by sea to Port Sudan, then journey overland through Sudan to Libya (or sometimes Egypt) and, finally, across the Mediterranean.

Others travel overland through Tog-Wajaale, Ethiopia towards Sudan, re-joining the route through Libya or Egypt and, eventually, crossing the Mediterranean. In recent years, reports have suggested a preference for the sea route over the land route. Some believe that this is because it is safer, while a government official speculated that it might be due to a shift in policy in Ethiopia through which undocumented migrants were fined rather than deported, thereby making that route more difficult.⁴⁷

Far fewer respondents noted that they would travel from Yemen to Saudi Arabia or other countries on the Arabian Peninsula. A number of Somalis also migrate to South Africa via Kenya, but no one in this study mentioned that route. This reinforces earlier research, which indicated that those in cities further south (Beledweyne, Kismaayo and Mogadishu) prefer to take this route.⁴⁸

43 Interview with immigration officer, Borama, July 2018.

44 Wasuge, M., ‘Youth Migration in Somalia: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Remedies’, *The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS)*, Mogadishu, Somalia, 2018, <http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Youth-Migration-in-Somalia-1.pdf>, accessed 4 December 2018.

45 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

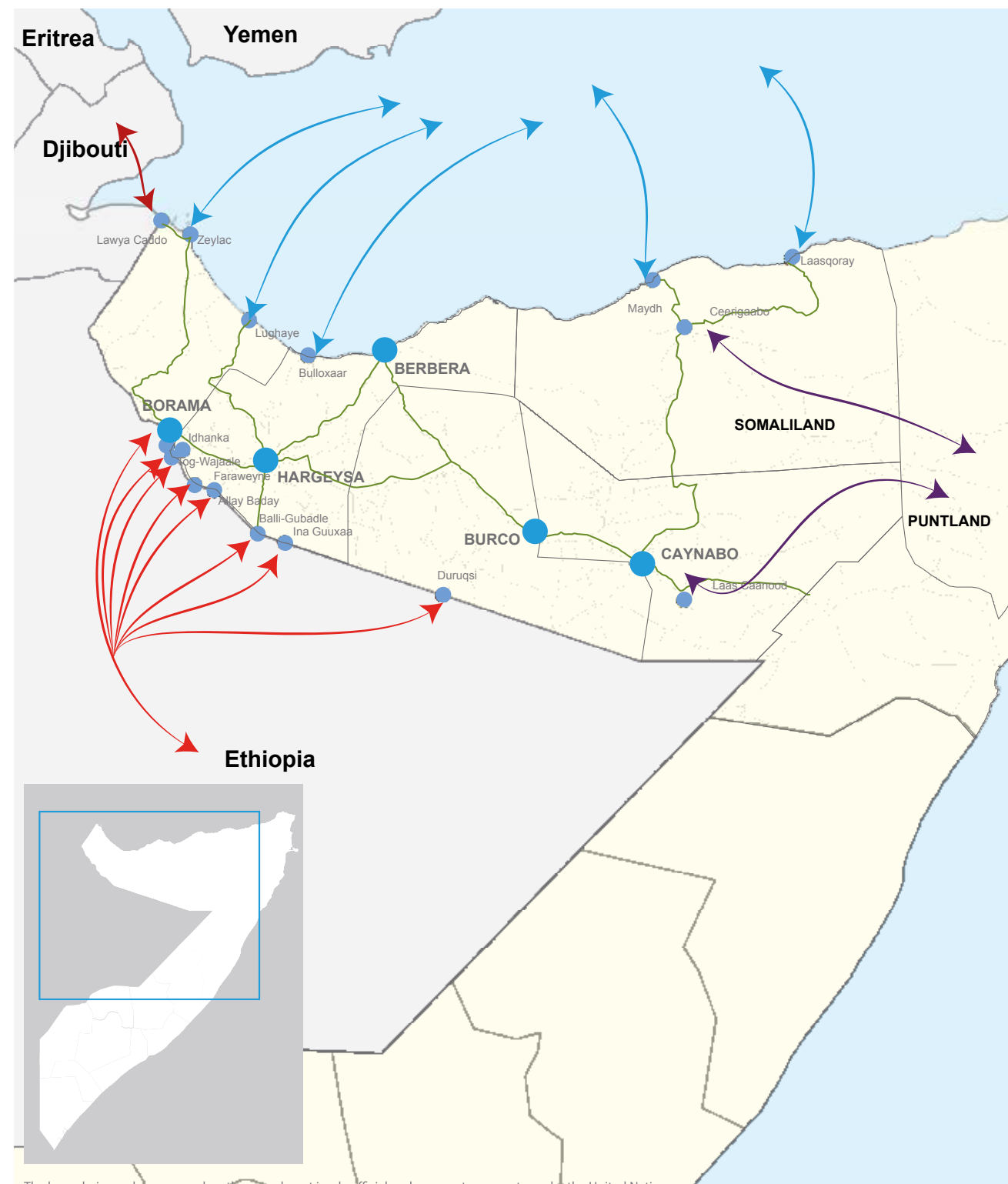
46 Interview with civil society organization, Hargeysa, July 2018.

47 Interview with a representative of the Ministry of Justice, Hargeysa, July 2018.

48 Wasuge, M., ‘Youth Migration in Somalia: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Remedies’, *The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS)*, Mogadishu, Somalia, 2018, <http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Youth-Migration-in-Somalia-1.pdf>, accessed 18 June 2018.

Children on the move migration routes

This map is stylized and not to scale. It does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.



The boundaries and names used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Legend

- Main transit points
- Transit points
- ↔ Routes through the sea
- ↔ Routes from and to Ethiopia
- ↔ Routes from and to Puntland
- ↔ Routes from and to Djibouti
- Internal routes

In most of the cases documented in this research, individuals attempting to migrate did not make it to their intended destination. In fact, only in four of the 89 profiled cases did individuals reach their intended destination (Europe). Only seven individuals recounted returning from Libya. In the majority of cases, those attempting to migrate were stopped or decided not to continue either before they left Somaliland or in Ethiopia – because the road was hard or, in one case, in response to a plea from the family. It must be remembered, however, that the research was conducted only in Somaliland, so we were only able to interview those who had personally travelled and returned or the family members of migrants. Thus, the data is skewed towards those who did not make it to their destinations.

If my family knew that I was migrating, they would have stopped me or done anything in their power to keep me here.

Tahriib is a young person's phenomenon. While the majority of those migrating in this fashion are aged 18–21, a significant minority are children. Of those profiled in a study by the Rift Valley Institute, 15 per cent were under 18 at the time they migrated.⁴⁹ While community members indicate that most children who undertake *tahriib* are aged 16–17,⁵⁰ children as young as eight were interviewed in this study⁵¹ and experts cited cases of children as young as nine.⁵² According to a school teacher's estimate, "Most are in grades seven and eight, forms one, two and three. The age is between 12 and 21."⁵³

In most cases, children and youth travel either alone or with friends and do not inform their families. Their ability to travel in this way is facilitated by the engagement of smugglers, who often allow them to begin the journey without money, only requiring payment once the journey is well underway. Most individuals attempting *tahriib* hide their plans from their families who (they believe) would try to stop them. In the words of one young woman, "If my family knew that I was migrating, they would have stopped me or done anything in their power to keep me here" (Somali, 18 years).⁵⁴ In the vast majority of cases, this was confirmed by family members interviewed who were fearful of the consequences of migration for their children, particularly of children being held and physically abused while ransom was demanded from their families. As one woman put it, "No mother wants her child to migrate."⁵⁵ Other parents described trying to prevent their children from migrating and some children described being intercepted by their parents at various points along the journey. One woman told of how she had tracked down her daughter seven times. Now, she explained, "As a mother, I spend most of my time guarding her and giving her advice about migration and its consequences."⁵⁶ Whereas in many other contexts families pool resources to fund the migration of one individual with everyone's support, the interviews made clear that – in the context of Somaliland – most youth leave without the consent or support of their families. Most parents criticized their children's decisions to migrate and went to great lengths to stop them if they could.

In a few cases, however, parents were aware and tolerant of the child or youth's decision. In the words of one young man who had returned, "My father was okay with me going because [I used to end up in jail and] he used to pay a lot of money every time I did something. So, he was like, 'Let him go. All he

49 Ali, N., 'Going on Tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe', p. 11.
 50 Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 51 Interview with child migrant, Borama, July 2018.
 52 Expert, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018.
 53 Interview with school teacher, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 54 Interview with female *tahriib* returnee, Hargeysa, 4 July 2018.
 55 Interview with refugee from Yemen, Hargeysa, 31 July 2018.
 56 Interview with internally displaced parent, State House IDP Settlement, Hargeysa, 28 July 2018.

does is cause problems.” But my mother was sad.”⁵⁷ In other cases, supporting one child’s migration is considered an investment. One expert said, “They think that one person abroad will save them all.”⁵⁸

Human trafficking

Previous research has indicated that Somaliland is a source, a destination and a transit point for both adults and children subjected to trafficking. This includes trafficking of Somalis into Somaliland and Puntland, as well as from Somaliland to Puntland, Djibouti, Ethiopia and the Gulf for domestic work, sexual services and even organ harvesting.⁵⁹

Trafficking is defined by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children as, “Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”⁶⁰ Despite some controversy over the matter, this definition is generally seen to exclude most of those who go on *tahriib* because they are not coerced into doing so.

The US State Department notes that although youth aged 18–35 years are most vulnerable to trafficking, the number of children exposed to the practice appears to be increasing.⁶¹ However, there is a general lack of detailed information about child trafficking and our field research documented only one unambiguous case. For the purpose of this report, those subjected to extortion and ransom have not been included as victims of trafficking, although some strongly argue that they should.⁶²

Key informants indicated that some trafficking occurs within Somaliland. Cases of trafficking from rural areas to Hargeysa and Burco for domestic work were reported, as was a traditional practice in which children are sent to rear livestock for another family in exchange for grants of livestock.⁶³ In addition, it was reported that Somali children (mainly girls aged 4–12) are taken to Ethiopia to work as domestic servants. Those older than twelve were reportedly vulnerable to sex trafficking.⁶⁴

One young man interviewed, who was 16 years old at the time of the incident, described being handed over to Pakistani traffickers who took him with a group to Addis Ababa for medical checks. The group was warned that the traffickers meant to harvest their organs and they managed to escape.⁶⁵

57 Interview with young male returnee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

58 Hall, S., ‘Investing in Somali Youth: Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland’, Report, IOM Somalia, <http://samuelhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/YOUTH-EMPLOYMENT-MIGRATION-RESEARCH1.pdf>, accessed 22 June 2018.

59 See discussion in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

60 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Article 3 (a), <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>, accessed 4 December 2018.

61 US State Department, ‘Special Case: Somalia’, *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2018*, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282798.pdf>, accessed 14 August 2018, p. 466.

62 See longer discussion in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

63 Interview with expert, Hargeysa, 25 July 2018.

64 Interview with representative of HAKKAD, 8 March 2018.

65 Interview with young internally displaced person, State House IDP Settlement, Hargeysa, 28 July 2018.



Regardless of the definition and scale, it is clear that there is a trafficking problem in Somaliland and that the victims are subject to serious abuse. Additional research is needed to clarify recruitment and trafficking patterns.

Returnees

An estimated 1,084,071 Somalis are registered as refugees in the Horn of Africa.⁶⁶ Since March 2015, an estimated 30,600 Somali refugees in Yemen have returned to Somalia following the outbreak of war,⁶⁷ with an estimated 1,321 returning so far in 2018.⁶⁸ A large number of these returnees re-enter the country through Somaliland – predominantly by boat through the port of Berbera – and a significant proportion list Somaliland as their final destination. Somalis undertaking *tahriib* have also been supported by IOM and UNHCR to return to the country from Libya.⁶⁹ At least two Somalis interviewed for this report had benefitted from that programme.⁷⁰

66 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Operational Portal, ‘Horn of African Somalia Situation’, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/horn>, accessed 4 October 2018.

67 Ibid.

68 Radio Ergo, ‘UNHCR assists 2,000 Somalis in voluntary return from Yemen’, 17 August 2018, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2018/Aug/159603/unchr_assists_2_000_somalis_in_voluntary_return_from_yemen.aspx, accessed 20 August 2018.

69 International Organization for Migration, ‘UN Migration Agency Helps Somali Migrants Return Home from Libya’, 1 June 2018, <https://www.iom.int/news/un-migration-agency-helps-somali-migrants-return-home-libya-0>.

70 Interview with young returnee, Hargeysa, 2 July 2018; interview with young male returnee, Burco, 24 July 2018.

INVESTIGATING THE ROOT CAUSES: WHY ARE CHILDREN LEAVING ON TAHRIB?

As part of its Agenda for Action for Refugee and Migrant Children, UNICEF has called for action on the factors that uproot children from their homes.⁷¹ In Somaliland, it is clear that *tahriib* is a dominant public concern and its causes must be better understood.

Push factors

A significant *tahriib* push factor is the search for (as interviewees often described) a 'better life' namely better economic and educational opportunities and improved living conditions. Somaliland is very poor, with GDP per capita estimates between US\$347⁷² and US\$444⁷³ – either figure would rank among the lowest in the world. The people most concerned that their children would migrate included those with some of the worst living conditions – including migrants into Somaliland and internally displaced persons – though the middle class is far from immune from this phenomenon.⁷⁴ In the words of one Somali woman, "When my children see the difficult life we are living in, it is possible that they may think about migration. This is the biggest worry that I have."⁷⁵ Another mentioned, "If employment was high and family living conditions were better, I believe they wouldn't migrate. Besides people from the upper and middle classes don't migrate as much as [those in the internally displaced persons camp]."⁷⁶

Employment

The most frequently cited element of seeking a 'better life' was the search for employment. One woman, whose daughter left for Europe aged 16 years, said that unemployment was the main reason, "She was my oldest child and willing to change her family's situation but she found difficulties in getting a job and preferred to go for migration."⁷⁷

The main reason he left his home was unemployment. When he saw that his older brothers who completed secondary education couldn't go to university because of financial incapacity and don't have jobs to contribute to the family life, he decided to disappear and look for a better life.

Individuals are not only driven by the objective reality of unemployment but also by their perceptions of their chances of finding a job. Numerous factors can create a feeling that the search is hopeless, including the difficulties faced by peers and friends. In the words of one mother of a child who had left, "The main reason he left his home was unemployment. When he saw that his older brothers who completed secondary education couldn't go to university because of financial incapacity and don't have jobs to contribute to the family life, he decided to disappear and look for a better life."⁷⁸

71 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Agenda for Action for Refugee and Migrant Children', <https://www.unicef.org/eca/what-we-do/emergencies/unicefs-agenda-action-refugee-and-migrant-children>, accessed 20 August 2018.
 72 The World Bank, 'New World Bank GDP and Poverty Estimates for Somaliland', Report, Hargeysa, 29 January 2014, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/01/29/new-world-bank-gdp-and-poverty-estimates-for-somaliland>, accessed 9 August 2018.
 73 Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Planning and Development, National Development Plan II.
 74 Indeed, a previous research project which classed interviewees into three income brackets – poor, middle and better-off – found that the largest number of those attempting *tahriib* (43 per cent) were in the middle bracket. See: Ali, N., 'Going on Tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe'.
 75 Interview with woman from Somalia, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 76 Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 77 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 78 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.

Another parent reflected that "If the older children are employed, it will give hope for the younger children that someday they will also be employed."⁷⁹

This desperation is exacerbated by the fact that even highly qualified individuals – including those with degrees from universities and vocational schools – find it difficult to get a job. In the words of one mother, "My boy was equipped with technical and vocational skills. However, when he failed to get another job because of his young age and his salary was not increased, he decided to leave the country."⁸⁰

Reinforcing the drive to migrate is the notion that Somalis returning from Europe or America are in greater demand in the job market than locals. For example, a study commissioned by IOM noted that "In Hargeysa and Garowe, the administrative capitals, returnees had a marked advantage in meeting educational requirements [of employers] over locals and internal migrants, suggesting that they had acquired education abroad that is now in considerable demand at home."⁸¹ In this context, leaving may be seen as a way of building a life at home in the future.

Lack of access to education

Another frequently cited reason for embarking on *tahriib* was a lack of educational opportunities. One parent suggested that her child was planning to travel to the Gulf, saying, "Since he could not afford to join university, he was totally disappointed."⁸² Another young man described his frustration at being forced to abandon his studies and the role this played in his decision to migrate to Europe, "I was studying computer engineering but I didn't have the money to continue because my uncle lost his job" (Somali, 23 years).⁸³ One 14-year-old said that she dreamt of becoming an academic in Europe, saying, "I really love to study, if I could afford the university here, I wouldn't think about moving, but considering the family situation they are really struggling and I don't want to put extra pressure" (Somali, 14 years).⁸⁴

The disappointment of being unable to continue with education is not unrelated to the concern about employment; university degrees are considered vital in getting good jobs and alternatives, such as vocational schools, are inadequate. In the words of a civil society activist interviewed, "Some children drop out after secondary school and they are the majority of *tahriib* goers, and also those who cannot afford university fees are at risk of going for *tahriib*. An opportunity for the youth population to develop their skills and viable employment opportunities would prevent them from taking the risky *tahriib* journey."⁸⁵

Some children drop out after secondary school and they are the majority of tahriib goers, and also those who cannot afford university fees are at risk of going for tahriib. An opportunity for the youth population to develop their skills and viable employment opportunities would prevent them from taking the risky tahriib journey.

This perception of a link between education and employment may not match with reality, however, as evidence shows that employers value practical experience over education. Yet, regardless of the objective necessity of degrees, it is clear that failure to finish university education is a driving factor for migration.

79 Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 80 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 81 Hall, S., 'Investing in Somali Youth: Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland'.
 82 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 83 Interview with returnee young man, Hargeysa, 1 July 2018.
 84 Interview with internally displaced child, Hargeysa, 28 July 2018.
 85 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 5 March 2018.



In my life, my parents didn't beat me. However, they used painful words to correct me, they were bullying and saying unacceptable words to me. Sometimes beating and torturing is better than bullying and heart-breaking words... They never helped me or supported me.

Family dynamics and diaspora

When discussing their families, some interviewees cited discord and the sense that they were disrespected as reasons for travelling. It is interesting to note that some of the youngest interviewees emphasized this most, although because the numbers in this group were small, caution must be exercised when attributing this concern to child migrants as a whole. As one child said, "I had tension and latent conflict with my family and I got depressed... then I decided to get out and migrate all the way to Europe" (Somali, 15 years).⁸⁶ Another child who had attempted to migrate said, "In my life, my parents didn't beat me. However, they used painful words to correct me, they were bullying and saying unacceptable words to me. Sometimes beating

and torturing is better than bullying and heart-breaking words... They never helped me or supported me." (Somali, 15 years).⁸⁷

Some community leaders also mentioned family dynamics and the widespread social acceptance of domestic violence and corporal punishment, "There is no peace at home. There are conflicts between parents. Children get frustrated and want to stay away from home, they leave home and become street children or migrate to other cities."⁸⁸ This lack of peace extends to schools, where "children often get beaten by teachers, even for minor reasons."⁸⁹ Indeed, as many as 78 per cent experienced corporal punishment.⁹⁰ This can push children to leave home, driving them to the streets or further afield.

Other interviewees cited lack of respect as a factor prompting children to leave. In the words of a religious leader, "Parents do not... consult their children in their daily lives. So, this encourages the children to move and migrate."⁹¹ One community leader also indicated that this issue was related to access to education; children considered the failure to pay for education to be disrespectful as it undermined their future, "When parents fail to pay school fees, family conflict can rise."⁹²

One community leader reflected that girls experience more pressure within the household than boys, "We have seen many girls who flee from the pressure of their homes and some got depression and anxiety due to daily routine work."⁹³ None of the girls interviewed spoke about the issues in this way but the dynamic would be worth exploring in future research.

