

YOUR World Research

Insecurity and Uncertainty: Marginalised youth living rights in fragile and conflict affected situations in Ethiopia and Nepal

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

MIGRATION

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NEPAL



Goldsmiths
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ChildHope
Inspired by children; challenging injustice



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Youth Uncertainty Rights (YOUR) World Research has carried out detailed qualitative and participatory research with some of the most marginalised young people across eight fragile environments in Ethiopia and Nepal. YOUR World Research shows that, when we include youth by listening to their views, a picture emerges of creativity and innovative ideas in the face of significant challenges. The research took place in 2016-2019, and has generated new knowledge about how marginalised young people perceive, navigate, negotiate and respond to uncertainty. By building on youth strategies, the research illuminates our understanding of young people's realities and rights, and how to support them to confront their feelings and experiences of marginalisation and find pathways out of poverty.

In Ethiopia and Nepal the national teams worked with a total of 1,000 young people including 500 in-depth and focused case studies – 500 young people and 250 case studies in each country. Four sites in each country provide evidence from youth in rural earthquake or drought affected fragile environments, conflict situations and of young lives on the streets of capital cities and smaller towns. Young people also provide illustrations of their journeys and reasons for migration in search of alternative futures.

In Ethiopia the research sites were: Addis Ketema in slums and with street connected youth; Hetosa in the drought affected zone; Woreta a transit town for migrants; and rural kebele's of Fogera Woreda, from where young people migrate to nearby towns. In Nepal the research sites were: Kathmandu to work in slums and with street connected youth; Sindhupalchowk in the earthquake affected area; and in Kapilvastu in the plains (Terai) urban and rural localities, with migration characteristic of each location.

MIGRATION KEY FINDINGS

NEPAL

Young people in Nepal migrate internally and internationally. Many from rural areas migrate to urban areas and cities within the country. In rural Kapilvastu it was reported that *"There is almost one person from every household going somewhere outside the community for work and employment"* (Sara, young woman, 15 years). A family may have one child migrated internally and another internationally, or have siblings and one parent each going to different countries. Reasons for going are largely economic, to support parents, siblings or children. Many say they do not want to migrate, but feel they have no choice. International experiences vary, partly because of the range of countries involved.

Young people migrate because they see a lack of opportunity and employment in their own communities, to support family, or to earn enough to save to start their own business. They often feel that school and education has not been relevant. *"While I was in Malaysia, I used to think 'oh I should have continued my education. But when I came back and saw my friends who completed the school education are still without any job, I felt good that I left the school."* (Milan, young man, aged 24 Sindhupalchowk).

The location of Kapilvastu, in southern Nepal on the border with India, means that migration to India is comparatively easy and frequent. But young women complained that parents prohibited them migrating. *"There are many young men going outside the country. My elder brother is also in Saudi Arabia for work. For me, parents will not allow to go"* (Suni, young woman aged 17); *"If I am boy, I would be some-where in my age and working like other young of the community"* (Tasi young woman aged 17); *"My father and two elder brothers are also in foreign employment. My family do not allow me to go outside from home and community because I am girl. If I am boy, I would be somewhere in foreign country for work at this time"*. (Balki, young woman aged 18). Tanura, a married 17 year old with a child, had visited, *"My husband is working in India and I have no regular contract with him. I do not have any hope for future. I just want to do any work to earn money for myself and daughter."* (Tanura, young woman 17 years, rural Kapilvastu).

Young men from Kapilvastu reported being sent or going by themselves, or with relatives, to work in India from the age of 10 or 11 years. For example: *"My mother died when I was 10 years old. After 8 months of my mother's death, I went to Delhi along with other 5 boys from the village. I worked in Delhi for one and half year. I used to cook food in a company."* (Sonu young man, 17 years, rural Kapilvastu). Radhe left before he was 12 and worked in different parts of India packing bread and selling clothes. Now back in Nepal he said *"I felt very bad that I could not continue my study. Though I have studied up to grade 8, I cannot read the sentences written on this [Information Sheet]"* (Radhe, young man aged 18, rural Kapilvastu). In this area, international migration also works in reverse. Some young people feel they have to leave because incoming Indian migrants are employed in Indian owned factories.

Apart from India, young people (including some from Kapilvastu) migrate to South east Asia, particularly Malaysia and to countries in the Middle-East, such as Qatar, Kuwait, Dubai, Saudi Arabia. These countries are preferred because migrants can earn more and save money. They have sometimes faced problems in brokers taking fees without helping them, long delays in getting visas and sometimes failing required medical tests. They also say they face difficulties in country because of language problems, and not knowing what to do. *"In the first two months in Kuwait, I felt difficulties. I did not know what to do, how to do, how to speak...I did not understand the language, I did not know even they were shouting at me"* (Sugandha, young man 23 years, Sindhupalchowk).

