

# STAKEHOLDER MAPPING IN MIXED MIGRATION FLOWS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN EAST AND THE HORN OF AFRICA



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN DISPLACEMENT AND MIXED MIGRATION

**A**t the 2019 there were almost 79.5 million displaced people around the world, of whom 45.7 million are internally displaced and 26 million are refugees. **40% of those displaced, nearly 32 million, were children.**

#### What are mixed migration flows?

Mixed migration flows comprise both displacement (forced or otherwise) and migration (both regular and irregular).

Typically, these movements follow fluid migratory paths and involve tens of thousands of people annually. The proportion of children in mixed and complex flows has risen significantly in recent years, with some regions seeing exceptionally rapid increases.

These numbers do not account for adults and children who do not appear on official records, who have been compelled or have chosen to move from their home and have joined migration flows to urban centres within their country or into neighbouring countries and onwards irregularly. The group of irregular and undocumented migrants is relatively small compared with the 272 million migrants officially living outside their country of birth but they represent the most vulnerable and at risk.

**Children and youth represent a significant share of mixed flows but their number is uncertain – like the overall number of people migrating irregularly each year. Among them are children**

registered as refugees who choose to undertake secondary movement, from camps to cities or across borders into further countries of transit and destination.

#### CONFLICT-RELATED DISPLACEMENT IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGION

In 2019, sub-Saharan Africa recorded around 8.1 million new displacements associated with conflict and disasters – more than any other region, and accounting for 24.1% of all new displacements worldwide. **Approximately 19.2 million people were living in internal displacement in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of conflict and disasters, with a majority of them being children.**

In the Horn of Africa, sub-regional and intra-state conflict continues to drive people from home towards safer environments. In this region, this can mean moving to and through regions affected by conflict (e.g. movement out of Somalia through Sudan towards Libya).

**Conflicts in this region have had complex, cross-border impacts, and children are often the worst affected. Such conflicts also**



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation



Save the Children

have multigenerational impacts, often leading to a continuous state of displacement for children and their families. This limits access to services such as education or health. It has also exposed children to risks of abuse and exploitation, including recruitment into armed forces and child marriage.

## A JOURNEY BESET WITH RISKS

The irregular, cross-border nature of mixed migration in the East and Horn of Africa makes for a perilous journey for children and young people.

- On their journey, migrants have to navigate harsh physical environments, cross heavily secured borders and traverse territories of oppressive regimes not dissimilar to the hostile circumstances they were seeking to escape in the first place.
- Because irregular migration is criminalised in several countries in the region, children and youth on the move are often exposed to criminal gangs, militias, smugglers and corrupt officials seeking to take advantage of their precarious legal status, which makes them vulnerable to predatory behaviour by the different people they interact with.
- Those facilitating irregular migration may see asylum-seekers and migrants as a source of income and even easy prey for financial or sexual exploitation, kidnapping and torture. Because migrants often have no legal status in countries of transit and destination, violations and crimes against them go unreported and unpunished.

As part of its commitment to the most marginalised and at-risk children, [Save the Children International has intensified its programming with children and youth on the move](#), including those at risk of undertaking unsafe migration.

## METHODOLOGY: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING OF EAST AND THE HORN OF AFRICA

This mapping of stakeholders is intended to strengthen understanding of the formal and informal actors – ranging from family, community, smugglers, officials, fellow migrants and the diaspora to agencies, government departments and service providers – whose actions have implications for children on the move in Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. Clearly identifying them is also useful to ensure alignment and avoid duplication across various actors in the area of migrant child protection.

Primary data collection for this study was conducted in Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. The study also covered Eritrea, Somalia and South Sudan through secondary data collection.

For the primary data collection, key informant interviews were carried out in the three countries of focus with government departments, UN agencies, international and local non-governmental organisations, civil society, the media and independent experts.