It is important to remember that practical constraints can impede the ability of parents to meet their children's needs. In the words of one internally displaced person, "Really, I am not very aware of what is happening with my family because I wake up early and search for their daily meal and I usually come back late, around midnight."⁹⁴ Similarly, members of one community committee argued that children in single parent households were more likely to migrate, as single parents were less able to meet their children's material and emotional needs.⁹⁵

86 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 87 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 88 Interview with UNICEF staff, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.
 89 Ibid.
 90 United Nations Children's Fund, Multiple Indicator Study, 2011.
 91 Interview with religious leader, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 92 Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 93 Focus group discussion with community leaders, Burco, July 2018.
 94 Interview with internally displaced person, Burco, 24 July 2018.
 95 Focus group discussion with members of the children's committee, Berbera, July 2018.

I asked them to help me to start a business and open shop for me, to lead my life and build my future by my own as long as I have finished my secondary education, then they refused it, so I thought if I leave and go through migration they will come together and send the money that they refused to give now.

Some reflected that families' failure to invest in their children was perhaps counterproductive in the context of migration. In the words of a teacher, "When the child migrates, the parent will pay US\$10,000. But when they finished, they do not give it to them to start their own business or something that they can work on."⁹⁶ In other words, why not make an investment now to avoid a larger and more disastrous expense later?

This appeared to be part of one young person's reasoning, "I asked them to help me to start a business and open shop for me, to lead my life and build my future by my own as long as I have finished my secondary education, then they refused it, so I thought if I leave and go through migration they will come together and send the money that they refused to give now." (Somali, 15 years).⁹⁷

Others saw migration as a way to provide vital support to their families. One girl wanted to migrate in order to pay back the uncle who had supported her family for a long time.⁹⁸ Another young woman attempted to migrate because she saw no other way to help her family.⁹⁹ This pressure on youth illustrates the attitude from some that supporting an individual's migration is an investment for the family.

Lack of protection

Some social workers and civil society representatives working with migrating children discussed cases in which children sought to migrate because of a lack of protection at home from harmful practices, such as domestic violence, FGM, and forced and early marriage. For example, one social worker noted that girls in rural areas fled FGM,¹⁰⁰ another recounted a migrating young pregnant woman who refused to give any information about her identity or her home, presumably because she had left to hide her pregnancy and feared returning.¹⁰¹ Another member of civil society pointed out that victims of sexual and gender-based violence often migrate to escape the shame and stigma of their ordeals.¹⁰²

Sexual and gender-based violence is clearly prevalent. Even though rape and sexual violence are under-reported, thousands of cases are estimated to happen each year (see section on sexual and gender-based violence for more detailed discussions of available estimates). The prevalence of FGM is estimated at 98.4 per cent.¹⁰³ In the National Development Plan, the government estimated that 75 per cent of girls in Somaliland are vulnerable to early marriage.¹⁰⁴ Although statistics for domestic violence were not available, the issue was frequently mentioned by social workers during the research. However, the field research was not able to establish a clear causal connection between these rights violations and migration, as they were not explicitly mentioned by the participants as a reason for migrating. Yet, this could be due to constraints of the research methodology and thus does not disprove such concerns. Further, it is clear that even if these

96 Interview with school teacher, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 97 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.
 98 Interview with internally displaced child, Hargeysa, 28 July 2018.
 99 Interview with young internally displaced woman, Borama, 23 July 2018.
 100 Interview with civil society representative, Comprehensive Community-Based Rehabilitation in Somaliland, Hargeysa, 16 July 2018.
 101 Interview with civil society representative, Borama, 24 July 2018.
 102 Expert, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018.
 103 Edna Adan University Hospital, 'Female Genital Mutilation Survey in Somaliland: Second Cohort', 2016, p. 29, <https://orchidproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FGM-Survey-in-Somaliland-Edna-Adan-Hospital-FINAL-print-version-2-ilovepdf-compressed-1.pdf>, accessed 24 August 2018.
 104 Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Planning and Development, National Development Plan II, p. 252.

are reasons for flight, they are likely not the most prevalent reasons; as such, future research on this issue, though worthwhile, would need to be more targeted.

It is clear that these protection concerns persist; migrant and internally displaced women and children continue to experience (and may be at greater risk of) FGM, sexual and domestic violence and other factors discussed below.

GBV also appears to influence return decisions. It is less socially acceptable for young women to migrate than young men. As one community committee leader said, “For a girl to migrate or travel somewhere is not a good idea, she only has a dignity and worth within her home.”¹⁰⁵ In other words, women are expected not to migrate and, if they do, they are likely to find less sympathy than male counterparts. In addition, due to widespread reporting of sexual violence along the route, those who migrated were reportedly tainted by an association with sexual violence and the stigma attached to it in Somali culture, regardless of whether they had personally suffered such treatment. The stigma and shame are likely even greater for actual survivors. This reportedly discouraged women en route from returning when they had the opportunity and made women less likely to speak about their experiences if they returned. Although this phenomenon was reported by a number of interlocutors, the research was unable to establish any statistical basis to demonstrate that women and girls were less likely to return than their male counterparts.

Pull factors

Family dynamics

Whereas conflict within the family was cited by some, other children talked about positive relations with the family as a motivating factor for migration. In the words of one internally displaced child, “My father had

When we arrived at the house to which we had been invited, they separated us and treated him as a special guest. While we were told to sit at the gate, he was taken inside and that made me angry. From that day, I started gathering information about migration.

passed away and my elder sister had migrated and succeeded in her journey and I thought to join her” (Somali, 15 years).¹⁰⁶ In such cases, migration was an effort to reunite with family members abroad.

Seeking respect

While some young people appeared to be motivated by the practical benefits of migration, others appeared to be driven by the respect that they felt came with employment or being a member of the diaspora, especially if they had travelled to Europe. For example, one young man described how he visited some friends with someone who had recently

returned from the diaspora. As he described it, “When we arrived at the house to which we had been invited, they separated us and treated him as a special guest. While we were told to sit at the gate, he was taken inside and that made me angry. From that day, I started gathering information about migration” (Somali, 24 years).¹⁰⁷ These returnees also contribute to the positive image of life abroad. As one interviewee put it, “When *tahriib* returnees come back to visit Somaliland, they give a very rosy picture of their lives abroad and show photographs of all the beautiful things, which motivates young people to migrate as well.”¹⁰⁸

105 Interview with Community Based Child Protection Committee, Tog Wajaale, July 2018.

106 Interview with child, Cakaara IDP camp, Hargeysa, July 2018.

107 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

108 Interview with a representative from the Mixed Migration Task Force, 8 March 2018.

A similar notion was expressed more generally by an academic, “They get more prestige and power in the society once they come back with foreign degrees, foreign passports and finance. Young people are desperate to go on *tahriib* and the objective is to get a foreign passport so that they can come back with capacity and also look after their clans.”¹⁰⁹

This is reflective of a deeply divisive way in which Somaliland society sees migration. To some extent, it is engrained in the tradition and culture, based on a highly mobile, pastoralist past. In the present day, a highly visible diaspora community has brought considerable wealth and education back to the country. Remittances are critical to the Somaliland economy, supporting an estimated 25–40 per cent of households.¹¹⁰ At the same time, diaspora returnees have taken up important government roles.¹¹¹

Previous research has documented that the value and respect given to the diaspora runs parallel to a strong current of distrust and animosity.¹¹² Some community leaders expressed resentment about the respect paid to the diaspora and blamed it for encouraging migration. One religious leader pointed to the government’s annual diaspora celebration as “evidence that the government and community directly or indirectly support and encourage migration.”¹¹³ Another pointed to preferential treatment of the diaspora in terms of marriage,¹¹⁴ which allegedly fuels higher dowries and limits locals’ access to marriage.¹¹⁵ These individuals suggested that, to address migration, one must address any excess respect or prestige given to the diaspora.

Overall, this plays into a dynamic in which migration is both celebrated and demonized. Diaspora returnees are welcomed, even as migration is represented as a ‘disease’ and a ‘national disaster.’ This has allowed the culture to criminalize migration (detaining attempted migrants) while simultaneously valuing its benefits. Whatever the complexities of these dynamics in reality, it can create a perception among youth that migration is a test: you may be criminalized if you fail but you will be celebrated if you succeed.

Peer influence

Some interviewees expressed a desire to migrate based on an idealized conception of Europe, at times promoted by friends who had migrated. In the words of one young woman, “Sweden is like a heaven on earth and I have been dreaming to get to it” (Somali, 18 years).¹¹⁶ A child who had attempted *tahriib* noted that his friends pushed him to this, “A lot of my friends who were already in Europe were constantly telling me that Europe is so much nicer than everywhere else” (Somali, 15 years).¹¹⁷

Increased access to technology has played a clear role in providing the communications that create this peer pressure, as well as providing advice on the practicalities of travel. One young man said a lot of his friends were already in Europe, “We were communicating on Facebook and they encouraged me to travel...

109 Meeting with academics, Hargeysa, 23 March 2018.

110 Hansen, P., ‘Migrant Remittances as a Development Tool: The case of Somaliland’, International Organization for Migration, Policy Research Working Paper Series, No. 3, June 2004, https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrant_remittances_somaliland.pdf, accessed 15 August 2018.

111 Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, ‘Diaspora Return to Somalia: Perceptions and implications’, Report, June 2014, http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HIPS_Policy_Brief_007-2014_ENGLISH.pdf, accessed 15 August 2018.

112 See longer description in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/> and Hammond, L., ‘Diaspora Returnees to Somaliland: Heroes of development or jobs-stealing scoundrels?’, ch. 3 in *Africa’s Return Migrants: The new developers?*, edited by Akesson, L. and Baaz, M. E., Zed Books, London, 2015, pp. 44–63.

113 Interview with religious leader, Hargeysa, July 2018.

114 Interview with civil society organization, Borama, 23 July 2018.

115 See discussion in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence.

116 Interview with female returnee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

117 Interview with child returnee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

peer pressure pushed me to migration” (Somali, 19 years).¹¹⁸ Another said, “I used to contact my friends in Europe through Facebook and they continuously send me their pictures and their living styles. Through consultations with my friends in Europe, they led me to the best and easiest way of travelling” (Somali, 19 years).¹¹⁹

Others said that they were inspired to go to Europe by a desire to join their friends who had already migrated. One young man said that he was motivated to migrate because “I felt loneliness in here and I decided to go where my friends went.”¹²⁰ Others noted that they felt pressure from colleagues who wanted travelling companions. This phenomenon was also reported by the Rift Valley Institute, “Incidences of large groups leaving together are not uncommon. For example, in July 2015, a group of young men from a Hargeisa football team left together.”¹²¹

The role of information and communication technology

The increasing availability of communication technology has altered the context for migration, as shown by previous research.¹²² Phone and internet access are decreasing in cost and Hargeysa has good internet connectivity. According to one civil society representative said, “Due to technology, everybody has knowledge, education and information.”¹²³

The increased accessibility of information has thrown the differences in living standards between Europe and Somaliland into increasingly starker contrast. As one internally displaced person in the State House settlement said, “Technology made the world so small, and our children who are living with us in very traditional Somali houses get access to everywhere and the comparison makes them unhappy with their fortune.”¹²⁴ The ease of communication facilitates the peer pressure that some described as a key reason for their flight. It also facilitates the exchange of information about the particulars of the journey – which routes are considered safer and which smugglers can facilitate them. There is also evidence that smugglers use such technologies to exchange information about law enforcement efforts.¹²⁵

Indeed, this technology and its role in influencing youth was so powerful that some also expressed concern about its potential to be used even more disastrously for terrorist recruitment.¹²⁶ Internet and social media have been a significant tool for Al-Shabaab recruitment outside Somalia in the past and recruitment of children remains a key tactic.¹²⁷ This, combined with an increase in reported Al-Shabaab activity in the Sool and Sanaag regions,¹²⁸ raises the spectre that such recruitment might increase in Somaliland.

118 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

119 Interview with young male returnee, Burco, July 2018.

120 Interview with a returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

121 Ali, N., ‘Going on Tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe’, p. 31.

122 See overview of this research in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

123 Interview with civil society organization, Hargeysa, 22 March 2018.

124 Focus group discussion with internally displaced persons, State House IDP settlement, Hargeysa, July 2018.

125 See overview of this research in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

126 Interview with civil society organization, Boroma, 23 July 2018.

127 Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea to the Security Council, UN doc. No. S/2017/924, 2 November 2017, <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/751/work-and-mandate/reports>, accessed 2 September 2018.

128 Ibid.

Mobile phones and communication technologies are also used to facilitate ransom demands and payments. One young migrant described how pictures of him with a devastating skin ailment, the result of unhygienic conditions in the hands of traffickers in Libya, were circulated on Facebook in an effort to garner financial contributions from his friends and family. The traffickers posted this image from a dummy account and were thus able to communicate with the community at home without exposing themselves. Mobile phone money transfer services also facilitate the transfer of ransom money over long distances. In the words of one government representative, “Mobile phones are used for sending and receiving money electronically, which also facilitates children’s migration as the monetary transactions and ransom between traffickers and family members are easily carried out over mobile phones.”¹²⁹ Hawala money transfer systems, in which money is paid by an individual to an agent in one location who instructs an associate to make a payment to the individual’s intended recipient and which are often seen as less formal than banks, are also utilized for payments.¹³⁰

Mobile phones are used for sending and receiving money electronically, which also facilitates children’s migration as the monetary transactions and ransom between traffickers and family members are easily carried out over mobile phones.

However, it is worth noting that most of the youth who used communication technologies for their journeys stated that they had used these to communicate with individuals they knew personally. They did not appear to be recruited or to receive advertising en masse. In this context, some of the mechanisms designed by social media companies to control the spread of propaganda and disinformation elsewhere might be ill-suited to the Somaliland context, as they focus on controlling the scale of information flows that are already quite individualized. Although it will be critical to ensure that youth have access to objective information about risks, it is important to remember that the targets of these information campaigns will also have other sources of information that they are likely to already know and trust.

Additionally, communication technologies were also used to track those who were attempting to migrate. One young woman told of how – when her brother left home – her family was able to pay US\$70 to Telesom to track his phone and find out that he was in Tog-Wajaale.¹³¹ Relatedly, tracking technologies could be deployed to trace the payments to traffickers and smugglers (often made through mobile money transfers) to establish their identities and take action against them. Given the international nature of these smuggling rings, this would also be an opportunity to engage the international community in countering smuggling.

129 Interview with government official, Hargeysa, 6 March 2018.

130 Wasuge, M., ‘Youth Migration in Somalia: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Remedies’, p. 21.

131 Interview with young internally displaced woman, State House IDP Settlement, Hargeysa, 28 July 2018.



VULNERABILITY ON THE MOVE: PROTECTION RISKS FOR MIGRATING CHILDREN

The numerous protection risks associated with movement generally increase in accordance with the distance individuals travel. As individuals cross less familiar and less secure areas, their journeys become less adequately resourced and they cross without the required documents. Whereas internally displaced persons generally reported minimal problems en route, some refugees and migrants reported violence or other threats. For those going on *tahriib*, the journeys were even more perilous.

During dangerous journeys to Europe, young persons have to cover unfamiliar, remote and inhospitable terrain. Physically, the arduous trips are made more dangerous by the fact that young people often cross without resources and without their families and are unfamiliar with the terrain and languages of the areas they pass through. Travelling without proper visas and documentation while seeking to avoid detection can lead to an even greater risk. Threats include physical, sexual and gender-based violence; economic exploitation; ransom, smuggling, trafficking and extortion; and detention.¹³² Most young people are aware of these risks when they attempt the journey but deem them to be manageable and worth the reward.

Once at their destinations, children on the move continue to face serious protection risks and often find themselves in impoverished situations, without material support and at increased risk of physical violence.¹³³

Assessing risk

Throughout the research, it was clear that the majority of individuals were aware of the risks associated with migration. Because the phenomenon is pervasive and nearly all families have been affected, individuals have heard stories of friends and relatives being ransomed, beaten, mistreated and detained. One civil society organization reportedly uncovered cases in which individuals attempted to migrate even after losing a sibling to the process.¹³⁴ Similarly, one interviewee in the field research said that he tried to migrate in 2015 despite having lost his brother in Libya in 2009.¹³⁵ In other cases, a person might attempt to migrate multiple times despite negative experiences. Admittedly, a minority maintained unrealistic expectations. As one young woman preparing to leave relayed, "I am confident that I will be free and get a job soon. I have prepared everything and know the easy routes to travel" (Somali, 18 years).¹³⁶

Although migration is a high-risk journey, I can't miss this opportunity for searching for a new life in my future and I am planning to try a third time.

If the majority are aware of the dangers, why do they take the risk? For the most part, they feel that they lack viable alternatives. In one child's words, "Although migration is a high-risk journey, I can't miss this opportunity for searching for a new life in my future and I am planning to try a third time" (Somali, 17 years).¹³⁷ Another child said, "I know two of my friends, we used to go school together, who escaped and now they are in Germany (...) They had rough journey but it worth taking

132 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Harrowing Journeys: Children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea, at risk of trafficking and exploitation', available at https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/press_release/file/Harrowing_Journeys_Children_and_youth_on_the_move_across_the_Mediterranean.pdf, accessed 18 February 2018.

133 See UNICEF and REACH, 'Children on the Move in Italy and Greece', June 2017, http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_ita_grc_report_children_on_the_move_in_italy_and_greece_june_2017.pdf, accessed 22 August 2018.

134 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 1 July 2018.

135 Interview with internally displaced child, Borama, July 2018.

136 Interview with young internally displaced woman, Burco, 23 July 2018.

137 Interview with a child in Cakaara internally displaced persons camp, Hargeysa, July 2018.

as now they enjoying life in Europe, now I believe it's my turn to try my fortune" (Somali, 14 years).¹³⁸

The fear among those who go on *tahriib* of appearing weak in their communities sometimes pressured them into taking risks. One focus group participant described the messaging in the following terms, "Be a man and take the risk, life [in Europe] is worth doing so."¹³⁹ As one researcher put it, "Unwillingness to leave because of fear of the risks associated with *tahriib* is considered cowardly. This type of pressure is particularly pertinent for young men as it directly touches on important socio-cultural stereotypes of Somali masculinity."¹⁴⁰

Many resigned themselves to the risk, framing their success as a matter of luck. In the words of one young woman, "Some people go through migration easily without any harm and with a short period of time. They realize their life goal when they reach their destinations. On the other hand, some people are killed or kidnapped for huge amounts of ransom... it depends on the luck of the person" (Somali, 24 years).¹⁴¹

A girl who intended to migrate even though she expected to be ransomed said, "We got the information from our friends who migrated previously, they told us that it is by chance to get there safely or not."¹⁴² Some suggested that this view was informed by religious thinking, the notion that all happens as Allah wills it – that the outcome is determined by the divine rather than the actions of the individual. However, most of the young people interviewed did not speak in overtly religious terms and the issue was not probed in the interview map. The extent to which an individual's faith influences decision making could warrant further research.

Mental health

Children from Somaliland who migrate abroad face serious mental health risks, driven by the pressures that pushed them to migrate and the difficult situations they face both en route and at their destinations, as well as the violence they witness and the dislocation and uncertainty they often experience.¹⁴³ "They do not see the consequences that lie ahead of their journey; the risks to their lives travelling from here to there. If they survive... they may not find what they had expected to find there. It is a reality that, at destination, they have to fit into a system that they are not prepared for... Some of them become crazy or criminals or join extremist groups."¹⁴⁴ As previously documented, these pressures can lead to increased levels of depression, self-harm and substance abuse.¹⁴⁵

Some people go through migration easily without any harm and with a short period of time. They realize their life goal when they reach their destinations. On the other hand, some people are killed or kidnapped for huge amounts of ransom... it depends on the luck of the person.

They do not see the consequences that lie ahead of their journey; the risks to their lives travelling from here to there. If they survive... they may not find what they had expected to find there. It is a reality that, at destination, they have to fit into a system that they are not prepared for... Some of them become crazy or criminals or join extremist groups.

138 Interview with internally displaced child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

139 Focus group discussion, State House IDP settlement, Hargeysa, July 2018.

140 Ali, N., 'Going on Tahriib: The causes and consequences of Somali youth migration to Europe', p. 31.

141 Interview with a young woman from Somalia, Hargeysa, July 2018.

142 Interview with internally displaced child, Burco, 22 July 2018.

143 United Nations Children's Fund, 'Protected on Paper? An analysis of Nordic country responses to asylum-seeking children', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, Italy, 2018, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/940-protected-on-paper-an-analysis-of-nordic-country-responses-to-asylum-seeking-children.html>, accessed 12 June 2018.

