

2018 Update of Research Activities & Publications

Overview

The last twelve months have been extremely busy for the Research and Evidence Facility (REF), with research on return to and displacement from Somalia, rural to urban migration in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and migration and displacement from Sudan towards Europe. We are also in the process of carrying out three other research projects: on border economies in Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somaliland and Djibouti; on the links between youth employment and mobility in Uganda and Ethiopia; and on community attitudes towards migration management. This research brief provides an update of research activities completed by the REF over the past year. It also includes information on initiated research and exciting preliminary findings as well as an outline of upcoming research outputs.

Return and (Re)Integration after Displacement; Belonging, Labelling and Livelihoods in Three Somali Cities

Somalia is experiencing a complex situation of protracted and new internal displacement, organised and spontaneous repatriation of refugees, people returning from the diaspora, and arrival of deported asylum seekers and migrants from other countries. This study, based on in-depth research in Baidoa, Kismayo and Mogadishu, examined the different factors that shape decisions about, and experiences of, displacement, return and (re)integration in Somalia. It pays particular attention to five key themes: IDP and returnees' sense of belonging;

linkages between rural and urban communities; the importance of categories and labels in securing or blocking access to support; access to housing, land and property; and the importance of improving coordination in the short and medium term.

Some key findings from the study:

1. *Reasons for moving are many-layered.* Most people attributed their movement not to a single cause, but to a variety of factors. While insecurity and climate constraints were cited as the main drivers, the search for a 'better life' was also a contributing factor. This layering of motivations for movement complicates conventional concepts of forced and voluntary movements which seek to explain and categorise people on the move in terms of single drivers.
2. *Access to housing, land and property are the most important concerns for the displaced and returnees.* The insecurity of not knowing whether or when people will be evicted or relocated underscores people's livelihood practices and prevents them from pursuing education, improving their shelters, or making longer term plans for the future.
3. *IDPs are the most vulnerable.* How and why people have moved greatly influences their experiences and the extent to which they are vulnerable to different forms of hazards, including impoverishment, eviction, hunger, violence and insecurity. In general terms,

IDPs are exposed to the highest levels of vulnerability, followed by refugees, returnees, deportees and diaspora.

4. *IDP labeling can perpetuate discrimination and marginalization.* There is little to distinguish recognised IDPs from those seen as rural-urban migrants when it comes to their reasons for moving and humanitarian needs. What is more, those labelled as IDPs often face discrimination as a result of perceived social, cultural or language differences, and reduced access to rights and freedoms.
5. *People continue to feel displaced when they lack a sense of belonging to the community they live with.* While some displaced people may feel alienated from the local community, they express a sense of belonging to each other through a redefined sense of community and identity in displacement based on shared experiences. Successful integration does not necessarily entail the end of mobility. Very often people may choose to settle in places other than their area of origin where they feel stronger ties to community.
6. *Rural-urban linkages provide essential support.* Many displaced households stay connected with kin across rural and urban settings in order to diversify livelihoods, access resources and maintain land and other assets. The socioeconomic support that these rural-urban linkages provide can promote sustainable return and (re)integration in places of origin and destination.

To read the full Executive Summary of the report, please visit: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/file133105.pdf>

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The Lure of the City: Drivers, Dynamics and Challenges of Rural to Urban Mobility

Migration to secondary cities outside of national capitals is growing throughout the Horn of Africa region. This study, undertaken in collaboration with the Rift Valley Institute, explores rural to urban migration in three such cities: Dire Dawa in eastern Ethiopia, Eldoret in northwest Kenya and Gulu in northern Uganda. The research examines the drivers of migration to cities, the experiences of those who have moved, what has happened to their ties to rural areas, and the challenges faced by municipal and other government departments in responding to the growth in urban population.

The study reveals advantages associated with rural-urban migration for migrants and those who stay behind. By moving to Dire Dawa, Gulu and Eldoret, migrants have benefited from job opportunities, higher education opportunities and security. Yet many remain marginalised and live on the economic, geographic, and social perimeters of the city.