The study conducted 23 focus group discussions (FGDs) in Addis Ababa, Cairo and Khartoum and an additional FGD in the transit town of Metema, Ethiopia. FGDs were held in child-friendly spaces and followed a ‘do no harm’ approach. They comprised



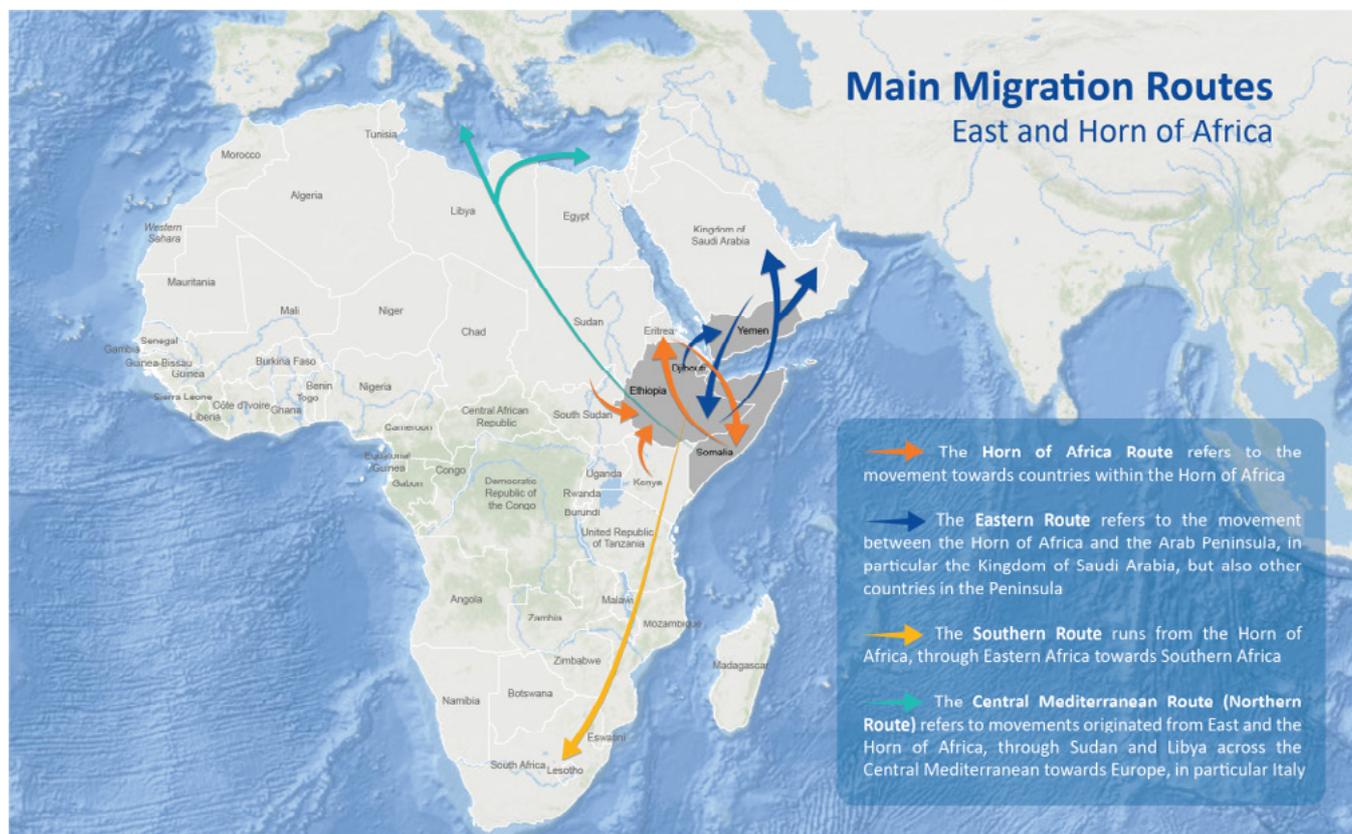
child and young people, female and male, from Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, and internal migrants and returnees in Ethiopia. Respondents were asked about their experiences of conflict, violence, hostility and detention, on the road and in the city in which they were residing.

The research also used primary data collected through the Mixed Migration Centre's Mechanism for Monitoring Mixed Migration Initiative.<sup>1</sup> This made it possible to develop bespoke data analysis to suit the targeted reference group and the countries under analysis in this study. The use of this data gave access to information on an additional 607 respondents, most of whom were young migrants and asylum-seekers from Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Puntland, Somalia, Somaliland, South Sudan and Sudan.