144 Interview with Ministry of Health, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

145 See fuller discussion of the relevant literature in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

They may suffer discrimination in the areas to which they migrate and might also face serious strains in their family relationships. Having expended significant family resources to migrate, children and young people face familial and social pressure to ensure that the migration is a success. This can push them to continue to try and reach their destination, even when they might prefer to turn back. One mother described her situation, “The boy migrated four years ago. We struggled so much for his survival. We even sold the family land to pay his ransom. He survived and reached Europe, but he is still in a camp and doesn’t have anything to contribute to the family life.”¹⁴⁶

Those who reach Europe and are able to gain status and access work may return but generally only after years of establishing themselves abroad. Those who return soon typically do so because they have failed to reach their destination. In this context, returnees have to deal with pressure related to this failure.

As one child returnee put it, “In our return, our biggest worry was our parents; we were asking ourselves how to face our parents after all this and what will be their response” (Somali, 15 years).¹⁴⁷ In more positive terms, most returnees reported that they were welcomed by their parents.

One 17-year-old who had recently returned said that, despite his fears, “I had no bad reactions, either from my family or my community” (Somali, 17 years).¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, at least some returnees developed a new appreciation for family. One young man suggested that, “Really, living with your family is amazing, you will recognize that after you leave home” (Somali, 19 years).¹⁴⁹

There is evidence of significant mental health issues among those who have migrated, returned, or become displaced within Somaliland, though there is relatively little infrastructure in place to address this. One migrant expressed concern about her husband, “who is sick and sometimes we are afraid that he will harm us.”¹⁵⁰ A Yemeni refugee admitted that he had been unable to find mental health services in Hargeysa for his child.¹⁵¹

Substance abuse – often related to mental strain and the absence of other coping strategies – appears to be a serious problem among youth. In some instances, this takes the form of abuse of *qat*, a shrub whose leaves are chewed for their stimulant effect. Although *qat* use is socially acceptable, a number of interlocutors expressed concern about excessive use among young people, particularly in stressful circumstances. However, more concern was expressed about the use of substances viewed as illicit, particularly alcohol and marijuana, and the sniffing of glue. One social worker pointed out that parents may kick children out of the house when they start using drugs, leaving them on the street.¹⁵² Substance abuse is strongly associated with street children and one government official said, “Street children use drugs and are not mentally fit and stable... they are on drugs and alcohol, they are not in control.”¹⁵³ Others expressed concern that children would develop these behaviours on the streets.

146 Interview with an internally displaced child, Borama, July 2018.

147 Interview with internally displaced child, Borama, July 2018.

148 Interview with returnee child, Tog Wajaale, July 2018.

149 Interview with young male returnee, Burco, July 2018.

150 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.

151 Interview with Yemeni refugee, Hargeysa, 31 July 2018.

152 Interview with service provider, Berbera, 23 July 2018.

153 Interview with government official, Hargeysa, 23 March 2018.

Some associate substance abuse with migrant communities. For example, one community child protection committee member expressed concern that Ethiopian migrants smoking marijuana and sniffing glue were influencing Somali to do the same.¹⁵⁴ However, the extent to which this might be based on reality or prejudice is unclear. Nevertheless, substance abuse is a serious problem. It can be a sign of pre-existing mental health problems – whereby an individual’s behaviour illustrates the lack of alternative coping mechanisms – and can require intervention to address the addiction. However, services to assist with substance abuse and its underlying causes are sorely lacking.

Physical health

The journeys undertaken by migrants, especially those going on *tahriib*, are physically demanding and children can face a number of physical health consequences, up to and including death. These can stem from inadequate preparations or resources to guard against the elements or result from attacks by human beings, either the smugglers or others. At times, individuals have to cover long distances by foot. One child recounted, “We travelled by foot around 500 kilometres and went up to three or four nights without sleep” (Somali, 17 years).¹⁵⁵ Within Somaliland, children and youth aged between 14 and 20 (mostly from Ethiopia) have been found walking up to 600 kilometres on foot through desert and rough terrain, without food, water and transport, to avoid law enforcement. During these journeys, children face physical perils, including attacks by wild animals, particularly hyenas.¹⁵⁶ In the words of an immigration official, “They die in the sea as well as in the desert. We get victims from the middle of the desert where temperatures are 50 to 60 degrees Celsius. They can’t always cross the 120-km desert on foot during the day. They die due to heat during the day and quicksand at night. Last year I caught 100 victims and 10 of them died of dehydration. Sometimes we find dead bodies on coastlines and we don’t know where they come from.”¹⁵⁷

Migrants often face harsh terrain without adequate supplies of food or water. One boy, who was 13 when he departed, described journeying for days without food.¹⁵⁸ Another young man described being stranded at sea for seven days and noted that “Our food and water was finished after the first three nights so we were using sea water as food and drink” (Somali, 19 years).¹⁵⁹ Yet another told of how he was forced to drink his own urine because water was in such short supply, “Usually because of lack of water people would even beat each other for the urine. There was no medicine available, so if you get sick they will just throw you out and let you die.”¹⁶⁰ Those who reach the Mediterranean face a dangerous sea crossing. In 2016, an estimated 4,579 people of all nationalities – 700 of them children – died crossing the Mediterranean between Libya and Italy.¹⁶¹

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154 Focus group discussion with community child protection committee, Berbera, July 2018.

155 Interview with a returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

156 Expert, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018. Attacks on displaced persons by hyenas (though not specifically children moving alone) have also been reported in the press. See, for example, Radio Ergo, ‘People fleeing conflict in northern Somali town of Tukuraq fall prey to wild animals’, 30 May 2018, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2018/May/158366/people_fleeing_conflict_in_northern_somali_town_of_tukuraq_fall_pre_y_to_wild_animals.aspx, accessed 20 August 2018.

157 Interview with Department of Immigration official, Hargeysa, 26 March 2018.

158 Interview with child, Cakaara internally displaced persons camp, Hargeysa, July 2018.

159 Interview with youth returnee, Burco, 23 July 2018.

160 Interview with youth returnee, Hargeysa, 1 July 2018.

161 United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘A Deadly Journey for Children: The central Mediterranean migration route’, UNICEF Child Alert, February 2017, https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/EN_UNICEF_Central_Mediterranean_Migration.pdf, accessed 4 June 2018.



For those who migrate to or within Somaliland, physical health can also be a significant concern. Many in internally displaced persons settlements cited poverty and lack of access to food, water and sanitation facilities, which can have a significant impact on health. Nearly half of those who shared information on their living conditions lived in only one room, sometimes cramming as many as 14 family members into these limited quarters.

In the words of one child, “We face a lot of problems in this internally displaced persons settlement, we live like homeless people” (Somali, 10 years).¹⁶² In the words of another, “It is OK to live here, but it is not as good as it was in my village. We didn’t get what we were expecting to get, it is not what we thought” (Somali, 12 years).¹⁶³ In the words of another, “Living here is difficult. We didn’t find the things that we were expecting to get such as education, shelter and health, the only thing that here is better is the peace and good climate, but it never become the way we thought it would be” (Somali, 14 years).¹⁶⁴

In the words of one internally displaced child, “We don’t have electricity, nor clean water. Food is scarce, we eat day to day, and yes, we got help from the community when we first came here, we got land and meal, but that was not enough” (Somali, 12 years).¹⁶⁵ An internally displaced parent articulated the importance of these services, “If we could get any support from anyone, our priority would be a toilet and accessing water.”¹⁶⁶ Internally displaced persons also face obstacles in accessing health care. As one community leader put it, “If we need to go to the hospital, it is difficult to get a car or an ambulance.”¹⁶⁷ One child stated, “Sometimes I face diseases and there is no health care system” (Somali, 12 years).¹⁶⁸ For these internally displaced persons, health care is made inaccessible both by the distances they must travel to medical facilities and the costs.

Discrimination

Another hazard accompanying migration is discrimination. Many Somali going on *tahriib* described discrimination on their journeys, “Immediately as you speak they will recognize that you are not from the region, and they will start harassing you. ‘Why did you come from your country? What are you doing here?’ you will be asked in every village in Ethiopia” (Somali, 18 years).¹⁶⁹

Within Somaliland, the population seems relatively open but there is also evidence of discriminatory attitudes – particularly against migrants – and there have been previous periods of elevated xenophobia in the country. In internally displaced and migrant communities, those with mental and physical disabilities also face discrimination. With few services available, they are more likely to face abuse. In one example, a young woman with a mental disability became pregnant. Her family was unaware of her condition and she eventually died in labour due to a lack of appropriate care.¹⁷⁰ Although the research did not garner specific data about disability, this would be a critical area to explore further.

162 Interview with internally displaced child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

163 Interview with internally displaced child, Caynabo, July 2018.

164 Interview with child displaced from South-Central Somalia, Burco, July 2018.

165 Interview with internally displaced child, Caynabo, 27 July 2018.

166 Interview with internally displaced person, Berbera, 24 July 2018.

167 Interview with internally displaced community leader, Caynabo, 29 July 2018.

168 Interview with internally displaced child, Caynabo, 27 July 2018.

169 Interview with *tahriib* returnee woman, Hargeysa, July 2018.

170 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 3 July 2018.

Lack of access to education

During their journeys, children are generally not able to access any educational services as their movement hampers their ability to attend school. Youth who return from attempts to migrate to Europe do not face any formal barriers to re-accessing education but are sometimes reluctant to do so (especially young women). As one teacher described the situation, “There are some who come back from Libya and Sudan but mostly they do not go back to school, they work in the market but only a few go back, they are afraid that students will make jokes about them or humiliate them.”¹⁷¹ One religious leader pointed out that girls and young women especially were unlikely to return to school, “By the time they return from migration, they never expect to come back to the university for some reasons, including shyness among their peers and classmates.”¹⁷²

There are some who come back from Libya and Sudan but mostly they do not go back to school, they work in the market but only a few go back, they are afraid that students will make jokes about them or humiliate them.

Government policy is to extend access to regular public schools to children migrating to or within Somaliland, including internally displaced persons, refugees and migrants.¹⁷³ Given the low level of school enrolment in rural areas, some internally displaced persons have increased access to education in displacement compared to their home areas. Although few internally displaced persons cited this as reason for their movement, a number cited it as an advantage of their new homes. As an example, one child noted that, “Life here is good for me because I get education. Every day I go to school. When I lived in the rural area, I couldn’t get an education and I didn’t even know how to write my name” (Somali, 17 years).¹⁷⁴ A parent said that one reason to prefer their new home was the availability of “Islamic and normal schools.”¹⁷⁵

For others, however, access to education remains problematic. For example, at certain sites in Somaliland, internally displaced persons and migrants have insufficient access to educational resources.¹⁷⁶ Although primary school is intended to be free, some complained that they were still charged. A number of key informants indicated that they had heard of this practice before, but it remains unclear whether it is imposed on migrants on a discriminatory basis or whether it might rather be a practical and negotiated response to insufficient funding. That said, this should be investigated further and the government should work to find ways to ensure that primary education is actually free.

Even where school fees were not at issue, internally displaced persons complained that they were not able to cover the costs of books, uniforms and transport. For this reason, families with many children can often only afford school for short time, if at all.¹⁷⁷ The imposition of school fees at the secondary school level exacerbated this problem. Even if school were to become completely cost-neutral, some families rely on income generated by their children which they would find difficult to forgo. Others complained about the distance of schools from their location. In a Caqiibo settlement in Burco, it was reported that there were no schools nearby.¹⁷⁸ In the words of another internally displaced person, “Children need to have at least a bus and free books and uniforms so that they can join city schools, as there are plenty.”¹⁷⁹

171 Interview with a school teacher, Hargeysa, July 2018.

172 Interview with religious leader, Hargeysa, July 2018.

173 Interview with the Migration Resource Centre, 18 July 2018; UNHCR, 22 July 2018; and UNICEF Education Specialist, 16 August 2018.

174 Interview with internally displaced child, Caynabo, 28 July 2017.

175 Interview with internally displaced woman, Caynabo, 29 July 2018.

176 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

177 Interview with UNICEF education specialist, Hargeysa, 16 August 2018.

178 Interview with internally displaced person, Burco, 22 July 2018.

179 Interview with internally displaced person, Burco, 23 July 2018.

Positively, however, some indicated that they were able to negotiate reduced fees. One displaced parent said she was able to send her kids to school because, “Some of them are on scholarships or semi-scholarships. The school principal allowed me when I complained that I can’t afford to pay.”¹⁸⁰ In other cases, such negotiations are reportedly facilitated by local child protection committees.¹⁸¹

For migrants and refugees, language adds to already formidable issues of poverty.¹⁸² Yemenis are able to send their children to pre-existing Arabic language schools. This access is facilitated by UNHCR but, due to the cultural similarity of this group, these students generally integrate quite easily. Ethiopian refugees and migrants face a more difficult situation. Many would prefer to have their children in special classes using their native language and following the Ethiopian curriculum, but these are not readily available.¹⁸³

Detention and juvenile justice

The field interviews revealed numerous cases in which children – if caught by police or immigration authorities – were detained while travelling. This was true within Somaliland and in Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya, where individuals reported being held for immigration offences.

In Somaliland, children attempting to cross the border without parental permission are generally arrested. Ostensibly, this is to facilitate the tracing of their families, but it is reflective of a cultural tendency towards criminalizing migration. Individuals are held while their families are traced, their parents are contacted, and – eventually – their families arrive to take custody of them.¹⁸⁴ In the words of one attempted migrant, “When

Last night I was with two girls from Puntland, I captured them and returned them to their parents. We help and capture those children who are Somalis whether they are from Somaliland or Puntland or even Somalia, we get them back to their parents mostly but the Ethiopian people who are migrating here move freely and mostly they move by foot and we don’t have capacity to capture and help those people.

I went to go to the bus station, a cop caught me and asked me some questions. He asked what I was doing there. I said that I was a tourist, but he said, “You are not” and took me to the police station. After I had been there four days, I told them the truth. I told them I was migrating and they called my family.”¹⁸⁵ It was also reported that children deported from neighbouring countries are sometimes detained on the Somaliland side, including “some children who were deported from Lawya Caddo a few days ago... they were arrested by the government and detained for 30 days.”¹⁸⁶

Police and immigration officials feel compelled to detain these children in the interests of promoting family reunification. One officer believed his role was “to arrest those children who are leaving. We usually meet them at checkpoints, borders and sometimes people inform us that there are children migrating in the community.”¹⁸⁷ A police officer in

Caynabo recounted, “Last night I was with two girls from Puntland, I captured them and returned them to their parents. We help and capture those children who are Somalis whether they are from Somaliland or Puntland or any of the southern and central states of Somalia, we get them back to their parents mostly but

180 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.

181 Focus group discussion with child committee, Berbera, July 2018.

182 Interviews with UNHCR, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018, and with Norwegian Refugee Council, 26 March 2018.

183 Interview with UNICEF education specialist, Hargeysa, 16 August 2018.

184 Interview with MESAF, Hargeysa, 16 July 2018 confirmed by interview with immigration officer in Borama, July 2018.

185 Focus group discussion with *tahriib* returnee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

186 Focus group discussion with child protection committees, Borama, July 2018.

187 Interview with immigration officer, Borama, July 2018.

the Ethiopian people who are migrating here move freely and mostly they move by foot and we don’t have capacity to capture and help those people.”¹⁸⁸

In early 2018, a total of 520 young Somalis, including 180 young women and girls (35 per cent) were arrested at the Somaliland-Ethiopia border and sent back to their families.¹⁸⁹

As documented by previous studies, conditions for those detained can be concerning¹⁹⁰ and this was echoed by some interviewees. A representative of a child protection committee noted that the committee had advocated for the release of detained children.¹⁹¹ A social worker in Borama expressed concern that, in some cases, these attempted migrants might be mistreated by police who lack appropriate training.¹⁹² One police officer expressed concern about having to detain children waiting for their parents without having a specialized place for this purpose¹⁹³ and one social worker reported advocating for children held for this reason to be kept separate from other detainees.¹⁹⁴

Since Somaliland does not have any embassies in other countries, we communicate through our communities. We get mobile phone calls that 50-60 children in groups have been in detention in a foreign country.

In addition, Somaliland regularly arrests undocumented migrants, particularly Ethiopians. The immigration authorities report the capture of large numbers of children and youths from Ethiopia.¹⁹⁵ The government lacks the resources to hold these migrants, so detention is usually short-term while deportation is arranged. In addition to regular pick-ups of undocumented migrants, there are periodic crackdowns.¹⁹⁶

Somali migrants who travelled further afield reported being arrested and detained for irregular entry. One interviewee said that he was detained for two years in Ethiopia,¹⁹⁷ another said that he had been arrested and detained in Sudan for about two months.¹⁹⁸ Yet another described his detention in Libya, “The police caught me and I was in jail nearly three months. When they released me, I decided to go back to my home” (Somali, 17 years).¹⁹⁹ This reality was reflected by Somaliland authorities, who pointed out that they were ill-equipped to protect children in these circumstances. In the words of a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Since Somaliland does not have any embassies in other countries, we communicate through our communities. We get mobile phone calls that 50–60 children in groups have been in detention in a foreign country.”²⁰⁰ With no official diplomatic representation abroad and limited financial resources, the government lacks the capacity to intervene on behalf of these children.

188 Interview with police officer, Caynabo, July 2018.

189 Interview with civil society representative, March 2018.

190 See more detailed discussion of the literature in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

191 Focus group discussion with child protection committees, Borama, July 2018.

192 Interview with social workers, Borama, 24 July 2018.

193 Interview with police officer, Caynabo, July 2018.

194 Interview with a social worker, Borama, 24 July 2018.

195 Interview with official from Department of immigration, Hargeysa, 26 March 2018.

196 See more detailed discussion of previous crackdowns in ‘Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

197 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, 29 July 2018.

198 Interview with *tahriib* returnee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

199 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

200 Interview with official from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hargeysa, 26 March 2018.

Violence against children and insecurity

In the context of *tahriib*, young people sometimes described mistreatment by border authorities. One child recalled the time his friend was brutally shot in Ethiopia, “If they met someone migrating, they make money from him, so this is like business according to them. He had a stick made up of a metal, he came inside

If they met someone migrating, they make money from him, so this is like business according to them. He had a stick made up of a metal, he came inside the truck where we were hiding, he was waving the stick and he hit my friend’s eye who was hiding near me. More blood came out from his eye, we were at the border, and there was no hospital nearby nor available doctor. The officer came back to check if he is still alive and he found out that he was alive so he took his gun out and shot him in front of my eyes.

the truck where we were hiding, he was waving the stick and he hit my friend’s eye who was hiding near me. More blood came out from his eye, we were at the border, and there was no hospital nearby nor available doctor. The officer came back to check if he is still alive and he found out that he was alive so he took his gun out and shot him in front of my eyes” (Somali, 13 years).²⁰¹

On the Somaliland side, a migrant girl also described abuse, “We got beaten by the border police, and they took our shoes, our money and our bags” (Ethiopian, 12 years).²⁰²

In areas for internally displaced persons and migrants, like in many impoverished areas around the world, security is a serious problem. In many of these areas, lights are lacking and homes are made of traditional materials, which make them difficult to secure. In the words of one migrant parent, “Poverty is the main cause of all the problems facing people who live here. For example, at night it is very dark and many things like robberies happen.”²⁰³

At times, it is the children themselves who generate insecurity. One internally displaced person said that “the main challenges that we have here are children who are in conflict with the law, making violence, fighting each other when playing football games, arresting them and always pressuring us to pay fines to release them, which is difficult for us because we cannot afford that money.”²⁰⁴

Sexual and gender-based violence

There is a clear link between displacement and forced marriage. The same livelihood and drought issues that drive migration also fuel early marriage. The Somaliland National Development Plan acknowledges that early marriage is more prevalent in internally displaced persons’ situations.²⁰⁵ In February 2018, Save the Children documented the cases of 51 teenage girls who had been married off because of the impact of drought (including displacement) on their families.²⁰⁶ In some cases, forced and early marriages can be extremely exploitative. In other circumstances, as research in Zambia has shown, early marriage may be deployed as a protective strategy by both children and their parents.²⁰⁷ It was not within the scope of this research to explore the circumstances of forced marriages in the Somaliland context. As such, further research would be useful.