A main reason for going is work. *"Here, in Nepal, no work, no employability; youth are even not getting support and opportunity for skill development. The main problem of youth like me is employment. Thus, I am planning to go foreign employment. I am sure that, my parents and relatives will support [invest] for this."* (Iman, young man, 22 years, Kathmandu)

A young woman explained the distribution of her family migrations due to poverty. Her mother had been in Kuwait and now in Lebanon, one brother in India and another in Malaysia, and she herself just back from Kuwait. She was about to meet her mother. *"Now we are meeting face to face after 16 years. She is now with us on her 4-month leave."* (Kuntee, young woman 22 years, Sindhupalchowk). Some family members leave to support others through school *"I have my father and brother working in foreign countries at some points. There was a financial crisis in the family. We even go hungry sometimes... They supported me to study up to 10th grade."* (Chandra, young man 20 year, Kathmandu). Others migrate to support parents and their future *"I wish to have good house for my parents and establish a business after return back home from foreign country."* (Nima, young woman 19 years, Kathmandu)

Most migrants want to return and use the money to set up businesses in Nepal, and many would prefer not to have to go. *"I will come back and open a bike workshop to help young people of Nepal."* (Chandra, young man, 20 years, Kathmandu). Another young man, who had at last got a visa after two years, said *"I enjoy here" and that "I do not want to go now, because I am enjoying the work in bike repairing"* (Atma, young man, 22 years, Kathmandu). Jyaseelan, who had already migrated to Qatar, concluded *"I am certain for migration and it would be better ...I will earn some money and will return back home ... I wish to do something which is benefit to me and others too."* (Jyaseelan young man, 24 years, urban Kapilvastu)

ETHIOPIA

Although young people in Ethiopia migrate internally, usually rural to urban areas, or from towns to larger cities, international migration is especially significant. Many young people themselves want to migrate internationally, and others are sent by their family. Countries in the Middle East are the main preferred destination for international migration, which is also fuelled by pictures on social media, stories told and observations of money sent back by migrants. Despite the problems that many international migrants experience, and recount to their peers and siblings, including advising them not to go, many young people still want to migrate, and many families still want their children, particularly daughters, to go. The underlying reasons and tensions within families around international migration are varied, particularly in the light of experiences brought back.

Some internal migration involves young people escaping abuse and violence within the family, and many of these internal migrants become street connected. Young people also migrate internally to seek work, for example from Woreta and Fogera to Bahir Dar, which is a popular destination itself, but is also a link in a chain migration route from Ethiopia to the Middle-East. Young women have gone to Bahir Dar for domestic work, and been told the workload is similar but the pay lower compared to abroad. For some, internal migration is preferred because of negative experiences of international migrants. *"I don't want to live in my home town 'Woreta'. Neither have I preferred to migrate to the Middle East. People who returned back from the Middle East are psychologically disturbed and experience high levels of anxiety. I don't want to be like them. I want to migrate and live in Bahir Dar"* (Lidet, young woman aged 18 years, Woreta)

Reasons for youth international migration vary, essentially between young people themselves being the initiator, or their parents, siblings or uncles being the prime driver. There are also suggestions that international migration is inevitable, not only because it is possible, but enticing and potentially rewarding and there are no other options as promising.

Many young people want to migrate, or feel that they have to go because of failure at school, the need to raise money to attend college, for better paid work, or particularly to support their family such as parents, siblings, husband, or child. *"I failed in grade 10 national exam. I became unemployed person... I saw people from my village moving abroad which encouraged me to follow suit."* (Yared, young man, 24 years, Hetosa). They generally need the support of their parents, including approval for the decision as well as initial funding for brokers, travel and to secure papers. Some parents are willing but some have to be persuaded. Poverty and family responsibilities push young people to migrate. *"Our level of income was hand to mouth. I have two younger brothers. After I joined high school, schooling became morally impossible for me. I preferred moving abroad and help my family. I moved to Beirut and stayed there for five years"* (Wagaye, young woman aged 23, Addis Ketema). For other young people the key factors were education, levels of unemployment, and migrant role models. *"Due to the limited opportunities for education I don't know a person from our locality who got employed by succeeding in education. My role models are those who went abroad, work and improve their family and their own life. This hold true not only for me but also others in the community. As the opportunities in the community are minimal people take the option of migrating as a means of improving their standards of life."* (Yonatan, young man, aged 16 years, Hetosa).