The study encountered a number of limitations:

- The time available to carry out the research, as well as a validation process involving numerous stakeholders, was limited.

- Some FGDs were carried out in languages other than the national language. This meant the research had to rely to a certain degree on local researchers and on (time-consuming) transcriptions.
- Given the need to interview children and young people from a range of backgrounds, FGDs were composed of female and male participants. This may have put restrictions on the potential to discuss sensitive topics such as (sexual) violence.
- Some targeted research participants were hesitant to take part in the study.
- Some topics were sensitive, and this represented a major barrier to both the quality and the scope of data collection. Engaging children and young adults who are potentially illegal in the country, in particular unaccompanied minors, also presented significant difficulties.
- Given the particular sensitivity involved, only four FGDs with children were conducted in Sudan. This inevitably affected the Sudan analysis.



Source: IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, Programming in the East and Horn of Africa 2019

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/>

## LAW AND POLICY ANALYSIS AT GLOBAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

### International initiatives

There is a robust framework at the international level for the protection of children, and all three countries have signed up to the key conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This means that they have, in principle, taken on the obligation to put the best interests of all children first, including those of children who are irregular migrants, allowing them access to national systems and providing them with protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. This is an important entry point for child rights advocacy.

The two global compacts, the **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** and the **Global Compact for Refugees (GCR)**, treat the rights and vulnerabilities of children in some detail, and, even for project not directly implementing the GCM, its adoption by target countries provides a range of entry-points for advocacy and policy dialogue.

The GCM speaks repeatedly of the best interests of the child, and affirms the need 'to protect the human rights of migrant children' and champions better access to 'basic health, education and psychosocial services' for children involved in migration. However, the Compact is not binding, and has not, so far, been a platform for significant leverage or advocacy for the protection of children on the move with the three countries of this study. The Compact is not yet a year old, however, and a variety of monitoring mechanisms are being developed to push for implementation and compliance by signatory member states.

### Regional initiatives

The **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** has been ratified or acceded to by 48 African states, including Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan. This brings a regional lens to bear on the CRC, including an additional focus on internally displaced children and harmful social and cultural practices. The AU has also recently updated its 2006 **Migration Policy Framework for Africa** and has announced it will release an 'African passport', allowing holders to travel visa-free between member states. This initiative could have a significant impact on labour migration for children and young people, and migration through countries of the region as part of a Europe-facing mobility, although it is unlikely that it will come to fruition quickly.<sup>2</sup>

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is involved in various migration management and governance efforts and has also taken an unusual lead in the coordination of efforts to manage the regional Somali refugee situation. Its position recognises the complexity of mixed migration, and the relationship between the growing number of people on the move and those who have been forcibly displaced. In late November 2019, IGAD and the East African Community, along

with representatives from member states and organisations, met to discuss the gaps in cross-border protection mechanisms for children on the move. A roadmap identified next steps on a country-by-country basis.

A number of evidence and data collection mechanisms have also been initiated in Africa, or regionally within the continent, although none has a child focus.

### Europe–Africa collaboration

Because of the prominence of the mixed flows of migrants through and out of Africa towards Europe, inter-regional initiatives and mechanisms have proliferated in the past few years between countries of origin, transit and destination. Most of these focus on inhibiting irregular migration. At the same time, many bilateral arrangements have been signed between African and European countries that are directly affected by migration across the Mediterranean Sea.

The 2014 **AU–EU 'Khartoum Process'**, for example, highlights 'the importance of the regional dimension in tackling the challenges posed by the mixed migratory flows of irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers between countries of origin, transit and destination between Horn of Africa and Europe', although it is not clear what focus on children there will be in specific projects. The **EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)**, which aims to address the root causes of irregular migration, does recognise the importance of addressing children. However, its activities are implemented in 26 countries and cover a vast array of themes and topic areas.