201 Interview with a returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

202 Interview with an Ethiopian migrant child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

203 Interview with the parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, 28 July 2018.

204 Interview with internally displaced person, Borama, July 2018.

205 Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Planning and Development, National Development Plan II, p. 252.

206 Save the Children, ‘Somaliland drought threatens progress in protecting females from sexual violence’, April 2018, <https://www.savethechildren.net/article/somaliland-s-drought-threatens-progress-protecting-females-sexual-violence>, accessed 22 August 2018.

207 Collins, T. M., ‘A Child’s Right to Participate: Implications for international child protection’, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 21, January 2017, pp. 20 and 23.

There is no comprehensive estimate of the prevalence of rape in Somaliland but, as one individual suggested, “Rape is widespread in the community and especially among marginalized communities and internally displaced persons.”²⁰⁸ There are indications that the phenomenon is growing. The Director of Social Affairs recorded about 5,000 rape cases in Somaliland in 2012, compared to 4,000 in 2011.²⁰⁹ Research has established a correlation between gang rape and youth frustration and unemployment in Somaliland.²¹⁰

Youth and displaced individuals are especially vulnerable. Bahi Koob, an NGO that provides support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, reported that they deal with approximately 200–250 victims per year, 75 per cent of whom are under 15 and most of whom come from internally displaced persons camps or other poor areas.²¹¹ A GBV cluster report in 2015 indicated that 70 per cent of those accessing services for sexual and gender-based violence were internally displaced persons.²¹² Another study showed that, in 2013, 30 per cent of documented rape cases were gang rapes and 55 per cent of survivors were under 15.²¹³ In the words of one survivor, “People who are in internally displaced persons camps are very vulnerable to rape and many other social issues. Because they are poor, they are not in a position to fight while they are struggling with day-to-day incomes. Sometimes we have to work and clean offices, stores and other places and we can only do it at night or early in the morning, which puts you in a situation where you can get raped, or even killed, since the streets are empty” (Somali, 19 years).²¹⁴

There is considerable social stigma attached to these crimes and, unfortunately, this often results in prejudice against the survivor, which can have a devastating impact. As a survivor put it, “These challenges can drive you to commit suicide at some point in your life, when everyone turns against you and treats you badly. It seems as if they don’t feel what you are going through, and that makes me feel lonely, sad, and as if no one cares about me. Sometimes I feel like everyone is talking about me, looking at me or even pointing fingers when am walking on the streets. Other times they will refer to you as the girl who has been raped. I think the reason is that people don’t understand what you are going through as a survivor. They blame you for what ensues, and treat you worse than the perpetrators” (Somali, 19 years).²¹⁵

People who are in internally displaced persons camps are very vulnerable to rape and many other social issues. Because they are poor, they are not in a position to fight while they are struggling with day-to-day incomes. Sometimes we have to work and clean offices, stores and other places and we can only do it at night or early in the morning, which puts you in a situation where you can get raped, or even killed, since the streets are empty.

These challenges can drive you to commit suicide at some point in your life, when everyone turns against you and treats you badly. It seems as if they don’t feel what you are going through, and that makes me feel lonely, sad, and as if no one cares about me. Sometimes I feel like everyone is talking about me, looking at me or even pointing fingers when am walking on the streets. Other times they will refer to you as the girl who has been raped. I think the reason is that people don’t understand what you are going through as a survivor. They blame you for what ensues, and treat you worse than the perpetrators.

208 Comment made at a meeting of the child protection working group, Hargeysa, 4 March 2018.

209 The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, ‘The Other War: Gang rape in Somaliland’, Report, Kampala, Uganda SIHA Network, December 2015, <http://sihanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-Other-War-Gangrape-in-Somaliland-SIHA-Network.pdf>, accessed 24 June 2018, p. 27.

210 United Nations Development Programme, ‘Somalia Gender-Based Violence Working Group’, Strategy, 2014–2016, <http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Somalia-Gender-based-Violence-working-group-2014-2016-Strategy1.pdf>, accessed 20 June 2018, p.6.

211 Interview with Bahi Koob, Hargeysa, 3 July 2018.

212 Email communication with UNICEF Hargeysa staff, 7 August 2018, on file with the author.

213 The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, ‘The Other War: Gang rape in Somaliland’, p. 26.

214 Interview with a survivor of sexual violence, July 2018.

215 Ibid.



Even close relatives can participate in this discrimination. If a man learns that his wife has been raped, he may immediately divorce her. If a family is more sympathetic (and can afford it), they may move to a new area to avoid further judgment from the community.²¹⁶

Smuggling and extortion

Previous research has indicated that 73 per cent of migrants from the Horn of Africa use smugglers for at least part of their journey. The findings of this research, although not quantitative in nature, were consistent with this estimate: the overwhelming majority of study participants had engaged a smuggler. Many had very limited money to undertake the journey and would likely not have been able to engage smugglers except for the 'go now, pay later' scheme. Some talked about selling their phones and laptops to get the initial few hundred dollars needed.

Most of the time, contacts with smugglers were arranged through friends, often those who had travelled earlier. As one child returnee described, "Some of my friends helped me to connect with a smuggler... they gave me some hints about the routes that we are going to take... I only had [US]\$200 to travel" (Somali, 15 years).²¹⁷ Another young man told of how he had organized his trip, saying that he had the contacts of some smugglers in Tog-Wajaale, "then I found others in Ethiopia and Sudan. Before I started to migrate, I had all the necessary information that I needed" (Somali, 21 years).²¹⁸ The initial phase was often appreciated, with migrants describing the smugglers as helpful.

The research indicated that although early interactions with smugglers were positive, these smugglers were part of broader international networks along which individuals were passed as they progressed in their journeys. Although the journeys might have begun in a consensual way, the experiences of most migrants

The trafficker called me by saying your children are with us, send US\$8,000 before Thursday and I didn't have even 1,000 Somaliland shillings [about US\$0.10]. I was washing clothes at that time, I became shocked, speechless and paralysed that I was unable to stand up. I didn't know where to go for help; I collected the required money from the neighbourhood, relatives and anyone I met.

quickly devolved into circumstances where they no longer had control over whether they would continue or many other aspects of their lives. At this point, smugglers demanded ransom, accompanied by beatings, threats and sexual violence; experiences which, as noted above, some argue constitute trafficking. These experiences are deeply traumatic, not only for the young people who experience them directly but also for parents who receive the calls demanding ransoms, which are generally between US\$7,000 and US\$12,000²¹⁹, though one woman reported being asked for US\$25,000.²²⁰ One parent described her experience as follows, "The trafficker called me by saying your children are with us, send US\$8,000 before Thursday and I didn't have even 1,000 Somaliland shillings [about US\$0.10]. I was washing clothes at that time, I became shocked, speechless and paralysed that I was unable to stand up. I didn't know where to go for help; I collected the required money from the neighbourhood, relatives and anyone I met."²²¹

216 Interview with Bahi Koob staff, Hargeysa, 15 August 2018.

217 Interview with a returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

218 Interview with a returnee man, Hargeysa, July 2018.

219 Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

220 Interview with internally displaced parent, Hargeysa, July 2018.

221 Interview with the parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.

She ended up raising the money through borrowing and collections but now remains under crushing pressure to repay those loans. A young man described his experience, "I used to call my mom. She used to cry a lot. She was so distraught that she even fell and broke her leg. She didn't have enough money and they would beat me. She would call family members. Every family has now been affected by this, so no one can help. She couldn't pay so I stayed there a long time."²²²

Another woman said, "During those three months I didn't sleep well because I was worried. Even sometimes when I go to the market or somewhere else I would get lost on the way home."²²³ One father described his helplessness, "The unfortunate thing is that I have nothing to support them or any money to send them so that the smuggler will set them free... the only thing I do now is beg."²²⁴

When faced with these crises, parents turn to the wider community for help. Several interlocutors noted that this has broadened the effects of *tahriib* to the point that it has now touched everyone. One expert pointed out that clan structures are utilized to muster financial support and that this figures into the calculus of traffickers, who know that the larger family and clan structures can provide support even where an individual family does not have resources.²²⁵ Because of the limitations of the study in addressing clan issues, this was not investigated in depth and could be an interesting topic for further study.

For the most part, the youth on the journey experienced beatings, confinement and sexual violence designed to pressure them (or rather their families) to pay. Most are confined in extremely difficult conditions. As one returnee described the situation, "We used to get a plate of macaroni for 10 people. Both genders were in that room and I was in that room for four whole months. There were insects eating us. Even some women delivered babies in that room" (Somali, 23 years).²²⁶ Confinement is generally accompanied by beatings that are designed to force their families to pay. In the words of the returnee cited above, "They would take pictures when they beat us to pressure our families."²²⁷ Children described similar experiences, "I didn't eat any food for days... some of my friends were killed. Especially when you reach Sudan, you will see many things there are very professional smugglers, I never recommend to anyone to go for *tahriib*" (Somali, 15 years).²²⁸

For women, beatings might be replaced with sexual violence. One community leader said, "My niece migrated... on her way to Libya, she was captured by one of the traffickers and she said that they used to take them out every night and rape all the girls, brutally, taking turns."²²⁹ A young man described the situation of girls and young women with whom he had travelled, "I witnessed a physical and sexual abuse happening,

I used to call my mom. She used to cry a lot. She was so distraught that she even fell and broke her leg. She didn't have enough money and they would beat me. She would call family members. Every family has now been affected by this, so no one can help. She couldn't pay so I stayed there a long time.

The unfortunate thing is that I have nothing to support them or any money to send them so that the smuggler will set them free... the only thing I do now is beg

222 Interview with returnee, Hargeysa, 1 July 2018.

223 Interview with the parent of a *tahriib* goer, Hargeysa, July 2018.

224 Interview with internally displaced person, Burco, 24 July 2018.

225 Correspondence with civil society expert, August 2018.

226 Interview with returnee youth, Hargeysa, 1 July 2018.

227 Ibid.

228 Interview with internally displaced child, Caynabo, July 2018.

229 Focus group discussion with community committee, Hargeysa, July 2018.

especially on girls who were migrating with us. I was also worried that I might die or get killed. I consider myself to be very lucky to have survived" (Somali, 21 years).²³⁰

In some cases, this mistreatment included forced labour. "Some smugglers are cruel. They tortured me, they refused to get food and water. They forced me to be a slave"²³¹ explained one former victim (Somali, 15 years). Where young people cannot pay, or where they are not compliant in other ways, they may be killed. One young man who was 17 at the time that he attempted to migrate described how smugglers shot and killed his companion in the desert in Sudan.²³² In the words of a government official, "Children not only suffer from health issues, but are also killed at the hands of traffickers for not being able to pay ransom."²³³ This abuse not only traumatizes the travelling youth and their families, it compels communities to sell assets and beg in desperation to pay the ransom, creating long-term economic consequences.

Child labour and exploitation

Many children, particularly in migrant communities, work to generate additional income for their families.

Some smugglers are cruel. They tortured me, they refused to get food and water. They forced me to be a slave.

Previous research has estimated that between 25 and 50 per cent of children in Somaliland are engaged in child labour.²³⁴ Although this qualitative field research was unable to calculate independent estimates of the percentage of children engaged, it documented numerous cases.

One young internally displaced woman said she worked as a cleaner from ages 12 to 16, which allowed her to contribute to the family; however, without specifying a reason, she indicated that this was no longer an option.²³⁵ Perhaps of greater concern is the engagement of

children in particularly hazardous forms of labour, specifically military service. One man whose daughter had attempted *tahriib* reported that his son had registered for military service at age 14.²³⁶ It was not clear whether this referred to the formal Somaliland army or a militia, though numerous cases of child recruitment into the army and militias have been previously documented, suggesting a pattern.²³⁷

In addition, child labour is common among the migrant community. Throughout the period of the research, researchers observed a number of migrant children working as car washers, cleaners and shoe shiners. The youngest was just eight years old.²³⁸ One ten-year-old Ethiopian girl was begging.²³⁹

230 Interview with returnee man, Hargeysa, July 2018.

231 Interview with returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

232 Interview with young male returnee, Burco, 24 July 2018.

233 Interview with government official, Hargeysa, 26 March 2018.

234 See a more detailed account of this research in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

235 Interview with an internally displaced young woman, Borama, 23 July 2018.

236 Interview with parent, Hargeysa, July 2018.

237 For example, such recruitment was documented by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, see more detailed discussion in 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

238 Interview with an Ethiopian migrant child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

239 Interview with an Ethiopian migrant child, Hargeysa, July 2018.

Lack of access to legal status

Refugees often have to wait long periods for status determination. Although there are few cases of unaccompanied and separated children seeking asylum in Somaliland, those that apply (either alone or with their parents) may wait a long time for a decision. According to one civil society representative, asylum seekers complain that status determination decisions can take eight months to a year.²⁴⁰ UNHCR reports insufficient staffing, which leads to longer processing times.²⁴¹ There are very few options for migrants to legalize if they do not have an asylum claim. Without documentation and legal status, individuals may be subject to deportation and, even when they are not actually deported, may suffer increased stress due to this vulnerability.



240 Interview with Legal Aid Clinic, 4 July 2018.

241 Interview with UNHCR, 22 July 2018.

RESPONDING TO VULNERABILITY: THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK

Legal framework

The formal legal system provides critical protections to children but also contains a number of gaps that need to be addressed. The government's recognition of international standards with regard to the rights of children is laudable. The National Child Protection Policy recognizes the authority of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, both of which stipulate that the best interests of children should guide all decision-making about them and that all children should enjoy the rights outlined in the conventions without discrimination.²⁴² The policy explicitly commits the government to respect the rights of children on the move, including internally displaced persons, refugees and immigrants.²⁴³ Key provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the best interests principle, are also integrated into the Juvenile Justice Law. The right of children to participate in decision-making is also reflected in the policy but appears to be poorly implemented in practice.

Somaliland has also committed itself to a range of other human rights standards – such as the refugee and torture conventions (through Article 10 of its national constitution) – which obligate the government to observe international commitments made by Somalia prior to 1991.²⁴⁴ However, the lack of international recognition means that Somaliland is generally not formally considered a state party, nor is it subjected to the usual reporting mechanisms due to its contested legal status.

The framework of law and policy relevant to the protection of children on the move includes those listed in Table 1.

Table 1: framework of law and policy relevant to the protection of children on the move

| Laws | Policies |
|--|--|
| Somaliland Citizenship Law, 2001 | National Child Protection Policy, 2016 |
| Juvenile Justice Law, 2007 | Somaliland Policy for Alternative Care, 2016 |
| Somaliland Labour Law, 2010 | Somaliland Gender Policy, 2009 |
| Sexual Offences Act, 2018 (passed by parliament, but not yet signed into law) | National Youth Policy of Somaliland, 2011 |
| Draft Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Law, 2018 | Draft National Plan of Action for Children, 2016–2020 |
| Draft Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2017 | Draft National Justice for Children Policy, 2017 |
| Draft Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Offences Bill, 2016 | Draft Somaliland Sexual Assault Protocol and Medicolegal, 2017 |
| Draft Birth Registration Act, 2015 | Draft Community Child Friendly Guideline, 2016 |
| Draft Somaliland Child Rights Act, 2014 | Draft Children Diversion Committee Guideline, 2016 |
| | Draft Code of Conduct for <i>Qaduis</i> , 2015 |
| | Draft National Children Diversion Policy 2014 |

Reprinted from 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti.

242 Organisation of African Unity, 'African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child', Articles 2 and 3, <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/child/#a4>

243 Republic of Somaliland, National Child Protection Policy, p. 19.

244 For a full list of mechanisms that have been adopted this way, please see 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

There are also important gaps in the law. For example, there is currently no single definition of the age of majority under Somaliland law and various laws define children differently for their own purposes.

Additional challenges include the fact that Somaliland's legal system is heterogeneous, underpinned by three distinct pillars of law: the formal legal system, customary law (known as *xeer*), and Islamic sharia. These pillars do not always align. The *xeer* system was created to adjudicate disputes between clans and sub-clans; as one review says, "It is an ever-present part of the Somali way of life."²⁴⁵ Traditionally, it has excluded women and minority clans.²⁴⁶ Although the system recognizes certain protections for children, it does not traditionally give them a voice in proceedings and has been criticized for valuing peace among clans over the rights of the individual.²⁴⁷ However, others have argued that it is possible to reinvigorate the *xeer* system, addressing its weaknesses and making it more responsive to the needs of the broader community.²⁴⁸

Services

In practice, legal protections for children are only as strong as the systems that exist to ensure that they are enforced. In the words of one UNICEF staff member, "The biggest challenge is implementation. One way of implementing policies is to develop the recommended structures. But the government does not have enough positions to do so. There is no dedicated police force for children, no rehabilitation centres for children. The government is not in a position to implement its policies due to funding."²⁴⁹

Specialized systems for the protection of particular rights will be discussed in dedicated sections, while this section discusses the mechanisms with a mandate to protect the rights of children on the move.

One key issue is the failure to secure adequate funding for services and mechanisms related to the rights of children. Child protection mechanisms are constrained by the country's lack of economic resources. Furthermore, children's needs are not prioritized. In the words of one civil society representative, "Investing in youth is missing by both donors and government."²⁵⁰ Although the percentage of the national budget allocated to education, health and other social concerns has increased in the last decade, it remains small in comparison to spending on national security and defence.²⁵¹ While the lack of expenditure on the government side is redressed to a certain extent by programmes funded by international agencies and the diaspora, key informants raised concerns that this can produce distorted programming. Rather than the needs of the population, it was suggested that diaspora members prioritized their own vested interests, whereas the international agencies were more interested in donor priorities.²⁵² In addition, donor funds may be highly restricted. One NGO suggested that, "donors' resources are often limited and based on project-based activities rather than programmes or case management services." The

The biggest challenge is implementation. One way of implementing policies is to develop the recommended structures. But the government does not have enough positions to do so. There is no dedicated police force for children, no rehabilitation centres for children. The government is not in a position to implement its policies due to funding.

245 Leite, N., 'Reinvigoration of Somali Traditional Justice through Inclusive Conflict Resolution Approaches', 12 October 2017, <http://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/reinvigoration-somali-traditional-justice-inclusive-conflict-resolution-approaches/>, accessed 5 September 2018.

246 Ibid.

247 The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, 'The Other War: Gang rape in Somaliland', p. 27.

248 Leite, N., 'Reinvigoration of Somali Traditional Justice through Inclusive Conflict Resolution Approaches'.

249 Interview with UNICEF staff, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.

250 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 22 March 2018.

251 For more detailed discussion and precise budget numbers, see 'Protecting Children on the Move in Somaliland: An analytical review', UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, available at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

252 Interviews with government officials, civil society representatives and an international organization, Hargeysa, 24, 27 and 29 March 2018.

same NGO complained that donor resources only allowed for training once a year which, due to high staff turnover, was insufficient.²⁵³

The Somaliland National Human Rights Commission has a general mandate to protect the rights of children (in addition to other groups). A 2010 act of parliament established the commission to lead the protection and promotion of human rights in Somaliland. It struggles, however, due to an indifferent relationship with the rest of the government. One staff member admitted, “We show their mistakes and oversight rules. Government does not have enough interest in correcting their mistakes; they don’t bother about strengthening the commission.”²⁵⁴ The commission also lacks credibility with donors, who regard it as being insufficiently independent from the government. As one representative said, “Donors think that the National Human Rights Commission is part of the government.”²⁵⁵

The Child Protection Committees are another important part of the national response to child protection issues, formed from local community leaders who act as an interface between the community, the government and other service providers. Established in parts (but not all) of Somaliland, they include some internally displaced person areas and form a first line of defence, identifying child protection problems and referring these to the relevant social workers and authorities. Many of these committees have years of experience and have received child protection training. Overall, the research found these committees to be very committed and effective actors, often offering resources from their own pockets to assist children in need. However, they do have weaknesses and may occasionally be subject to some of the same prejudices and cultural attitudes that undermine child rights in the wider community. These include xenophobic attitudes (for example, some blamed a variety of negative behaviours among children on migrants) and notions that the head of household should have unfettered authority within the home. Nonetheless, efforts should be made to reinforce these committees. MESAF is beginning to offer official identification to the committees to enhance their credibility and ability to act. This was appreciated by one community committee member who had “cards to go to the police station... now we can enter the police station and report GBV cases to them.”²⁵⁶

Responses to migration and asylum movements are coordinated through the Mixed Migration Task Force, which was set up in 2007 to “develop a rights-based strategy to ensure a comprehensive coordinated response to protection and humanitarian needs of migrants and asylum seekers transiting through Somalia.”²⁵⁷

There are institutions that provide reception and referral services for migrants. These include the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Hargeysa, which provides registration, counselling, legal assistance and medical care to migrants (including children). In the past, the centre has received cases of unaccompanied and separated minors but none of these were in the past year. MRC staff do not believe that this is due to a drop in the number of unaccompanied minors but more likely to a desire to avoid interventions. If unaccompanied children end up on the street, they may be assisted by the Hargeysa Orphanage or the Street Children Rehabilitation Centre.²⁵⁸ However, the MRC has noted that its services are insufficient to meet the community’s needs, “There is a huge demand for services from the community and migrants, but we offer very little.”²⁵⁹

253 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

254 Interview with the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission, Hargeysa, 23 March 2018.

255 Interview with the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission, Hargeysa, 27 March 2018.

256 Focus group discussion with community committee, Borama, July 2018.

257 IASC Somalia Protection Cluster, ‘Mixed Migration Task Force: Terms of Reference’, <http://www.unhcr.org/50a4c7b89.pdf>, accessed 20 August 2018.