Some young people migrate internationally because their parents want them to go. *"Returnee migrants are not marginalized. Those youth who hang around for too long are pushed by the community to migrate. Youth who choose to delay their migration to the Middle East are considered as irresponsible and careless... My parents convinced me that I better migrate"* (Kelemua, aged 15 years, Hetosa). There is the potential of remittances. *"My uncle and my elder brother used to push me to migrate to the Middle East. My uncle has sent my elder sister to the Middle East. She sent money through him which made him think that he made the right decision... [he] convinced members of the whole family to push me to migrate to the Middle East"* (Metaya, young woman aged 23, Addis Ketema). Some parents prefer their daughter to take risks involved in international migration, than remain nearby and be abducted. *"My parents would like me to migrate instead of seeing me get abducted for marriage. When my elder sister was in Dubai she sent money to my parents."* (Demitu, young woman aged 14, Hetosa).

Young women point out parents benefit more from daughters' migration than marriage. *"Our parents prefer to send us to Arab countries. Because they expect something in return. They hope we will send them money. However, if we get married here, they will get nothing in return. They will not get any benefit. Hence unlike in the past today they encourage us to migrate rather than to get married"* (Mufeyat, young woman aged 18, Hetosa).

The benefits from international migration are well known, although remittances are not always used as intended. *"Mostly the head of the family, especially fathers, send their children to Arab countries for their own sake. Those in the local area talk "Mr Bekele's daughter goes to Arab country and brings this much money. Why don't you send your daughter there?" ... After their children go there and begin remittance the fathers use the money for alcohol rather than putting it for the future of their child when she returns back. They finish all the money. When she come here there is nothing changed in her family and the money is already gone."* (Zeru, young man, 24 years, Woreta).

Some young women have rejected the pressure of family. *"I had started to work in the informal business. I was able to fulfil my basic needs and that gave me the strength to reject their advice. It wasn't easy to live there rejecting his advice. I became very uncertain in life. And I started looking for support from people around. I decided to get married and move out from my uncle's house. Accordingly I did that..."* (Metaya, young woman aged 23, Addis Ketema). Life in the Middle-east is known to be potentially difficult *"Youth who came back from Dubai were able to buy land in urban areas and construct houses. They have their own housing units and lead a better life than others."*

KEY MESSAGES FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

MIGRATION OVERVIEW

Internal and international migration is a major part of life for most of the marginalised young people across all research sites in Ethiopia and Nepal. Many of the young people participating in the research have migrated by themselves or with their families. Most of those who have not, and who are still nearby their first home location, are expecting to migrate, or have close or extended family members who have migrated. It appears that everyone knows of people who have left or returned in their community, and who are often held up as examples of migration.

Although some internal migration of young people by themselves is for education and training, most is for seeking work. Some migration is prompted by a need to escape abuse and violence in particular, but also discrimination and poverty in the family and community. Much internal migration of children and young people with parent(s) or relatives is a strategy for escaping poverty and improving family income and prospects. Many young people also migrate by themselves to seek employment and income to contribute to their families.

International migration is a significant part of all migration in both countries. Rural migrants may move to urban areas before international departures. The destination and other characteristics of international migration, and criteria of success, return and other features vary by site and country. International migration to the Gulf region is significant for both Ethiopia and Nepal. But in some locations, such as the southern plains of Nepal with proximity to India, international migration is easier.

MIGRATION KEY MESSAGES FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Education, employment, knowledge, information, safety and protection, and legality are key issues underlying migration, both internal and international.

Education: young people find that formal education is not relevant or helpful in finding employment or providing skills for earning an income. They want appropriate education and vocational training.

Employment: the problem of local unemployment is a push factor. An increase in provision for rural employment and industries is needed. Skill training for these programmes is also required, as well as support for individual small business development by young people.

Knowledge and information: young people need information about migration, and the possibilities and pitfalls at different destinations. They need to know what sort of work is available and have knowledge of what skills and capacities are required and whether it is appropriate for them. They also need to know what resources and opportunities are available in their locality. Parents and guardians need to know about migration and its realities.

Remittances: migration is a livelihood strategy, and as well as supporting their families, young people often look to this as a future resource, for example in setting up a business. Mismanagement of remittances limits or consumes all their gains. Training and support is needed for young people and families on the best use of remittances.

Safety and Protection: processes of migration need to be safe, both internally and internationally. Use of brokers and services needs to be regulated in order that candidates for international migration are provided with full and appropriate information so they may suit the skills and capacities required at their destination. Migrants need protection, both internal and international. Internal migrants need labour protection from abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

Legality and avoiding criminalisation: government and NGOs need to recognise that one of the main strategies for the most marginalised is to migrate internationally to support their families, and so they need support to do this legally and safely. They also need support and international liaison to negotiate and maintain an appropriate status and conditions in their destinations. Rather than making or enforcing laws that restrict youth, especially those that are most marginalised without education, paperwork or money, NGOs and government departments developing and implementing youth policies and services need to listen to marginalised youth strategies.

The importance of migration as a survival strategy means that policies and practices need to understand realities of their lives and avoid criminalising young people.

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