In 2015, the Valletta Summit (convened in response to the European 'migration crisis') resulted in the **Joint Valletta Action Plan**, which includes support to basic services for refugees and displaced persons as one of its main priorities. It also includes several references to children. The Summit and Action Plan led to the launch of the EU–International Organization for Migration (IOM) **Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration** in December 2016, funded by the EUTF. The main focus of this is the return and reintegration of migrants in their countries of origin.

These arrangements have been effective in reducing the number of irregular migrants arriving in Europe but have also encouraged policies that put children on the move at risk and strengthen barriers to access to essential services in countries of transit.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://au.int/en/visa-free-africa>

<sup>3</sup> Stevens, B. (2017) *Making Space for Children in the Global Compact on Migration*. Tokyo: UNU.

## Leaving home and on the road: friends and foes

Children and young people may encounter a range of stakeholders before they leave, and during their journey. Here, we are using a broadly route-based lens.

Stakeholders are those with an interest in children and young people (family members or those who have funded them, or who seek to gain from them), as well as those who have official responsibility for their well-being. To this extent, they have a range of duties, and represent a range of influences. This overview is not exhaustive but gives a sense of the key entities that most young people on the move encounter at some point on their journey.

### The departure

Migration, particularly if relying on multiple smugglers, is expensive, requiring **wide support from family, diaspora or savings**. Meanwhile, there is room for wider and more accurate dissemination of information on the extreme nature of violations suffered, particularly for young women and girls. Part of this information provision must include knowledge about alternatives and opportunities at home. Family, diaspora and returnees are critical entry-points here.

Although **freedom to move within the country of origin is generally not problematic**, Eritreans and Ethiopians have reported abuse and exploitation even before they leave the country, including bribes to be paid to officials who know these departures are irregular.

**Children and young people normally possess or have access** to phones before and during their journey. However, data also shows that the ability to rely on smartphones and social media by those on the move should not be overestimated.

### Smugglers

**Children and young people continue to rely on smugglers** because of the clandestine and irregular nature of migration. In most cases, these actors successfully deliver children and young people to a safer place and a better life, whereas the international system offers them no regular or legal method of accessing their destination. Smugglers are deeply entrenched in migrants' social networks, and virtually all children and young people interviewed said they had used their services for either part of or the entire journey.

High demand for smugglers' services may explain why both smugglers and the officials who have contact with migrants are careless of damaging their own 'business model' and fearless of punishment. From their perspective, there is a seemingly unending stream of people who are willing to pay smugglers no matter how badly they are treated. The violations reported in migrant transit locations include robbery, deception, sexual and physical assault, disappearance (sometimes trafficking), holding people against their will, extortion, detention and death – normally through negligence resulting in vehicle accidents and dehydration or starvation, sometimes through direct murder.

## Officials

Border officials in Sudan and Egypt are acting in accordance with the laws of their country when they stop and detain young adult migrants who are entering the territory without documentation. **Officials often lack specific training on the rights of children and the special measures that need to be taken** to avoid detention for minors, or any abuse in the process of applying the law. In the region more broadly, reports suggest that some officials working in cities and remote border areas also lack clear accountability. Even though this is not the case in all countries, lacking accountability encourages some individuals to act counter to legislation. In some cases, this can lead to violence, abuse and even a willingness to collude with smugglers for financial gain.

### Fellow migrants

Children and young people involved in migration are most commonly found in groups, based on kinship or friendship, and for mutual protection. They may also be formed into groups by smugglers and depart only when a group of sufficient size is formed. These group relationships play a very important role in terms of psychological and physical support and solidarity on the journey, as well as later in their destination countries. However, children and young people also report perpetration of violations by fellow migrants, as well as nationals from their home countries working as go-betweens for kidnappers or those who hold them for ransom and extortion. Some of those involved claim they are forced to take on such a role.

### Organisations along the road and at destination

There are organisations working at some of the crossing points but their **services are not necessarily known or used by the most vulnerable migrants**. There is a need to ensure these services are child-friendly and child-focused, particularly when they target victims of trafficking, especially young women and girls. Discreet, confidential and free-of-charge sexual and gender-based violence services need to be prioritised in such remote areas, where sexual violence and trafficking into commercial sex work is commonly reported.