258 Interview with MRC staff, Hargeysa, 15 August 2018.

259 Interview with MRC staff, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

IOM, UNHCR and NGO partners, in cooperation with the Somali-land government, run a reception centre in Berbera that receives primarily Yemeni refugees and Somali returnees from Yemen and provides food, water, medical care and registration. In July 2018, the centre helped roughly 60 Ethiopian migrants rescued at sea to return voluntarily to Ethiopia.

In addition, MESAF, Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Somaliland and Women’s Action Advocacy Progress Organisation have set up 13 child protection desks throughout Somaliland with support from UNICEF. They aim to increase access to protection services for children on the move, strengthen case management services, increase access to legal services and improve the quality of data available for children on the move. These desks provide identification, documentation, tracing, reunification and referrals to other services. While effective, they could benefit from increased training and capacity of the current staff; improved facilities (many do not have child-friendly premises); and increased staffing (some do not have sufficient staff to address the cases that come to their attention and are unable to ensure that staff of both genders are available at each desk).²⁶⁰ In addition, social workers articulated a need to set up additional desks, particularly to cover new and emerging migration routes.²⁶¹ Finally, those working in connection with the desks reported that family tracing is more difficult with migrant (i.e. non-Somali) children, suggesting the need to facilitate cross-border links to help identify foreign children and trace their families.

The EU, IOM and the Somaliland government recently created a ‘reintegration facility’, designed to support people from Somaliland stranded in other countries return home voluntarily and reintegrate them by providing strengthened livelihoods, social reintegration and psycho-social support.²⁶²

Social workers are responsible for the initial assessment of cases in a wide variety of contexts, and conduct assessments, counsel children and make referrals to services. Their role is vital. In Somaliland, however, interlocutors – including both social workers themselves and the NGOs and government officials who work with them – complained that the supply of social workers was not equal to demand and that those social workers in place lacked skills and resources to carry out their work effectively. Although a comprehensive set of figures for the number of social workers in Somaliland was not available, there are a few indications of the size of the population. The Ministry of Justice reported that it had only two social workers, while MESAF reported that it had 12 and the National Displacement and Refugee Agency reported that it had 14. One NGO working in three out of Somaliland’s six regions reported that they had only five social workers. UNICEF approximates that it is supporting about 1,000 professionals to carry out social work functions even if they are not trained as such.²⁶³

In this context, there is a need to increase the number of social workers. One obstacle to this is the availability of qualified personnel. Many social workers lack university degrees or vocational school training. During an informal review of the qualifications of nine governmental and non-governmental social workers, it was found that less than half had a tertiary or vocational school degree, though all had received case management training at least once.²⁶⁴ Those offering psycho-social counselling also lack training.²⁶⁵ International organizations have reported that they occasionally lack the capacity to deal with specific

260 Internal UNICEF report, on file with the author.

261 Interview with civil society partner, Hargeysa, 15 August 2018.

262 International Organization for Migration, ‘EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa Kick-off Meeting in Somaliland’, 27 April 2018, <https://www.iom.int/news/eu-iom-joint-initiative-migrant-protection-and-reintegration-horn-africa-kick-meeting>, accessed 14 August 2018.

263 UNICEF, ‘Social Work Curriculum development in Somalia – Consultant,’ https://www.unicef.org/somalia/about_21123.html, accessed 4 December 2018.

264 Meeting, case workers fortnightly conference, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.

265 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

We have knowledge on case management in normal situations, but we lack knowledge and skills of case management in emergency situations, as well as dealing with children with mental and physical disabilities

cases.²⁶⁶ According to UNICEF, there is currently only one social work school in Somalia and that produces about 40 graduates per year.²⁶⁷ UNICEF has identified the need to develop a broader corps of social workers as a key priority and is working to improve training and support for social workers.

Once on the job, social workers interviewed for this research expressed a range of concerns related to their ability to carry out their functions effectively. Social workers lacked key operational budgets, including

those for transport and communication costs. Some complained about lack of training. Moreover, some of those who had been trained expressed concern that the principles of social work and case management were not always integrated into the policies of their institutions. Others expressed a desire for specialized training on particular issues. In the words of one, “We have knowledge on case management in normal situations, but we lack knowledge and skills of case management in emergency situations, as well as dealing with children with mental and physical disabilities.”²⁶⁸ Others suggested that some social workers lack training on the particular needs of children. One government official suggested that, “staff do not have specific skills to make services child friendly and they do not have knowledge, understanding and skills in dealing with child protection issues.”²⁶⁹ Further, it was noted that low salaries led to high staff turnover, undermining the effectiveness of training efforts. In an effort to respond to these concerns, UNICEF is working with the University of Hargeysa to improve its social work programme, including a comprehensive review of the curriculum. Additional efforts to improve training (including on the job) would be useful.

Legal status

Access to legal status is critical to children’s well-being. Without legal status, children on the move are at increased risk of arrest and deportation for immigration offences. This can also have a profound psychological impact, increasing feelings of tension and insecurity.

Legal status is available to refugees. Article 35(1) of the Somaliland Constitution confirms that, “Any foreigner who enters the country lawfully or is lawfully resident in the country and who requests political asylum may be accorded asylum if he fulfils the conditions set out in the law governing asylum”. This refers to the 1984 Refugee Status Law,²⁷⁰ which recognizes both the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. The law also provides for a national status determination mechanism but, in practice, the UNHCR carries out this function, working closely with the Somaliland National Displacement and Refugee Agency.

Positively, Somaliland recognizes UNHCR’s refugee status determination decisions and generally respects the rights of officially recognized asylum seekers and refugees. In addition, Somaliland grants prima facie refugee status to Yemenis fleeing the civil war, which allows these vulnerable people to avoid the time-consuming (and sometimes traumatic) refugee status determination process.

266 Interview with UNICEF, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.

267 Ibid.

268 Interview with government agency, Hargeysa, 27 March 2018.

269 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

270 Republic of Somalia, 1984 Refugee Status Law as applied in Somaliland, 2 June 1984, http://www.somalilandlaw.com/1984_Refugee_Status_Law_as_applied_in_Somaliland.pdf, accessed 13 August 2018.

However, ensuring that asylum seekers of other nationalities gain access to the territory in order to claim asylum has been a concern. The majority of Ethiopians cross the border for economic reasons; thus, there can be a presumption among government officials and others that *all* Ethiopians are economic migrants and therefore would not qualify for asylum and should be deported quickly. This presumption is misleading and could undermine access to asylum for those who need it. Although many Ethiopians crossing the border are motivated by economic conditions rather than persecution, some have valid asylum claims. Immigration authorities have been trained on the right of individuals to seek asylum and they are aware of the need to conduct screenings but this message needs to be regularly reinforced through both ongoing training and procedural guidance.

For other classes of migrants there is little possibility of accessing legal status. This is problematic as it leaves many migrant children unsure of their status and vulnerable to arrest and deportation. On occasions in which they are engaged in immigration proceedings, they are not given an opportunity to participate – despite the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the words of one government official, “Immigration authorities determine the best interests of the child by themselves and also involving parents, but without giving any opportunity to listen to children’s opinion. Government don’t bother getting children’s wishes whether they want to go back home or not.”²⁷¹ Reportedly, migrant children are routinely sent back to their countries, irrespective of their wishes to remain in Somaliland or to continue their journeys through the country.²⁷² Likewise, children are routinely excluded from the decision-making processes of policy makers and service providers.²⁷³

In this context, Somaliland should consider reform of their immigration laws in order to allow the best interests of the child principle to be applied in cases involving the status of migrant children and their families, and to expand possibilities for regularization of their status.

Detention

Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child protects children from arbitrary arrest and detention.²⁷⁴ In addition, Article 17 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child provides due process guarantees for children in conflict with the law and provides that children should be detained separately from adults. With particular reference to migrant children, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families have previously asserted that the detention of children due to their immigration status (or that of their parents) constitutes a violation of children’s rights and contravenes the best interest principle.²⁷⁵

Somaliland’s Juvenile Justice Law 2007 is progressive in many respects. In particular, it reflects the best interests provision of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in national law.²⁷⁶ The law also provides that the deprivation of a child’s liberty will be undertaken only as a last resort; that children in conflict with the law shall be provided with legal aid; and that a number of protections should be offered to detained

271 Interview with government official, Hargeysa, 27 March 2018.

272 Interview with government official, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

273 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

274 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, ‘Protection and Assistance for Children on the Move,’ 2017, <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document/protection-assistance-children-move/> accessed 3 June 2018.

275 Joint general comment No. 4 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families; and No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on State obligations regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration in countries of origin, transit, destination and return, UN doc no, CMW/C/GC/4-CRC/C/GC/23, 16 November 2017, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CMW%2fC%2fGC%2f4&Lang=en.

276 Republic of Somaliland, Juvenile Justice Law No. 36/2007, Art. 6, on file with author.

children, including detention in facilities separate from adults.²⁷⁷ The latter obligation brings Somaliland law into compliance with the provisions of the African Charter.

In practice, however, children who attempt *tahriib* are regularly detained. This practice would appear to be an effort to implement the provisions of the National Child Protection Policy, which states that “Speedy reunification with their parents and extended families will be a priority (e.g. children who are trafficked, abandoned, or living on the street) if it is determined to be in the best interests of the child.”²⁷⁸ Proper and formal assessments of the best interests of the child are not carried out, nor are children given the opportunity to be heard in the process. When faced with resistance from children, social workers and law enforcement both emphasized the need to convince the child or contact the parents by another means. There appears to be a strong presumption that reunification is in the best interests of the child. While that may be true in most cases, it is vital that the child’s views are heard and that there be recognition that it may not always be the best option. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has recognized that family unification is not always in the best interests of the child,²⁷⁹ for example, in cases where families have placed children in trafficking situations or otherwise undermined their protection. In any event, children should have the right to be heard and to participate in any process determining their best interests.

Even where reunification with parents is in the best interests of the child, detention to achieve that aim is problematic. Attempting *tahriib* is not illegal in Somaliland and migration should not be criminalized. The Horizon Institute has argued that “the arrest and detention of youth for such acts [is] unlawful.”²⁸⁰ It is possible that, in these circumstances, the police rely on Somaliland laws which criminalize ‘parental disobedience,’ as children are usually detained when police suspect that they lack parental permission for their journeys. However, this provision raises a number of concerns. One, it lacks clarity and could potentially criminalize any behaviour forbidden by an individual’s parents. Two, it is unclear what evidentiary standard would be applied as parental instructions are rarely documented. Three, it raises questions about the protection of children in a circumstance in which a parental instruction might be harmful to the child. In this context, it would be critical for the authorities to clarify the legal basis for detention, consider alternative methods of achieving family reunification and revise the law on parental disobedience. Finally, although the law provides that children in such cases should receive legal aid, this seems unlikely in practice. According to the Horizon Institute, there are only five public defenders in Somaliland and they only work on cases that carry a potential sentence of at least ten years.²⁸¹

The attitude of some police and immigration authorities is also concerning. In particular, the vocabulary of ‘capture’ deployed by the law enforcement authorities interviewed shows a lack of sensitivity to children on the move. Accordingly, the Somaliland government and international partners should urgently improve the training of these authorities on child sensitivity and ensure that – in compliance with National Child Protection Policy – each police station or post has at least one officer on staff with specific training on child protection and child-friendly communication who can ensure appropriate treatment of children in contact with the authorities. Because previous efforts to provide such training have reportedly been undermined by high staff turnover, it might be useful to organize training regionally to reduce costs, include more officers and reduce the impact of turnover.²⁸²

277 Ibid, articles 5, 9 and 10, on file with author.

278 Republic of Somaliland, National Child Protection Policy, p. 18.

279 ‘Protected on Paper? An analysis of Nordic country responses to asylum-seeking children’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2018, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/940-protected-on-paper-an-analysis-of-nordic-country-responses-to-asylum-seeking-children.html>, accessed 8 January 2019.

280 Horizon Institute, ‘Juvenile Violence and Delinquency in Somaliland: Why incarceration is the wrong response’, June 2018, p. 4.

281 Ibid., p. 5.

282 Interview with international organization, Hargeysa, 15 August 2018.

Further, despite the reservations expressed by some authorities, children detained while attempting to leave the country are sometimes detained alongside adults. This practice is both concerning and against the law. Somaliland’s Juvenile Justice Law provides that children should be detained in separate facilities, including at the pre-trial phase.²⁸³ For the most part, however, such separate detention facilities do not yet exist in Somaliland. Action must be taken to ensure that these are created and also that practical alternatives to detention are introduced, such as child-friendly shelter, reception and foster care in family or community-based living arrangements.

Birth registration

Birth registration is a critical stepping stone to accessing a wide variety of rights, both in migration contexts and at home. Birth registration is an essential tool to help establish identity and parentage; it can be critical for family tracing and reunification in migration contexts. Birth registration can also establish age, which can be critical for ensuring access to child protection systems. In addition, although birth registration does not by itself provide access to nationality, it does establish some of the key facts – such as place of birth and parentage – that establish nationality. This is particularly critical for the children of migrants: without proper documentation, they may be both ineligible for the citizenship of their host country and may, over time, lose the ability to establish a connection with their home country, potentially rendering them stateless.

However, few children in Somaliland have access to this vital service. In 2015, it was estimated that less than 7 per cent of children in Somaliland were registered, one of the lowest rates in the world.²⁸⁴ This is largely due to the disintegration of civil registration systems as a result of war.²⁸⁵ In addition, Somaliland lacks any legal or policy framework for birth registration.²⁸⁶ A draft law was produced in 2015 but has yet to be passed. A particular concern reported was the practice of clan elders being called to testify as to whether a child was a part of their clan in order for the child to receive a birth certificate.²⁸⁷ Such a policy might exclude migrants or members of minority clans, thereby undermining equal access to birth registration.

In 2014, with support from UNICEF, Somaliland piloted a programme to provide access to birth registration and improve this situation. Registration is now functional in 16 districts.²⁸⁸ However, it was reported that the lack of resources in some areas may prevent the issuance of birth certificates even when the appropriate authorities are notified of birth.²⁸⁹ While government officials reported that the system is functioning well in urban areas, it is not yet available in rural areas. This often makes registration inaccessible to children in those areas, as parents would need to travel long distances (often at considerable cost) to access registration. Additional work is needed to ensure that the process is accessible and sufficiently resourced. Increased sensitization is also necessary given that a lack of knowledge about the process reportedly discourages parents from registering.

Furthermore, the health and interior ministries (which receive birth notifications and issue birth registration) should be coordinating more closely with the Ministry of Planning and Development to ensure that birth registration data is used effectively for national planning.

283 Republic of Somaliland, Juvenile Justice Law No. 36/2007, Article 27.

284 Makundi, A., ‘Birth registration in Somaliland’, Report, UNICEF Somalia, 2015, https://www.unicef.org/somalia/cpp_16521.html, accessed 12 August 2018.

285 United Nations Children’s Fund Somalia, ‘Child Protection Strategy Note 2018–2020’.

286 Ibid.

287 Expert, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018.

288 United Nations Children’s Fund Somalia, ‘Child Protection Strategy Note 2018–2020’.

289 Interview, Ministry of Health, Hargeysa, March 2018.

Mental and physical health

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of children to the “enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health.”²⁹⁰ Article 14 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child makes similar provisions. The circumstances of migration, however, challenge the mental and physical health of children. Although health services are provided, access can be limited by poverty and distance. To address mental health, various agencies provide counselling for survivors of sexual violence and other trauma. However, these facilities are insufficient to meet demand and some individuals on the move reported being unable to access services. Additional training for counsellors and funding for counselling positions is needed.

Education

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the right of all children to education, stipulating that states shall:

- (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;
- (c) Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- (d) Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.²⁹¹

Article 11 of the ACRWC provides similar protections.²⁹²

The Somaliland Constitution provides for free primary education in national law. Since 2011, primary education has reportedly been free, though fees are still charged in some instances.²⁹³ Additional measures should be taken to ensure that education, particularly primary education, is truly free. Overall, school registration remains low in Somaliland, with more than 50 per cent of children out of school, while rural populations and girls experience significantly lower levels of enrolment than their urban and male counterparts.²⁹⁴ More needs to be done to ensure access to education.

²⁹⁰ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>, accessed 15 August 2018.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 11, <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/child/#a4>.

²⁹³ Interview with Ethiopian migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.

²⁹⁴ For a more detailed review of available data on enrolment, see ‘Protecting Children on the Move: An Analysis of Child Protection Contexts in Somaliland’, forthcoming at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

It is laudable that national education systems – from the primary to the tertiary level – are at least theoretically made available to children on the move.²⁹⁵ UNICEF supports the government’s strengthening of the national education system, especially primary education. In particular, UNICEF works to improve access for underserved communities, including internally displaced persons, pastoral communities and the urban poor. UNICEF is working closely with the government to identify large movements of internally displaced persons, helping schools in the affected areas to include internally displaced children. These programmes seek to respond to the specific needs of these children, including organizing classes in the afternoon for those who need to assist their families with household work in the morning.²⁹⁶ UNHCR provides support to aid the integration of refugees and Somali returnees. Support projects have included provisions for the refurbishment of classrooms.²⁹⁷

Unaccompanied and separated children are believed to be more preoccupied with movement or survival and to be unlikely to seek access to school. If they did, however, it would be difficult for them to register without parental assistance.²⁹⁸

To increase attendance, a special alternative basic education programme has been adopted. It uses a condensed curriculum and flexible timetables to provide education to internally displaced persons and other disadvantaged populations. However, the system is constrained by insufficient resources, a lack of qualified teaching staff and a limited number of facilities.²⁹⁹

At the secondary and tertiary level, there are concerns that existing educational opportunities are ill-suited to the practical needs and employability of youth who graduate. In the words of a government official, “The education sector is dominated by subjects such as politics and business administration. These are wrong faculties ... professional, technical, and vocational education and training is missing.”³⁰⁰ It would, however, be more accurate to say that these programmes are insufficient, rather than missing. Somaliland currently has 24 schools serving an estimated population of 5,000–10,000 students. In some cases, migrants are able to attend these programmes³⁰¹ – one young man fleeing from Somalia reported that he was completing a degree in mechanics.³⁰²

There are, however, a number of weaknesses in existing vocational training programmes. First, many are very short, lasting three to six months (though some are longer), and the skills they teach are too basic to make a person truly employable. Second, training initiatives are often based on assessments by potential beneficiaries (who select what they would like to learn) rather than market assessments of skills in demand. In some cases, beneficiaries pick from courses previously offered, even though the market might already be saturated with those skills. This creates a situation whereby considerable skills gaps may leave positions unfilled. For example, a 2015 survey found a significant demand for technical skills like beautician services, restaurant services, mobile phone repair and tailoring in Burco. In Hargeysa, administrative and management skills were in demand.

²⁹⁵ Interview with legal aid centre, Hargeysa, 4 July 2018.