Borders are sensitive areas but vital for information-gathering and service delivery to children involved in migration. Where possible, there needs to be a greater emphasis on remote locations that are part of the route for children and young people. There is also significant scope for strengthening current efforts to build services and referral for children and young people across the Ethiopia–Sudan border and, if possible, the Sudan–Egypt border (despite constraints on physical access). Programmes such as the Better Migration Management are already working in remote locations or across borders.

**Ethiopia has a very complex profile of different (mixed) migrants, and a largely engaged range of departments and ministries**, all of which play different roles in the provision of services to, and protection of, children and young people involved in migration and displacement. Some of these ministries/departments have been working alongside agencies running migration programmes for many years. There remain capacity issues

and a need for child sensitivity in the policies of the ministries working on migration, however. Meanwhile, there is significant regional support to countering the issue of trafficking. Generally, migration is also very much on the government's wider political and development agenda.

**Sudan is in a state of political transition, which may provide opportunities for renewed engagement.** The National Council for Child Welfare is an obvious counterpart on issues pertaining to inclusion and respect for the rights of children on the move through and stranded in Khartoum. However, Sudan is also a more sensitive environment. Partnership with civil society is advisable, as well as the provision of capacity support to relatively new government initiatives. Again, the new political environment may provide new opportunities here.

**Cairo has become a longer-term place of residence for children and young people who are stranded or unable to move onwards. This provides good opportunities for investment in education and longer-term resilience programming.** Considerable work needs to be done with regard to advocating for a more protective approach to children who are undocumented and legally invisible. There are departments in government that will be natural allies in this process.

## Donors, service providers and government initiatives in the three countries of focus

This overview of key donors, organisations and agencies providing services, and government ministries with mandates of relevance to children on the move is not exhaustive but intends to provide a sense of the most important funding streams and multi-year programmes, as well as agencies likely to be key allies in working to reach children on the move.

### In Ethiopia:

- Ethiopia has proclamation for The Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Person and Smuggling Migrants Proclamation, which aims to rise Ethiopia's capacity to fight traffickers and smugglers and dismantle organized crime groups. Taking into account the fact that human trafficking is exacerbated by the absence of regulatory framework on the employment of Ethiopian nationals in foreign countries, the government has also brought into practice Proclamation No 923/2016 – Ethiopia's overseas employment Proclamation. It was adopted to prevent human trafficking through regulating overseas employment relations, and to protect the human rights violations of Ethiopians working abroad and discourage vulnerabilities to human trafficking.
- The Government of Ethiopia has also formally adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), on 28 November 2017 and revised its National Refugee Proclamation that support rights and local integration of refugees in the country.
- Sizeable, multi-year funding streams mean a large number of organisations implement programmes for refugees and

migrants. Very few of these focus on internal migrants.

- Despite the many organisations working on economic opportunities and livelihoods, most young people felt that no way to sustain their family was available to them back home.
- A range of local NGOs provide counselling and skills and vocational training and education for migrant children and young people, as well as shelter, job search assistance, family tracing and reunification. The reach of each of these is not wide, and demand exceeds supply.
- UN agencies and international organisations working on migration include IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and SCI.
- The key counterparts in the Ethiopian government are the Ministry of Women and Children, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs and the Ethiopian Anti-Trafficking Task Force. Each of these occupies a space in policy development and coordination of interventions that affect young people and children on the move.

*We are returnees. Even though we are victims of human trafficking and have a lot of economic problems, there is no specific support available for returnees in this area. In addition to this, we did not have any support from the government, NGOs, communities and any concerned bodies in the area. Still we are suffering with unemployment and economic hardship; we are unable to feed ourselves and our families. Because of this, and despite all the risks, we are ready to migrate again.  
(Participant in FGD in Metema, October 2019)*

### In Sudan:

- Khartoum has a range of funding streams focused on resilience-building, livelihoods and labour management for internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and migrants in Sudan.
- NGOs in Sudan face day-to-day challenges related to logistics, rising costs and government restrictions, but they also play a key role in responding to severe needs in remote locations, where access often requires government and military consent.
- Donor and UN efforts include a UK Department for International Development-funded three-year consortium programme, led by the Danish Refugee Council, as well as work coordinated by IOM and UNICEF.
- Although all refugees have access to education in Sudan, under the Asylum Law, access is difficult and the schooling system is not aimed at providing education to children from other language and religious contexts, such as Ethiopia.
- Lack of documentation remains the key driver of vulnerability: those without sufficient documentation are unable to access social services or formal and stable livelihoods opportunities and face movement restrictions.
- A number of agencies within the Sudanese government oversee aspects of the management of migration, including

for children. SCI should collaborate with these agencies in any interventions. These include units within the Ministry of Interior, the police and the judiciary, as well as the National Council for Child Welfare.

#### In Egypt:

- Between 2007 and 2013, the EU spent more than €1 billion on bilateral assistance in Egypt. There are significant, long-term funding streams in place focused on resilience-building, livelihoods and labour management for IDPs, refugees and migrants in Cairo.
- UNHCR oversees the registration of newly arrived asylum-seekers and provides the documentation for refugee status. Beyond registration, the agency manages referral to legal services and education grants. IOM and UNICEF also are key agencies with regard to managing irregular migrant flows in Cairo.
- Challenges and frustrations remain around the UNHCR registration process. There have been a number of protests outside Cairo's UNHCR office that have resulted in arrests.
- Refugees, and migrants, have no legal recourse to citizenship. Rather, they remain in a permanent limbo of needing to renew their residency permit every six months.
- NGOs in Cairo providing for migrants operate around building social cohesion, improving health services and providing better livelihoods. Children and young people still feel their needs are far from being met, particularly with regard to education and work opportunities.
- A number of Egyptian agencies exist with which it is possible to collaborate. These include the National Council of Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, the National Coordinating Committee for Preventing and Combating Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking and the Anti-Trafficking Unit.

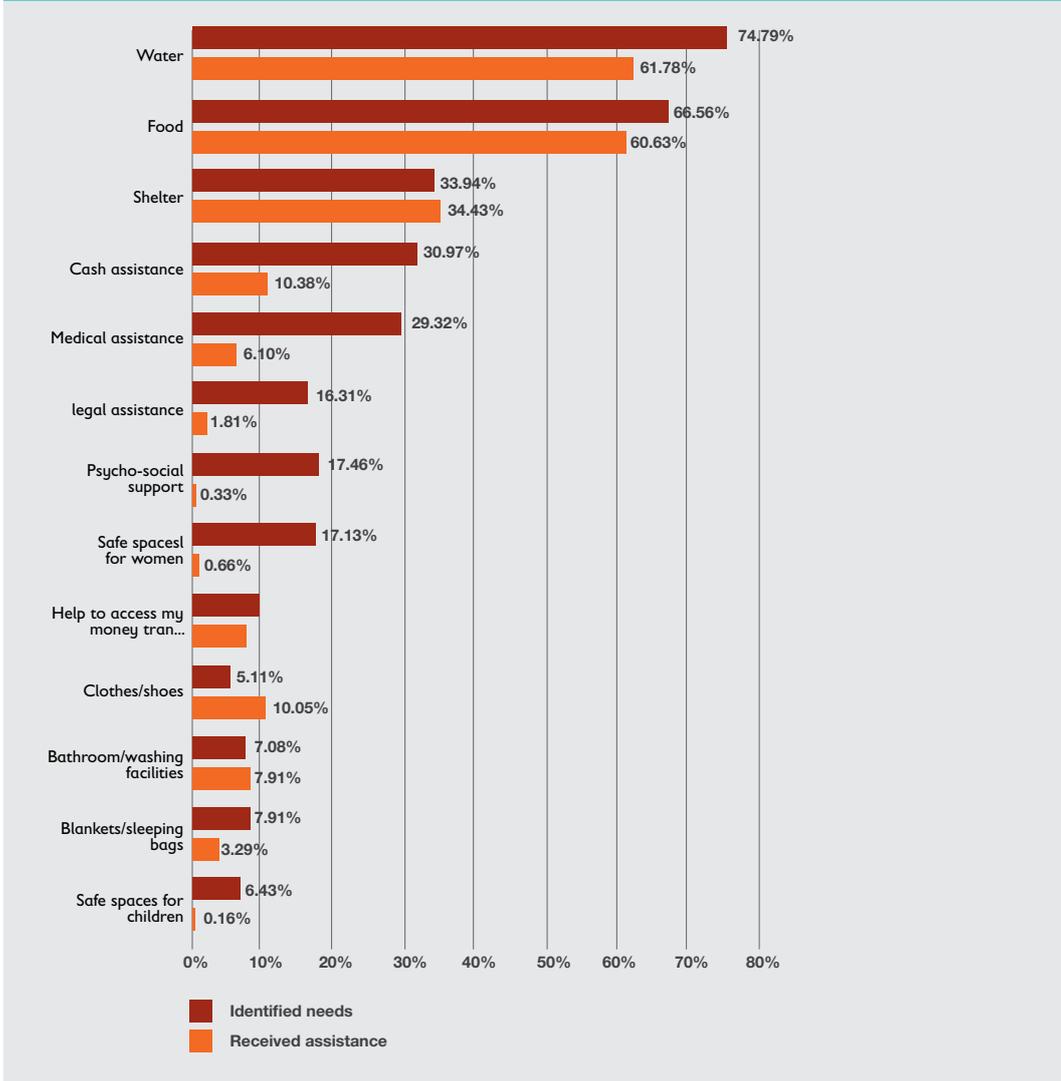
## SERVICE GAPS

Information in this report points to the fact that, despite nearly a decade of heightened funding, organisational prioritisation, global attention and advocacy, the experience of being on the move for children young people in this region is still extremely hazardous, and characterised by violence and abuse. The structural drivers of migration are unchanged in many of the source countries – poor governance, ethnic conflict, poverty – and other drivers are becoming more acute – such as population pressures, climate change and resource scarcity.

The MMC migration monitoring programme asks migrants about services they have received, and services they would have wanted, as part of the experience of their journey. The figure below shows the responses of the 607-person sample extracted for this research, focusing on young people (under 24 years) on the move through the countries of focus in the past two years.