²⁹⁶ Interview with UNICEF education specialist, Hargeysa, 16 August 2018.

²⁹⁷ Interview with UNHCR, Hargeysa, 22 July 2018.

²⁹⁸ Interview with UNICEF education specialist, Hargeysa, 16 August 2018.

²⁹⁹ Republic of Somaliland, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, National Plan of Action for Children 2016–2020, 2016, p. 11.

³⁰⁰ Interview with government official, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

³⁰¹ For a more detailed discussion of available technical and vocational education and training programmes, see ‘Protecting Children on the Move: An analysis of child protection contexts in Somaliland’, forthcoming at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

³⁰² Interview with young man from Somalia, Burco, 23 July 2018.

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Meanwhile, some programmes only target subgroups, making them inaccessible to a large number of people. These subgroups include the most vulnerable³⁰³ and dropouts, which excludes those who have completed at least secondary school.³⁰⁴ In addition, there is no formal policy mechanism to guide, coordinate or promote collaboration among technical and vocational centres managed by the government, NGOs and the private sector.

A similar problem persists at university level. One NGO representative suggested, “We need to challenge the universities about what they are doing,” for example, by asking whether the failure of graduates to find employment was related to access to universities, their quality, or whether they simply teach students

There was a need for greater language skills, particularly Arabic and English.

without considering market demand.³⁰⁵ The programme range at universities is limited, meaning that some employable skills are simply not taught. Similarly, there is little market analysis done to ensure that the courses offered match the needs of employers. As an example, a survey comparing job requirements with applicants found that there was a need for greater language skills, particularly Arabic and English. In this context, universities or other schools could consider bolstering language teaching to ensure that their graduates are able to meet these demands.³⁰⁶

Employment

One civil society representative in Hargeysa noted, “The country is overwhelmed with youth population and unemployment”.³⁰⁷ Unemployment is, indeed, a serious challenge. Only an estimated 23–35 per cent of the population is employed, with even lower figures for women and youth.³⁰⁸

Somaliland’s unemployment crisis is linked to a youth bulge, a common demographic pattern in developing countries in which the percentage of youth in the population rises.³⁰⁹ This pattern is typically associated with progress in reducing infant mortality combined with high fertility rates. It creates the challenge of ensuring that youth close to working age can be absorbed into productive economic activity.³¹⁰ This can be a challenge even where there is significant economic growth. In Uganda, for example, the economy is growing at the rate of about 4–5 per cent each year and, each year, 400,000 youth are released into a job market that adds only about 9,000 salaried jobs.³¹¹ This may give an indication of the challenges facing Somaliland given that its population growth rate (3.14 per cent)³¹² is comparable to Uganda’s (3.2 per cent) and is the seventh highest in the world.³¹³ Data on Somaliland’s economic growth are not available, but

303 Hall, S., ‘Investing in Somali Youth: Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland’.

304 Wasuge, M., ‘Youth Migration in Somalia: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Remedies’, p. 25.

305 Interview with NGO representative, Hargeysa, 22 March 2018.

306 Ibid.

307 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 22 March 2018.

308 For a more detailed review of available employment data, see ‘Protecting Children on the Move: An analysis of child protection contexts in Somaliland’, forthcoming at <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/children-and-migration-rights-and-resilience/>.

309 The definition of youth varies. UNICEF defines youth as persons under 25, but Somaliland extends this category to those under 35.

310 Lin, J., ‘Youth Bulge: A demographic dividend or a demographic bomb in developing countries?’, 5 January 2012, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-a-demographic-bomb-in-developing-countries>, accessed 15 August 2018.

311 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, ‘Invisible Labourers of Kampala: A paper on women street vendors in Kampala’, August 2018.

312 Somaliland Law, ‘Somaliland in Figures’, 2010, http://somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_in_Figures_20010.pdf, accessed 9 August 2018.

313 Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, ‘Country Comparison: Population growth rate’, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2002rank.html>, accessed 9 August 2018.

it is likely slower than Uganda’s, and its youth bulge is significant, with an estimated 45.6 per cent of the 3.5 million population aged below 15,³¹⁴ compared to about 26 per cent globally.³¹⁵

Employment provides not only livelihoods but also social acceptance and respect. Conversely, the inability to find employment is associated not just with migration but also with other negative consequences – both personally (for example, depression and increased drug use, most commonly *qat*)³¹⁶ and socially (increased risk of political instability and violence).³¹⁷ Ensuring access to employment may also be of particular importance for Somalis returning from attempted migration to Europe because the journey often devastates their families economically. One key informant agreed, “Of course families would be devastated when the child comes back empty handed... the family has already sold livestock and all properties for his migration... there is a huge need for reintegration programmes for returnees.”³¹⁸ Again, civil society organizations acknowledge that their efforts to respond are insufficient to meet demand.³¹⁹ Others, however, have cautioned against creating the appearance of favouring failed migrants as this might provide further motivation for children and youth to undertake dangerous journeys.

Small-scale interventions are useful for individuals but are unlikely to reverse the overall trend. Responses to the problem need to address both supply (making youth more employable) and demand (creating more jobs).

In addition, it is critical to understand the scale and the extent of the problem as well as the fact that it requires multiple and robust interventions. Small-scale interventions are useful for individuals but are unlikely to reverse overall trends. Responses to the problem need to address both supply (making youth more employable) and demand (creating more jobs).

In addressing supply, it is important to recognize that the existing education system is inadequate with regards to responding to the current job market, as discussed above. In addition, addressing the supply side could include encouraging youth to accept those jobs that are available. Cultural norms in Somaliland have created a hesitance among many young people to take blue collar jobs. This is partly due to the traditional structure of Somali society in which minority clans tended to do manual and technical labour while majority clans acted as pastoralists. However, urbanization and population growth are forcing a shift away from pastoralism – and this trend has only been exacerbated by drought and the massive loss of livestock over the last few years.³²⁰ This phenomenon has created an unlikely situation where there is both a high rate of unemployment and many unfilled jobs, particularly those available for unskilled labourers.³²¹

314 The percentage of the population under 15 represents the percentage of the population of southern and central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. Disaggregated data was not available. The total population estimate was calculated from the regional data provided. See Republic of Somalia, Data for a Better Tomorrow and UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014 for the 18 Pre-War Regions of Somalia, October 2014, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/population-estimation-survey-2014-18-pre-war-regions-somalia>, accessed 15 August 2018.

315 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ‘World Population Prospects: Key Findings and Advance Tables’, 2015 Revision, https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf, accessed 15 August 2018, p. 1.

316 Transparency Solutions, OCVF and University of Bristol, ‘Youth Unemployment in Hargeisa: causes and consequences’, April 2017, http://ocvp.org/HQRS/internshipphase/HQRS%20Group%20B%20Research%20Report%20Youth%20Unemployment%202017%20_%20FINAL.pdf, accessed 15 August 2018.

317 Ali, M., ‘Youth Unemployment: A global security challenge’, *Harvard International Review*, 12 September 2014, <http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=7296>, accessed 15 August 2018.

318 Interview with UNICEF staff, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.

319 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 23 March 2018.

320 Correspondence with civil society representative, August 2018.

321 Hall, S., ‘Investing in Somali Youth: Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland’.

My child is currently planning to go to Arab countries. I am really fed up with him now. I am concerned about his own self and fear that he may commit suicide. I sent him to a place to work recently but he did come back because he is not interested in it.

This was reflected in the frustration of one mother, “My child is currently planning to go to Arab countries. I am really fed up with him now. I am concerned about his own self and fear that he may commit suicide. I sent him to a place to work recently but he did come back because he is not interested in it.”³²²

This is driving a situation in which Somaliland is experiencing both significant inflows of migrants seeking jobs and significant outflows of migrants seeking jobs. In essence, people on the move are seeking

different jobs. To address this, interventions are required to change social norms and valorize a wider range of occupations than has traditionally been the case.

The perception that the job market is dominated by clan or sub-clan politics is another factor that undermines youth confidence in potentially finding employment. In the words of one internally displaced person, “Everything is becoming clan-based. It is not what you know, it is who you know in here. I blame the government for absence of social justice.”³²³ A child who had attempted to migrate said, “I tried to get a part-time job to cover my expenses and unfortunately found that the process of getting a job is almost clan-based, so I became depressed day-by-day” (Somali, 17 years).³²⁴ An NGO worker agreed, “Education, a degree and skills are not everything one needs in Somaliland to get a job. Clan reference is extremely powerful here... getting a job is impossible if you do not have a clan reference and if you are from minority clans.”^{325,326} A recent paper has argued that this phenomenon is anchored, at least in part, in historical conflicts, “There has been no genuine reconciliation, and businessmen have legitimate concerns.”³²⁷

In discussions with experts, however, the prevalence of this practice was questioned. Some argued that the issue was networking, connections and nepotism, rather than clan or sub-clan-based discrimination. Experts pointed out that this was more common in private businesses and that individuals hire from their own clan at their own risk – if that person turned out to be incompetent, they would be forced to fire them. Others asserted that, as the economy grows, instances of clannism and nepotism will reduce.³²⁸ However, the discussion shows the need to engage with this issue. If youth perceive that getting a job is predicated on something over which they have no control (their clan or family ties), they may feel little incentive to study or apply to jobs and are more likely to consider migration to be the only option.

This research was not able to independently assess the impact of clan identity on hiring. Due to the sensitivity of clan dynamics in Somaliland, researchers did not ask explicitly for the clan affiliation of individuals. For this reason, the research was unable to track whether these comments arise from specific groups. As such, additional research on how perceptions vary across groups would be worthwhile.

An interesting finding of a 2015 study on the job market was the mismatch between employer and youth expectations, whereby youth significantly overestimated the value of degrees and significantly

322 Interview with parent of a migrant, Hargeysa, July 2018.

323 Focus group discussion, State House internally displaced persons camp, Hargeysa, July 2018.

324 Interview returnee boy, Hargeysa, July 2018.

325 In Somaliland, the primary minorities are the so-called “occupational minorities” – the Gaboye, Tumul and Yibir. Traditionally, these groups practiced particular trades, such as weaving, pottery and metal working. They are treated as a distinct social category. As the research did not ask interviewees for their clan affiliation, it is not possible to assess the data on that basis.

326 Interview with NGO representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

327 Wasuge, M., ‘Youth Migration in Somalia: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Remedies’.

328 Expert, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018.

underestimated the value of work experience.³²⁹ In this context, the frustration expressed by individuals who were unable to complete their degrees and saw this as reason to migrate may be based on an inaccurate assumption that without a degree they have little prospect of generating a livelihood for themselves or their families. Accordingly, programmatic interventions could explore ways of helping youth gain the necessary work experience. This could include employing youth in project work or encouraging internships in the social sector. In addition, the government has proposed a national service programme which, if properly implemented, could offer valuable work experience to youth.

On the demand side, significant action must be taken to promote job creation. One government proposal is the aforementioned national service programme and experts expressed hope that the government would abide by its commitment to carry this out.³³⁰ Another difficulty raised was the importance of investment in growth industries and infrastructure. Although Somaliland receives considerable international aid – not least because its relatively high level of security makes it an attractive entry point for engagement with other Somali-inhabited areas – some argue that the country has had difficulty accessing some of the funding streams typically used for financing infrastructure projects due to the unrecognized status of its government.³³¹ Finally, more resources could be set aside to foster entrepreneurship. Previous research has shown that entrepreneurship is not considered as an objective or a goal by many youth because “you cannot succeed alone.”³³² Although there is inherent risk in entrepreneurship, there is also tremendous potential as it allows youth to create jobs for themselves. Various initiatives to support entrepreneurship through education already exist; for example, a joint Somaliland National Youth Organization (SONYO)-ILO project training entrepreneurship skills and direct business support, such as the Somaliland Business Fund and the Somaliland Special Arrangement.³³³ However, such initiatives could be expanded and targeted more explicitly to youth.

Child labour

The ILO 1973 Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) requires states to set a minimum age for employment not less than 15 years. This convention has not been ratified by Somalia and, therefore, is not among the conventions that Somaliland accepted through its recognition of those ratified by Somalia prior to 1991. However, Somaliland is bound by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which prohibits children from “performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.”³³⁴ In addition, recruitment of child soldiers is a violation of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and customary international humanitarian law.³³⁵

The Somaliland Labour and Employment Law – the Private Sector Act (31/2004) – includes articles related to child labour. Article 38(1) prohibits employment under age 15, including for internships (Article 28(1)); Article 38(2) limits the acceptable tasks for children over 15 years to those that are easy and not harmful to their health and mind; Article 38(3) ensures that work must not disrupt a child’s basic education; Article 7(1) prohibits compulsory employment; and Article 10(2) prohibits night work in industrial, commercial

329 Hall, S., ‘Investing in Somali Youth: Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland’.

330 Expert, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018.

331 Hall, S., ‘Investing in Somali Youth: Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland’.

332 Ibid., p. 51.

333 Ibid.

334 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990, Article 15.

335 International Committee of the Red Cross, ‘Rule 136: Recruitment of Child Soldiers’, *International Humanitarian Law Database*, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule136, accessed 22 August 2018.

or agricultural workplaces.³³⁶ Further, Somaliland's national child policy commits the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (now MESAF) to enforce these provisions through the control of employers. It also encourages families to engage in income generating activities where the work of the child is not critical to the family's survival, thus reducing the pressure on children to work.³³⁷ As such, national legislation seems to conform to international standards.

In practice, however, child labour is commonplace and the law is rarely enforced. In the words of a MESAF representative, "We have good laws but they are not implemented. Children are working everywhere in this country, even in hazardous situations and with the knowledge of the law enforcement authorities."³³⁸ A Ministry of Justice official was unaware of any case in which violations of the law on child labour were actually prosecuted.³³⁹ In this context, more should be done to ensure enforcement of national labour policy.

Particular effort should also be made to ensure that children are not subjected to military recruitment. Although the instances of recruitment in Somaliland are not as prevalent as those noted in conflict-affected regions of Somalia, any recruitment of children is problematic and should be addressed.

Trafficking and smuggling

The Somaliland government considers smuggling and trafficking to be serious issues and has expressed a willingness to address them. One such effort was the formation of the Counter Human Trafficking and Smuggling Agency of Somaliland (HAKAD), which was formed in 2016. This entity brings together representatives from immigration, police, the coast guard, the attorney general's office, and the ministries of commerce, finance and civil aviation to coordinate counter trafficking efforts.³⁴⁰ Arrests of smugglers are reportedly occurring on a regular basis. For example, it was reported in July 2018 that three individuals had been arrested for trafficking and that 40 children, mostly girls, had been released.³⁴¹ In addition, it was reported that Somaliland had recently joined a regional task force to combat trafficking.³⁴²

Throughout the interviews, it appeared that the concepts of trafficking and smuggling were not well understood

There are, however, serious constraints on these actions. First, throughout the interviews, it appeared that the concepts of trafficking and smuggling were not well understood. Government officials and civil society representatives frequently treated all persons transporting others as 'traffickers,' regardless of the reason or nature of their transport. This is a recognized issue and IOM (with support from UNICEF) organized training on trafficking and irregular migration in January 2018.³⁴³ Although knowledge appears to be improving, the lack of a clear and common understanding impedes the recognition of (and efforts to combat) these crimes.

336 Ibid., pp. 1–2.

337 National Child Policy.

338 Interview with MESAF, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.

339 Interview with Ministry of Justice, Hargeysa, July 2018.

340 US State Department, 'Special Case: Somalia', *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2018*, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/282798.pdf>, accessed 14 August 2018.

341 Correspondence with a local NGO, 24 July 2018.

342 Interview with the Ministry of Justice, Hargeysa, 16 July 2018.

343 International Organization for Migration, 'UN Migration Agency Holds Training on Trafficking and Irregular Migration in Somaliland', 19 January 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/un-migration-agency-holds-training-trafficking-and-irregular-migration-somaliland>, accessed 14 August 2018.

Second, government officials complained that the inadequate legal framework hampered their crime prevention abilities. Currently, trafficking and smuggling are not specifically defined crimes in Somaliland law. The government has been using provisions in the 1964 Penal Code that prohibit slavery, forced labour and compulsion to prostitution, which carry penalties ranging from six months to 20 years.³⁴⁴ Although the US State Department's 2018 Trafficking Report defines these penalties as "sufficiently stringent,"³⁴⁵ government officials believe that perpetrators could generally only be sentenced to between three and seven years. It is not entirely clear why these lower sentences are being imposed. One reported reason was that judges used their discretion, viewing trafficking and smuggling as less serious than slavery.³⁴⁶ Another explanation was that smugglers and traffickers hired lawyers capable of offering a vigorous defence.³⁴⁷ In addition, government officials complained that (under the current law) perpetrators could pay a fine in lieu of jail time.³⁴⁸ A new trafficking law was drafted in 2017 and has been endorsed by the relevant ministries but is yet to pass into law. The new law would require the government to make provisions for the accompaniment of children. Local authorities expressed support for its passage, claiming that it would be helpful in ensuring more successful prosecutions and more jail time and would thereby act as a more effective deterrent.

Third, government officials expressed concern that they did not have the resources to compete with well organized, well financed smuggling and trafficking operations in practical terms. It was reported that traffickers are typically caught in the act, as victims rarely come forward and the government lacks the capacity to conduct extensive surveillance. In the words of one government representative, "The transnational organized criminals are managing cross border trafficking. They are millionaires; they can do whatever they want."³⁴⁹ Even after traffickers are caught, officials lack the resources to prosecute them, "We have to pay 10 to 20 million Somaliland shillings just to pay for the victim and the traffickers to feed them in jail and meet other costs. We have trouble keeping them in prison."³⁵⁰ Even if the prosecution is able to proceed, traffickers seem to be formidable foes, "They hire clever lawyers to try to get out of it. They have even more money than us and they are using it to get away with this."³⁵¹

Although government officials profess their desire to combat trafficking and smuggling, sufficient resources are not allocated to this effort. In many countries, corruption and the involvement of powerful persons in trafficking and smuggling networks can be a serious hindrance to the prevention of these crimes. While specific information on these factors was not gathered in this research, it could be a question for future research.

In addition to legal prosecutions, numerous efforts are underway to raise awareness of the dangers of the journey among those most likely to migrate. UNHCR has recently launched their "Dangerous Crossings" campaign and others are engaging in various types of messaging. Returnees who can relate their experiences play an important role in this work. For example, the youth organization SONYO has reportedly engaged returnees in public outreach projects to raise awareness among youth. As noted above, most potential youth migrants are already aware of the dangers but hearing it directly from someone with experience gives the message a new weight and urgency.

344 Republic of Somaliland, Penal Code, Legislative Decree No. 5 of 16 December 1962, articles 455, 457, 464 and 408, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4bc5906e2.html>, accessed 14 August 2018.

345 US State Department, 'Special Case: Somalia', *Trafficking in Persons Report: June 2018*.

346 Email correspondence with civil society representative, 27 August 2018.

347 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 16 August 2018.

348 Interview with the Ministry of Justice, Hargeysa, 16 July 2018.

349 Interview with Department of Immigration, Hargeysa, 26 March 2018.

350 Ibid.

351 Interview with the Ministry of Justice, Hargeysa, 16 July 2018.

However, some counter factors should be considered. First, individuals are primarily getting information about the routes and the journey through personal networks and individuals personally known to them. Previous research has shown that many communities only trust information from people they know.³⁵² In this context, it will be difficult to package messages from spokespeople and to create generalized campaigns that will carry greater weight than personal networks. This underlines the need for personalized messages. Second, messaging about the risks alone is unlikely to be successful – individuals need a reason to stay, balanced against reasons not to go. Finally, this messaging must be respectful and realistic. If what individuals hear does correspond with what they see, the messaging is unlikely to be taken seriously.

Sexual and gender-based violence

Article 34 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 27 of the ACRWC provide protections for children against sexual exploitation and abuse,³⁵³ including sexual violence. These provisions are, to some extent, incorporated in Somaliland’s law, which criminalizes ‘carnal violence.’³⁵⁴ However, the definition of rape in national law is more limited than the internationally recognized definition because it only recognizes penetration by a male sex organ and not, for example, by other body parts or foreign objects. Further, the circumstances of rape are limited by a requirement that the person was either subjected to violence or the threat of violence, was incapable of giving consent or was under the custody of a public officer who committed the act. This fails to recognize types of coercion other than direct threats of physical violence.³⁵⁵ Also, the law is unclear as to the circumstances in which an individual would be considered unable to give consent. This contrasts with many national systems, which criminalize assault of children by providing that individuals under a given age are unable to give consent. The lack of clarity in the Somaliland law may particularly impact child victims.