The figure indicates that the most significant gaps between the support that children and young people might have wanted, and the services that they encountered, lie in the areas of medical assistance, psychosocial care and support, legal assistance and safe accommodation for women and children. The survey design dictates which services are listed, so this does limit the responses of young people on the move, but the results are nonetheless indicative of a set of needs that are not being addressed on the road. FGD responses supported this dataset. The major limitation of the data in the figure above is that it does not allow for an understanding of exactly where the gaps are geographically. Our FGDs with children and young people suggested that a range of services are offered in Cairo and in Addis Ababa (these are more limited in Khartoum), and that interventions are needed in areas that are harder to reach, and where children and young people are more vulnerable. Considering the staggered nature of the journey for children on the move, this is where a route-based approach can be innovative and provide the necessary assistance to the most vulnerable at various stages of their movement.

**Percentage of young migrant sample identifying comparison between assistance received and what they needed during their journey (multi-select)**  
 Note: "assistance received" does not distinguish between the givers being members of the local community, friends, smugglers or NGOs or even local government.



Recommendations related to these findings suggest strategic approaches, and guide possible programme activities in the three following areas:

1. Vital protection and services (in complement to those being offered by other stakeholders, or to address the gaps) that respond to immediate needs;
2. Investing in longer-term skills-building, education and livelihoods capacity that may alter the life chances of a child or young person who is involved in migration (to address programme gaps);
3. Being part of upstream advocacy and systems-strengthening efforts with national governments, regional bodies, donors and other stakeholders, which will contribute to protection and well-being of all children and young people involved in migration in a given context.





Save the Children®

# OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

**OUR VISION** is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

**OUR MISSION** is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

**OUR VALUES** guide our behavior and are the principles by which we make decisions: Accountability, Collaboration, Integrity, Ambition and Creativity.

## OUR 2030 AMBITION



### SURVIVAL

No child dies from preventable causes before their fifth birthday.



### EDUCATION

All children learn from a quality, basic education.



### PROTECTION

Violence against children is no longer tolerated.

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In Africa and around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

This study was led by **Ravenstone Consult** and edited by **Ruth Griffiths**.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation



Save the Children