Many of these weaknesses are addressed in the new Sexual Offences Bill, which expands the definition of rape to “sexual assault without the consent of the victim... that is carried out by physical force, coercion or threat.”³⁵⁶ The bill also provides for additional penalties if the victim is under 15.³⁵⁷ At the time of writing, the bill had been approved by both houses of parliament and was awaiting signature by the President.³⁵⁸

In addition to gaps in the law, there are significant gaps in the practical response to sexual violence. Despite the aforementioned statistics, which indicate that the actual number of rapes committed in Somaliland is likely to be in the thousands, only 81 cases were successfully prosecuted in 2017.³⁵⁹ This represents a success rate of just under 50 per cent in the 166 cases taken up by the Attorney General’s Office. Moreover, it seems that the majority of cases never reach the courts.

352 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, SOAS, and the International Refugee Rights Initiative, ‘Tackling the Root Causes of Human Trafficking and Smuggling from Eritrea: The need for an empirically grounded EU policy on mixed migration in the Horn of Africa’, November 2017, <http://refugee-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/IRRI-KP-final.pdf>

353 Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 34, <https://www.crin.org/en/home/rights/convention/articles/article-34-sexual-exploitation>; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 27.

354 Republic of Somaliland, Penal Code, Legislative Decree No. 5 of 16 December 1962, Article 398.

355 For a more detailed analysis of Somaliland law on rape and sexual violence, see Horizon Institute, ‘Consultation Paper on Sexual Offences in the Somaliland Penal Code’, February 2015.

356 Horizon Institute, ‘Seeking Justice for Rape in Somaliland: The role and limitations of the criminal justice system’, March 2018, https://www.thehorizoninstitute.org/usr/documents/publications/document_url/15/horizon-institute-s-report-on-prosecution-of-rape-cases-in-somaliland-march-2018.pdf, accessed 21 August 2018.

357 Ibid.

358 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, ‘Gender Alert: Criminalizing rape in Somaliland’, 31 July 2018, <http://sihanet.org/gender-alert-criminalizing-rape-in-somaliland-good-reasons-to-celebrate/>, accessed 20 August 2018.

359 Human Rights Centre, ‘Annual Review of the Human Rights Centre Somaliland 2017’, 2018, p. 22.

There are many obstacles to successful prosecutions. First, many victims decline to report rape due to the stigma attached to victims in Somali culture. Second, where a rape is reported, in many cases the victims or their families prefer to address the case through the traditional *xeer* system rather than the national courts. In the *xeer* system, the rape of a woman is considered an offence by the perpetrator’s clan against the victim’s clan and the leaders of the clans negotiate. The system focuses on maintaining relations between the clans meaning that the desires of the victim are secondary. In general, monetary compensation is negotiated or, in some circumstances, the woman may be married to the offender to preserve her honour and ensure that her family receives a dowry.³⁶⁰

By contrast, the formal system can be inaccessible and the public often lacks faith in it. The formal system is only available in urban centres – victims need to cover their own travel costs and, in many cases, those of the police should they travel to investigate. In addition, police may ask for bribes to advance the case. This can be cost-prohibitive, especially for poorer victims. Furthermore, the victim will typically be required to tell their story multiple times, which can be traumatic. Prosecutions may be derailed by a lack of evidence and inadequate medical reports. Even if successful, prosecutions take a long time and there is no guarantee that the penalty will be sufficient in the victim’s eyes.³⁶¹ The court proceedings may also be traumatic: one young internally displaced woman said that she was abused in court, saying, “The courthouse treated me so badly, as if I were the criminal. I remember the judge saying, “stop pushing us so hard, you’re female, why are you around the courthouse, aren’t you ashamed enough of what happened to you?” (Somali, 22 years).³⁶² In this context, individuals may prefer to negotiate resolution through the *xeer* system. In contrast to the formal system, this system is seen as quicker and more private, which is critical in the context of the stigma involved. This system may also provide more practical benefits to the victim’s family, who are generally offered compensation. This may be detrimental to the victim, however, who may be required (in some circumstances) to marry her assailant and who may find the offer of compensation similar to being sold.

In 2008, clan leaders declared that they would leave sexual violence cases to the formal legal system³⁶³ and, in 2014, the Attorney General issued a directive preventing prosecutors and judges from allowing families and elders to take rape cases out of the formal justice system. A civil society representative reflected that there is now considerable emphasis, at least in Hargeysa, on the need for prosecutions.³⁶⁴ The new Sexual Offences Bill also provides for the additional training of police and prosecutors to reinforce the formal system.³⁶⁵ However, these are unlikely to be successful without the cooperation and testimony of victims, who will not be swayed by official guidance in most cases. Those interviewed for this research reported that traditional systems continue to handle a large percentage of rape cases.

Aside from the legal response, medical and psycho-social care are needed. Bahi Koob, a local organization, provides medical care, psycho-social support and legal assistance. The organization has 41 staff and three offices in Hargeysa, Boroma and Burco. They collaborate with local hospitals, which support the medical

360 The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, ‘The Other War: Gang rape in Somaliland’, p. 27.

361 Horizon Institute, ‘Seeking Justice for Rape in Somaliland: The role and limitations of the criminal justice system’ March 2018, https://www.thehorizoninstitute.org/usr/documents/publications/document_url/15/horizon-institute-s-report-on-prosecution-of-rape-cases-in-somaliland-march-2018.pdf, accessed 21 August 2018.

362 Interview with internally displaced youth, Hargeysa, July 2018.

363 Republic of Somaliland, National Child Protection Policy.

364 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 3 July 2018.

365 National Public Radio, ‘Somaliland Debates A Tough New Penal Code for “Rape and Sexual Offences”’, 30 January 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/01/30/581552354/somaliland-debates-a-tough-new-penal-code-for-rape-and-sexual-offences>, accessed 21 August 2018.

treatment offered at all three sites. However, there is a need to improve the organization’s reach, to expand it into more regions and to equip it with vehicles so that more victims can be served. In addition, more funding could increase payments to staff and improve staff retention. The organization would also like to improve its advocacy and outreach capacity to increase awareness about these issues.³⁶⁶ There have also been calls for a more comprehensive response to GBV. One member of the child protection working group suggested that, “A girl who is a survivor of GBV needs more than a one-time medical, psycho-social counselling, or legal support. More than that, she and her family need livelihood support that we cannot offer. Without livelihood support, these girls remain vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.”³⁶⁷

In addition, efforts are needed to address the social stigma attached to sexual and gender-based violence. In the words of one civil society representative, “There is a greater need to scale up campaigns and advocacy for public awareness regarding gender inequality and GBV in particular.”³⁶⁸ In order to better address this stigma, it first needs to be better understood. In particular, civil society activists argued that in-depth research is important to understand attitudes; beliefs; values and practices of different clans; and clan-to-clan and community-to-community differences.”³⁶⁹

Harmful traditional practices

The ACRWC provides key framework protections against harmful social and cultural practices. Article 21 of the Charter calls on states to “take all appropriate measures to eliminate harmful social and cultural practices affecting the welfare, dignity, normal growth and development of the child”.³⁷⁰ In Somaliland, one of the most pervasive of such practices is FGM.

Although FGM is still widely practiced in Somaliland, the government is taking action to curb the practice. MESAF is drafting a bill to criminalize the practice.³⁷¹ Nevertheless, much more needs to be done and UNICEF is working with governmental and non-governmental actors to change social norms and roll out evidence-based solutions to increase the capacity to monitor the impact of these interventions.³⁷²

Forced and early marriages are prohibited under international law. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that marriage should be entered into only by men and women of “full age” and with the “free and full consent of the intending parties.”³⁷³ Article 21 of the ACRWC provides that the minimum age for marriage should be 18 and that states should take effective action to ensure that girls are not married younger than this.³⁷⁴ Similar obligations are placed on states to take action against forced early marriage in Article 6 of the Maputo Protocol,³⁷⁵ though Somaliland has not expressly committed to that instrument.

In Somaliland, the Child Protection Policy forbids forced marriage under sharia and charges the Ministry of Religious Affairs with the responsibility for ensuring that sheikhs and mullahs do not celebrate forced

³⁶⁶ Written correspondence with Bahi Koob, received 26 August 2018.

³⁶⁷ Meeting, Child Protection Working Group, Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Education, Hargeysa, 4 March 2018.

³⁶⁸ Interview with civil society representative, 5 August 2018.

³⁶⁹ Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 27 March 2018.

³⁷⁰ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 21.

³⁷¹ MESAF representative, Validation Session for Children on the Move Research, Hargeysa, 14 August 2018.

³⁷² United Nations Children’s Fund Somalia, ‘Child Protection Strategy Note 2018–2020’.

³⁷³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 16, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, accessed 22 August 2018.

³⁷⁴ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 21.

³⁷⁵ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, Art 6, <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/women-protocol/>, accessed 22 August 2018.



marriages. The Sexual Offences Bill, if passed into law, would reportedly codify these protections.³⁷⁶ However, the policy on early marriage is less strong, only ‘encouraging’ marriage to take place after age 18.³⁷⁷ As forced and early marriages can be extremely exploitative and may amount to modern-day slavery, it will be particularly important to thoroughly investigate and address this issue.

Alternative care

Article 25 of the ACRWC provides that state Parties, “shall ensure that a child who is parentless, or who is temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or who in his or her best interest

State Parties shall ensure that a child who is parentless, or who is temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or who in his or her best interest cannot be brought up or allowed to remain in that environment shall be provided with alternative family care, which could include, among others, foster placement, or placement in suitable institutions for the care of children.

cannot be brought up or allowed to remain in that environment shall be provided with alternative family care, which could include, among others, foster placement, or placement in suitable institutions for the care of children.”³⁷⁸

In Somaliland, Muslim traditions generally apply when parents are not able to care for a child. The Islamic principle of *khafalah* refers to a traditional practice through which a family can take responsibility for a child with no parents or whose parents are not able to take care of them, but without the rights to inheritance that would normally accrue in the western conception of adoption.³⁷⁹ The National Child Protection Policy recognizes the possibility of *khafalah* for foreign children and provides that, in such cases, children should be allowed to keep their nationality or have dual nationality.³⁸⁰

Coordination and data management

Successful outcomes for children largely depend on cooperation between the various actors engaged in addressing their needs. As such, an effective child protection system must be underpinned by functional relationships among these actors, while primarily focusing on preventing and responding to mistreatment.³⁸¹ In many cases, effective coordination is hindered by the lack of data, which limits the ability to make good decisions about the targeting of funding and other resources. Efforts are currently underway to improve data collection in various ways, including through the implementation of a standardized data collection system through child protection desks. However, much remains to be done and some key informants reported that the absence of a national database and a core agency responsible for addressing children’s issues undermined data collection and encouraged inefficiencies.³⁸²

376 Save the Children, ‘Somaliland drought threatens progress in protecting females from sexual violence,’ 11 April 2018, <https://www.savethechildren.net/article/somaliland-s-drought-threatens-progress-protecting-females-sexual-violence>, accessed 22 November 2018.

377 Republic of Somaliland, National Child Protection Policy, p. 28.

378 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 25.

379 Assim, U. and Sloth-Nielsen, J., ‘Islamic kafalah as an alternative care option for children deprived of a family environment’, *African Human Rights Law Journal* 18, 2014, <http://www.saflii.org/za/journals/AHRLJ/2014/18.html>, accessed 2 September 2018.

380 Republic of Somaliland, National Child Protection Policy.

381 Byrne, J. and O’Leary, P., ‘Draft Reviewing Child Protection Systems in Dynamic and Complex Times: Conceptualisations and measurement of outcomes’, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, 2017, p. 7.

382 Interviews with key informants, Hargeysa, 27 and 29 March 2018.

There are a wide range of stakeholders engaged in issues related to child protection in Somaliland and they are undertaking collaborative responses, such as quarterly meetings of service providers working in internally displaced persons areas and regular meetings of the Child Protection Working Group. However, some gaps were noted and it is clear that these systems could be further improved.

One key informant lamented the lack of participation by service providers in the Mixed Migration Task Force meetings led by the Ministry of Justice.³⁸³ This results in a lack of available data and information regarding different actors and their service provisions. Another informant reported that collaboration sometimes only happened when pushed for by donors rather than in response to the assessments of those responsible for service delivery. In the words of one government representative, “The donor must ask for and facilitate coordination between line ministries. When there is a workshop, then two ministries that UNICEF works with sit together. Otherwise there is no coordination between the two ministries.”³⁸⁴ It was also reported that, in relation to issues such as internal displacement, there was a lack of clarity with regards to which ministry was responsible.³⁸⁵ Further, it was specifically noted that additional coordination was needed in the relation to the profiling and registration of internally displaced persons.³⁸⁶

383 Interview, Anti-Trafficking Network-HAKAD, Ministry of Interior, Somaliland, 8 March 2018.

384 Interview with government representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.

385 Interview with international organization, Hargeysa, 29 March 2018.

386 Interview with civil society representative, Hargeysa, 24 March 2018.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Children on the move in Somaliland face numerous problems, including inadequate access to protection, health and education services, and discrimination, violence and detention. The Somaliland government and its international partners have taken a number of positive actions to address these protection concerns, from combatting smuggling and trafficking to providing child protection desks and offering access to education. However, the challenges remain immense. In the spirit of promoting solutions to these problems and working in partnership, this report makes the following recommendations for action.

Reinforce legal and policy protections available to children

Somaliland should strengthen the regime to better provide for the rights of children, including children on the move, by:

- Reforming Somaliland law to make 18 the unambiguous age of majority, to ensure that all those internationally recognized as children enjoy the relevant protections under Somaliland law.
- Ensuring that the revised Sexual Offences Act 2018 is signed by the president and passed into law.
- Moving forward positive draft legislation on:
 - Female genital mutilation – which should move towards zero tolerance.
 - Trafficking – including the Draft Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Act and the Draft Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Offences Bill. In particular, laws on trafficking and smuggling should reflect international standards, highlight the particular gravity of smuggling children and ensure that penalties are sufficient to have a deterrent effect.
 - Comprehensive legislation on the rights of the child – such legislation should focus on incorporating the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into law and practice.
 - Civil registration and vital statistics – such legislation should ensure access for all children on the territory, regardless of immigration status, to birth registration. The draft legislation produced in 2015 would be a logical beginning point.
 - Accelerating public debates on (and adoption of) draft policies relating to the rights of children, including:
 - The Draft National Plan of Action for Children, 2016–2020
 - The Draft National Justice for Children Policy
 - The Draft Somaliland Sexual Assault Protocol
 - The Draft National Diversion of Children Policy.
 - Developing practical procedures to ensure that formalized and comprehensive best interests assessments are carried out in decisions affecting children and that children have the opportunity to participate in these sessions, as provided for in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Somaliland law.

Ensure that child protections in law are effectively enforced in practice

- MESAF should create a comprehensive plan for the reduction of child labour, including – as specified in the Child Protection Policy – enforcement actions and provision of alternatives, as appropriate.
- Government authorities and any other groups with capacity should investigate whether individuals under the age of 15 are being recruited into, or used in, the armed forces or other armed groups in the country and should prevent any such recruitment in the future.
- The formal – rather than traditional – legal system should be encouraged to address cases of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Where the traditional legal system is used, efforts should be made to make it more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all. The current system can seriously disadvantage migrants and individuals from minority clans who will, most likely, not have strong representation. To the extent that the traditional system continues to be used, efforts should be made to make it more responsive to the needs of children, migrants and other disadvantaged groups. Alternatives could be considered, such as appointing representatives for migrants in such systems.
- The capacity of the Somaliland authorities to combat smuggling and trafficking should be reinforced. Such efforts could include:
 - Ensuring that trafficking and smuggling victims are appropriately and sensitively questioned to assess whether they may have information helpful to ongoing investigations.
 - Ensuring that victims of trafficking have access to the services that they need, including medical and psycho-social support.

Ensure that legal protections extend to children on the move

- Somaliland should consider the development of a legal regime that would provide protection to the most vulnerable economic migrant children.
- Best interests determinations should be at the core of all determinations related to children on the move.
- It should be stipulated that children not be detained or otherwise penalized for simply intending to leave the country.
- It should strengthen services supporting children.
- The Ministry of Education, along with local civil society and international partners, should do more to promote universal access to primary education and to develop secondary, vocational and higher education.
- **Access to birth registration should be improved.**
 - Somaliland, with support from international partners, should increase the capacity of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics to serve a greater percentage of the population.
 - The government, civil society and international partners should carry out a public awareness campaign to encourage parents and other caregivers to register births where these services are available.

- **The capacity of child protection services should be strengthened and improved**, including by:
 - Developing child protection desks by employing new staff and thereby ensuring that adequate staff are available and that staff of both genders are available at all desks. Additional targeted training for staff on child protection and child trafficking would increase the impact of these facilities;
 - Creating shelters for street children;
 - Expanding the capacity to train counsellors and increase funding for government institutions and NGOs to employ professional counsellors to provide mental health services to children and their parents; and
 - Improving the training of social workers as well as increasing the number of trained social workers in the system and the resources available to them.

Improve accessibility of services to children on the move

Somaliland and international partners should improve access to services for children on the move by undertaking the following:

- The Ministry of Education should promote access for children on the move to educational services by:
 - Conducting outreach sessions to communities with low enrolment rates – including internally displaced persons and migrant communities – about the importance of education;
 - Offering accelerated language classes to facilitate access to education for migrant populations who may be hindered from attending by the language barrier; and
 - Improving access to education among internally displaced persons, either by offering free transportation or by constructing additional schools in their areas.
- Civil Registration and Vital Statistics should ensure that the system is able to offer identification and register vital statistics of all children in the territory, including migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. Services should be designed so as to minimize – as far as possible – the costs of registration borne by families, including travel and administrative fees.
- **Coordination among governmental, civil society and international partners should be improved to increase the effectiveness of their joint actions.**
- **Knowledge and data management should be improved to serve as the basis for enhanced coordination and services.**
- Access to water and sanitation in internally displaced person camps should be improved.
- Children on the move should be provided with adequate access to health care. This will involve ensuring that adequate health facilities are placed in the areas where internally displaced persons and migrants live and also developing policy that allows children on the move to access health care without preconditions.
- In order to prevent violence against children on the move, the government should:
 - Make physical changes to promote security in internally displaced persons settlements and other insecure areas by, for example, installing lighting or providing locks and other materials that can increase security;

- Ensure that police posts are proximate to internally displaced persons settlements and areas where migrants live;
- Ensure that each police station has at least one officer thoroughly trained on the Juvenile Justice Law and child protection and on how to work appropriately with child victims as provided for by the National Child Protection Policy. Police should treat all children with whom they interact appropriately and in conformity with the principle of the best interests of the child;
- Reform the practices of police and immigration authorities to avoid detention of children attempting to migrate, particularly in the same facilities as adults;
- Improve family tracing and reunification services, particularly cross border;
- Ensure that all irregular migrants are screened before being returned to ensure that all immigration decisions comply with international law, both by ensuring that any requests for humanitarian protection or asylum are appropriately considered and that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in any cases involving children and/or their families; and
- Improve connections with government authorities in migrants’ countries of origin to assist in identification and family tracing of migrant children.

Improve access to services in order to ensure that needs can be met in country

- The capacity of the educational system should be enhanced by:
 - Improving education planning to ensure that the skills needed for the job market are adequately taught, either in the formal school system or in technical and vocational schools. While this is an important step, it will be important to be realistic and to recognize that preparing children and youth more effectively for the existing job market will need to be accompanied by job creation schemes; and
 - Creating a strong government role in coordinating and regulating vocational schools to ensure that they are offering quality courses covering an appropriate range of marketable skills.
- **Vocational schools and universities should improve access to appropriate skills, including by:**
 - Conducting market research to develop a better understanding of the skills that will make students most employable and design programmes to teach those skills; and
 - Promoting international cooperation on education including, for example, by developing partnerships with universities abroad and distance learning programmes.
- Funders who are supporting vocational schools and skills development should strive to lengthen the time frames for their support so that schools are able to offer programmes of sufficient length to ensure that trainees have the full set of skills needed to become more employable.
- In order to improve young people’s access to livelihoods, the government and international and civil society partners should improve access to employable skills. This could include:
 - Creating and maintaining career counselling services to assist young people in finding work;
 - Addressing perceptions of bias and nepotism in recruitment; and
 - Facilitating access to work experience through internships or other mechanisms.

- The government should improve access to employment opportunities by:
 - Implementing a national service programme to employ youth;
 - Expanding programmes to support entrepreneurship and refocusing these specifically on youth; and
 - Stimulating economic growth and job creation.

Reducing the risk of irregular migration

To address the risks associated with irregular migration, the government and international and civil society partners should:

- **Continue awareness raising among children about the dangers of migration.** Although the value of these programmes is limited by the fact that the majority of children who were interviewed for this research indicated that they were aware of the risks prior to traveling and many travelled anyway, it is still preferable that more information is available. In addition, several reported that speaking directly with returnees had an impact by personalising what might have previously been abstract knowledge.
- Create new, complementary messaging that emphasizes the role that youth can play in developing the country and highlights opportunities at home.
- **Develop child-friendly material for children on the move regarding protection risks; migrant, refugee, and children's rights; and services available.** Employ new technologies such as social media and television, to ensure that this messaging reaches the widest audience possible.
- Encourage investment in children and youth, including through programmes that calculate the economic impact of ransom payments and encourage individuals to invest in youth as an economic mechanism for fighting trafficking and smuggling.
- Conduct research to clarify legal options for migration and raise awareness about these.

UNICEF AGENDA FOR ACTION



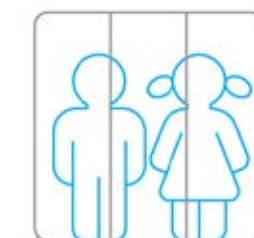
PROTECT UPROOTED CHILDREN FROM EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE



HELP UPROOTED CHILDREN TO STAY IN SCHOOL AND STAY HEALTHY



KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER AND GIVE CHILDREN LEGAL STATUS



END THE DETENTION OF REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN BY CREATING PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVES



PRESS FOR ACTION ON THE CAUSES THAT UPROOT CHILDREN FROM THEIR HOMES



COMBAT XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION

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ANNEX 1: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

1. African Youth Development Association
2. Bahi Koob
3. Candlelight
4. Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Somaliland
5. Counter Human Trafficking and Smuggling Agency of Somaliland (HAKAD)
6. Danish Refugee Council
7. Department of Immigration
8. Department of Social Work, University of Hargeysa
9. Edna Adan Hospital
10. Horizon
11. Human Rights Centre
12. International Organization for Migration
13. Legal Aid Clinic, University of Hargeysa
14. Migration Response Centre
15. Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family
16. Ministry of Health
17. Ministry of Justice
18. Mixed Migration Task Force
19. Nagaad Network
20. National Displacement and Refugee Agency
21. Norwegian Refugee Council
22. Somaliland National Youth Organisation
23. Shaqadoon
24. Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
25. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
26. Women's Action for Advocacy and Progress Organization
27. Youth Volunteers and Environment Conservation

ANNEX 2: KEY INTERVIEW MATERIALS

The research was conducted on the basis of interview maps, which not only laid out the key questions as the focus of the research but also empowered interviewers to adapt questions during interviews to delve into the particulars of individuals' stories and to explore issues raised in the course of the interviews. The interview maps were modified according to the profiles of the persons interviewed. However, the key materials are reproduced below.

Semi-structured Interview/Focus Group Discussion Guide with Community-based Child Protection Committee Members

Before each interview begins, greet the participants in the local language. Tell them about the research. Explain to them that we are seeking to understand why children are moving (within Somaliland, to Somaliland from other countries and returning to Somaliland from abroad), what problems they face when they do so, what help is available to them to address these problems and what is working well and not so well in efforts to help them. Reassure them that we want to hear their stories and experiences and this is vital for us in understanding the situation. Explain that the purpose of this research is to help design activities and strategies to improve the quality of help provided but that we cannot do this without understanding their stories. Please introduce yourselves, the University, UNICEF work, the project. They may need to understand a little what exactly you are looking for. You may need to explain exactly what you mean by children (persons under 18). You may need to use other language to describe this group. Please let them know that this basic information about participants is important to understand their situation. Please ensure that each interview begins with this basic data.

Please assure participants that their information will be kept strictly confidential. Please only ask the main questions. The prompt questions are listed under each of these for your information. Only ask the prompt questions to gently probe further if the person has not provided the information in response to the first question. However, do not press children if they are resistant to giving details. Move on to the next question.

Write down the date and location of the interview as well as who is conducting it. Also how you located the interviewee.

1. We are interested in issues of migration in your community, please tell us about your experience.
 - a. Are there people in your community who have come from other areas (in Somaliland or from other countries)?
 - b. Where do they come from?
 - c. When did they come?
 - d. Why do they come here?
 - e. Are there children among them?
 - f. Are the children alone? Or with others? If with others, who?
 - g. Do they come at certain times of year?
 - h. Are there people migrating away from this community?
 - i. If so, who tends to go?
 - j. Why do they leave?
 - k. Where do they go?
 - l. Do they travel with their children? If not, who cares for the children?

2. What is it like here for children from other areas?
 - a. How are they treated by local people?
 - b. How do they get along with local children?
 - c. What is good about their situation here?
 - d. What problems do they face?
 - e. Are the problems that girls face different from those of boys?
 - f. What about those that leave? What is it like for their families after they go? Does it have an impact on the community?

3. How does the community respond to children's problems?
 - a. What kind of support is given?
 - b. What if a child is alone? How will the community respond?
 - c. What kind of support is offered?
 - d. Who offers that support?

4. Tell me about the work of the community committee.
 - a. How are members selected?
 - b. Does the committee work with migrant children? With IDP children? With returnees? If so, how?
 - c. Is there other work that the committee does that is related to migration?
 - d. How does the community respond if children are separated/found alone?
 - e. Do you work with others in the government? Outside of government? If so, how?

5. Looking at the level of assistance and protection overall,
 - a. What systems work best?
 - b. What are the main challenges that you face?
 - c. Is there support that you would like to see others providing?

6. Are there things that you would like to improve in what the committee is doing?
 - a. What would you need to be able to make that improvement?
 - i. Is there a need for training?
 - ii. Are other resources needed?
 - iii. Are links with others needed?

7. Are there further services that you would like to see others provide? If so, what are they?

Note for interviewers: Thank the participants for their time and for sharing their experiences.

Semi-structured Interview/FGD Guide with Child IDPs

Before each interview begins, greet the participants in the local language. Tell them about the research. Explain to them that we are seeking to understand why children are moving (within Somaliland, to Somaliland from other countries and returning to Somaliland from abroad), what problems they face when they do so, what help is available to them to address these problems and what is working well and not so well in efforts to help them. Reassure them that we want to hear their stories and experiences and this is vital for us in understanding the situation. Explain that the purpose of this research is to help to design activities and strategies to improve the quality of help provided but that we cannot do this without understanding their stories. Please introduce yourselves, the University, UNICEF work, the project. They may need to understand a little what exactly you are looking for. You may need to explain exactly what you mean by children (persons under 18). You may need to use other language to describe this group. Please let them know that this basic information about participants is important to understand their situation. Please ensure that each interview begins with this basic data.

Please assure participants that their information will be kept strictly confidential. Please only ask the main questions. The prompt questions are listed under each of these for your information. Only ask them to gently probe further if the person has not provided the information in response to the first question. Do not press children if they are resistant to giving details. Move on to the next question.

Write down the date and location of the interview as well as who is conducting it. Also how you located the interviewee.

1. How old are you?

2. Where do you live?

3. We are really interested in your story. Please tell us how you moved.
 - a. Where do you come from?
 - b. When did you leave home? How old were you?
 - c. Why did you leave home? (if they say that it was their parents/other guardians that decided, ask if they know why their parents made that decision)
 - d. Why did you come here?
 - e. How did you travel? How long did it take? Make sure to get the story step by step
 - f. Are you on your own or with others? If you are with others, did they come with you? Or did you find them here? Have you moved with your family?

4. Did you get help in your journey?
 - a. Where did you get information about the journey?
 - b. Was there anyone who facilitated your journey?
5. Tell us about life here
 - a. What did you think you would find here? Is it like you thought it would be?
 - b. What do you do during the day? Do you go to school? Do you work?
 - c. If they go to school, where? At what level?
 - d. What is good about living here?
 - e. How do local people in this area treat you?
 - f. What problems do you face?
6. Does anyone help you with these problems?
 - a. Are you aware of anyone who helps with these problems?
 - b. What are your most urgent needs?
 - c. What could be done to make the situation better?
7. What are your plans for the future?

Note for interviewers: Thank the participants for their time and for sharing their experiences.

Semi-structured Interview/FGD Guide with IDP Parents/Caregivers

Before each interview begins, greet the participants in the local language. Tell them about the research. Explain to them that we are seeking to understand why children are moving (within Somaliland, to Somaliland from other countries and returning to Somaliland from abroad), what problems they face when they do so, what help is available to them to address these problems and what is working well and not so well in efforts to help them. Reassure them that we want to hear their stories and experiences and that this is vital for us in understanding the situation. Explain that the purpose of this research is to help to design activities and strategies to improve the quality of help provided but that we cannot do this without understanding their stories. Please introduce yourselves, the University, UNICEF work, the project. They may need to understand a little what exactly you are looking for. You may need to explain exactly what you mean by children (persons under 18). You may need to use other language to describe this group. Please let them know that this basic information about participants is important to understand their situation. Please ensure that each interview begins with this basic data.

Please assure participants that their information will be kept strictly confidential. Please only ask the main questions. The prompt questions are listed under each of these for your information. Only ask them to gently probe further if the person has not provided the information in response to the first question. Do not press children if they are resistant to giving details. Move on to the next question.

Write down the date and location of the interview as well as who is conducting it. Also how you located the interviewee.

1. Please tell us about your experiences as an internally displaced person.
 - a. Where do you live now?
 - b. Where did you come from?
 - c. Why did you leave home?
 - d. When did you leave home?
 - e. Why did you decide to come here?
2. What is it like here?
 - a. What did you expect to find here?
 - b. Is the situation here as you expected it to be?
 - c. How does the community who lived here before view the internally displaced persons community?
 - d. What is good about living here?
 - e. What challenges do you face now?

3. Please tell us about your household.

- a. Who lives with you? How many rooms do you have in the house? Do you have water, electricity and cooking gas/fuel? This will help us to understand the economic context.
- b. How do you manage household expenses here?
- c. Do your children work? If yes, what type of work do they do?

(Note for interviewers: Probe further to get a sense of age and gender-sensitive insights. For example, men would have different migration experience than women. Women and girls may also hint at issues of domestic violence. Please allow time to hear what is not being said).

4. Do you and your family/children get any help from outside the family?

- a. What kind of help?
- b. Do your children go to school? What type of school? Elementary? Primary? Secondary? Vocational? If not, why not?
- c. Do they enjoy learning?
- d. Is school free?
- e. Are the services available meeting your and your children's needs?
- f. Are there services that you are not able to access? If so, what is preventing you?

5. What could be done to better protect your children?

- a. Who could do this?
- b. Are there ways in which schooling could be improved?

Note for interviewers: Thank the participants for their time and for sharing their experiences.

Semi-structured Interview/FGD Guide with Child Migrants

Before each interview begins, greet the participants in the local language. Tell them about the research. Explain to them that we are seeking to understand why children are moving (within Somaliland, to Somaliland from other countries and returning to Somaliland from abroad), what problems they face when they do so, what help is available to them to address these problems and what is working well and not so well in efforts to help them. Reassure them that we want to hear their stories and experiences and that this is vital for us in understanding the situation. Explain that the purpose of this research is to help to design activities and strategies to improve the quality of help provided but that we cannot do this without understanding their stories. Please introduce yourselves, the University, UNICEF work, the project. They may need to understand a little what exactly you are looking for. You may need to explain exactly what you mean by children (persons under 18). You may need to use other language to describe this group. Please let them know that this basic information about participants is important to understand their situation. Please ensure that each interview begins with this basic data.

Please assure participants that their information will be kept strictly confidential. Please only ask the main questions. The prompt questions are listed under each of these for your information. Only ask them to gently probe further if the person has not provided the information in response to the first question. Do not press children if they are resistant to giving details. Move on to the next question.

Write down the date and location of the interview as well as who is conducting it. Also, how you located the interviewee.

1. How old are you?
2. Where do you live?
3. We are really interested in your story. Please tell us how you moved.
 - a. Where do you come from?
 - b. When did you leave home? How old were you?
 - c. Why did you leave home? (if they say that it was their parents/other guardians that decided ask if they know why their parents left)
 - d. When you left home/why did you come here?
 - e. How did you travel? How long did it take? Make sure to get the story step by step
 - f. Are you on your own or with others? If you are with others, did they come with you? Or did you find them here? Have you moved with your family?

4. Did you get help in your journey?
 - a. Where did you get information about the journey?
 - b. Was there anyone who facilitated your journey?

5. Tell us about life here
 - a. What did you think you would find here?
 - b. Is it like you thought it would be?
 - c. What do you do during the day? Do you go to school? Do you work?
 - d. If you go to school, where? At what level?
 - e. If you work, where do you work and what do you do?
 - f. What is good about living here?
 - g. How do local people in this area treat you?
 - h. What problems do you face?

6. Does anyone help you with these problems?
 - a. Are you aware of anyone who helps with these problems?
 - b. What are your most urgent needs?
 - c. What could be done to make the situation better?

7. What are your plans for the future?

Note for interviewers: Thank the participants for their time and sharing their experiences.

Semi-structured Interview/FGD Guide with IDP Parents/Care Giver Migrants

Before each interview begins, greet the participants in the local language. Tell them about the research. Explain to them that we are seeking to understand why children are moving (within Somaliland, to Somaliland from other countries and returning to Somaliland from abroad), what problems they face when they do so, what help is available to them to address these problems and what is working well and not so well in efforts to help them. Reassure them that we want to hear their stories and experiences and that this is vital for us in understanding the situation. Explain that the purpose of this research is to help design activities and strategies to improve the quality of help provided but that we cannot do this without understanding their stories. Please introduce yourselves, the University, UNICEF work, the project. They may need to understand a little what exactly you are looking for. You may need to explain exactly what you mean by children (persons under 18). You may need to use other language to describe this group. Please let them know that this basic information about participants is important to understand their situation. Please ensure that each interview begins with this basic data.

Please assure participants that their information will be kept strictly confidential. Please only ask the main questions. The prompt questions are listed under each of these for your information. Only ask them to gently probe further if the person has not provided the information in response to the first question.

Write down the date and location of the interview as well as who is conducting it. Also how you located the interviewee.

1. Please tell us about your experiences as a migrant.
 - a. Where do you live now?
 - b. Where did you come from?
 - c. Why did you leave home?
 - d. When did you leave home?
 - e. Why did you decide to come here?

2. What is it like here?
 - a. What did you expect to find here?
 - b. Is the situation here as you expected it to be?
 - c. How do Somalis look at your community?
 - d. What is good about living here?
 - e. What challenges do you face now?

3. Please tell us about your household.

- a. Who lives with you? How many rooms do you have in the house? Do you have water, electricity and cooking gas/fuel? This will help us to understand the economic context.
- b. How do you manage household expenses here?
- c. Do your children work? If yes, what type of work do they do?

(Note for interviewers: Probe further to get a sense of age and gender-sensitive insights. For example, men would have different migration experience than women. Women and girls may also hint at issues of domestic violence. Please allow time to hear what is not being said).

4. Do you and your family/children get any help from outside the family?

- a. What kind help?
- b. Do your children go to school? What type of school? Elementary? Primary? Secondary? Vocational? If not, why not?
- c. Do they enjoy learning?
- d. Is school free?
- e. Are the services available meeting your and your children’s needs?
- f. Are there services that you are not able to access? If so, what is preventing you?

5. What could be done to better protect your children?

- a. Who could do this?
- b. Are there ways in which schooling could be improved?

Note for interviewers: Thank the participants for their time and for sharing their experiences.

PHOTO CREDITS

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© UNICEF/UN058554/2017/Holt
An unidentified woman in Hargeisa, Somalia, holds up a photograph of relatives who left Somaliland with traffickers several years ago, and who have not been heard from since.

Page 2:
© UNICEF/UN0307645/2019/Knowles-Coursin
Hadija Osman Wardhere, 13, outside her home in Moqor Manyow camp for internally displaced people, Baidoa, Somalia. Hadija lives in here with her parents and her six siblings. The whole family travelled over 400 km to Baidoa in 2015 after being forced from their homes by violence and unrest.

Pages 8-9:
© UNICEF Somalia/2018/Prinsloo
Ideeya (17) plays with her siblings at her home in a IDP camp on the beach in Bossaso, Puntland, Somalia. She traveled to Marere to be smuggled out by boat to Yemen. On her first night before departure, a woman was raped in her boat by a drunk smuggler. Ideeya got scared and walked all the way back to Bossaso.

Page 15:
© UNICEF Somalia/2018/Prinsloo
Abdi Muhumed (14) holds his worldly belongings, a water bottle and a brush to polish shoes, at the Somaliland/Djibouti border post in Lowya-Cade, Somaliland. Abdi left his home in Ethiopia after his father died, since he was afraid that his entire family would starve. He was caught and imprisoned for three months by the local authorities.

Page 20:
© UNICEF Somalia/2018/Prinsloo
Mohamed Ali Abdulahi (17) at his home in a IDP camp on the beach in Bossaso, Puntland, Somalia. Mohamed used a smuggling route and ended up in Libya. Once there he feared for his life and fled to Sudan where he was arrested and deported.

Page 25:
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Young Ethiopian migrants in the back of a van, apprehended in Somaliland.

Pages 28-29:
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Fourteen-year-old Nadira Mohammed (left), whose sister left Hargeisa with traffickers in January 2017, walks home with her friends back from school. Nadira said she will follow her sister as soon as she is old enough since there are no opportunities for her in Hargiesia.

Pages 36-37:
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Mohamed plays on his mother’s smartphone at their home in Hargeisa, Somalia. His elder sister Najima left Somaliland with traffickers in January 2017, and they have not heard from her since.

Pages 42-43:
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A woman and child who have been forced to move because of drought walk towards a mobile medical unit being run in their settlement near the town of Ainabo, Somalia.

Pages 50-51:
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Saldar (16) show scars he received while chained at home, at the office of TASS (Tadamun Social Society) in Bossaso, Puntland, Somalia. At home he was chained and beaten by his father. Saldar tried to leave Somalia but was caught as he was about to board a smugglers’ boat. He was jailed for three days before being released.

Page 55:
© UNICEF Somalia/2018/Prinsloo
Abdi Muhumed (14) polishes shoes in the town of Lowya-Cade, Somaliland. Abdi left his home in Ethiopia after his father died, afraid that his entire family would starve. He was caught and imprisoned for three months by the local authorities.

Pages 66-67:
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A young girl writes her answers on the chalkboard of her class in her UNICEF-supported primary school, Salaama in Galkayo, Somalia.

Page 77:
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Women sit in a community meeting, organized by UNICEF, to raise awareness about the dangers of FGM in the Shabelle IDP settlement in Garowe, Somalia.

Pages 80-81:
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Ramla Mohamed (15) at her home in a IDP camp on the beach in Bossaso, Puntland, Somalia. Ramla used a smuggling route to travel to Yemen. She has now returned to Somalia.

Page 108-109:
© UNICEF Somalia/2018/Prinsloo
Children play in a IDP camp on the beach in Bossaso, Puntland, Somalia.



for every child, answers

For further information, please contact:
UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti
Via degli Alfani, 58 – 50121
Florence, Italy
Tel: (+39) 055 20 330
Fax: (+39) 055 2033 220
florence@unicef.org
www.unicef-irc.org
twitter: @UNICEFInnocenti
[facebook.com/UnicefOfficeofResearchInnocenti](https://www.facebook.com/UnicefOfficeofResearchInnocenti)

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