For those who remain in rural areas, having a relative in the city is a crucial risk management strategy. These rural-urban linkages can provide limited remittances, as well as the opportunity for rural households to access urban markets. For example, in Eldoret and Dire Dawa, migration is an opportunity for farmers to access urban markets by using children living and studying in the city as trusted intermediaries who can relay prices and sell products on their behalf.

However, rural-urban migration, together with demographic change, is putting growing strain on city infrastructures, services and housing. More established urban respondents revealed increases in the cost of living and rent, as well as changes to the socio-cultural fabric of the city that often feed into long-standing political and ethnic tensions. These can be seen most strongly in the recent violence that has occurred in and around Dire Dawa as Somali and Oromo groups compete for resources and political power.

Contrary to expectations, the study found that most migrants see the secondary cities as their final destination and as a valid alternative to moving to the national capital. However, there is a limited amount of onward migration, typically within the region or onwards to Gulf countries and Europe.

To read the full report, visit:
<https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/file128760.pdf>.

Individual city reports for Dire Dawa, Eldoret and Gulu are also available on at:
<https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/>

Darfuri migration from Sudan to Europe: from Displacement to Despair

This study documents for the first time the experiences of young, mainly men, who flee from Darfur, Sudan towards Europe. It draws on historical patterns of migration as well as political and economic context to understand the causes, decision-making, strategies, routes and experiences of migration, along the journey and at destination. The study also explores migration's impact on families and communities left behind, and on the wider political economy of Darfur.

The report shows that for many young Darfuris, attack, arrest and harassment by government forces, paramilitary groups and militia are the primary reason for leaving. Violence remains common during a conflict which has been ongoing for more than 15 years. Many of those who migrate to Europe have direct experience of conflict displacement. This has implications for asylum claims in Europe as well as for how European governments engage with the government of Sudan. In leaving Sudan, most migration occurs in stages: initially to Libya and then across the Mediterranean to Italy and northern Europe. Darfuris are amongst the most vulnerable migrants, being subject to exploitation and abduction in Libya, and in Europe they often find themselves living on the street and subjected

to further violence. In this context, the report examines the conditions and experience of Darfuris in Europe and the implications for migration and asylum policies.

The study was jointly led by researchers from SOAS University of London and the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and in Sudan our partners were CEDEJ-Khartoum, the Faculty of University of Khartoum and Oxfam Sudan.

To read the Executive Summary of the report, please visit:
<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12384.pdf>

For the full report, visit:
<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12385.pdf>

Assessing the impact of migration management systems on livelihoods and migration: Evidence from Puntland

This research explores the impact of migration management initiatives on sustainable development in Puntland, Somalia. It examines how ideas about migration management take shape and how associated activities impact not only individual lives (migrants and others) but also wider development dynamics and enablers.

Interviews were conducted in Garowe and Bossaso with community respondents and a mix of key informants whose work is directly related to migration as well as those whose work is not.

Findings reveal mixed views of migration depending on the type of informant (those working directly in migration and those not), the type of migration and the nationality of the migrants being referred to (Ethiopians, Yemenis or Somalis), the perceived economic benefits they can bring (for example new skills and economic activities) and perceptions around the security, health and cultural impacts on the local

community.

When it comes to ‘migration management’, the term itself meant very little for most respondents, even among those directly involved in migration programmes, which suggests a lack of institutional buy-in to this concept. At the same time, many respondents supported the notion of registering migrants to give them the legal status that would enable them to work. Other respondents indicated that they were unconcerned with stopping migrant flows as they saw it as beneficial. They said that attempts to stem movement were likely to be futile and to expand the role of smugglers.

Of greatest concern to respondents were efforts to stop the out-migration of Somali youths crossing into Yemen in the hope of reaching Europe. Somali respondents were very concerned with the dangers and risks of this route, as well as the financial burden shouldered by families who subsequently had to pay considerable fees to smugglers once their children arrived in Libya.

Additional REF research on migration management in Ethiopia, going on now, is expected to further enrich and contextualise these initial findings from Puntland, Somalia.

To read a longer summary of this preliminary report, please visit: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/file131879.pdf>

Working Papers

We have published the following working papers by researchers working in and on the Horn of Africa region:

1. Gianluca Iazzolino and Mohamed Hersi. ‘A Shelter or a Springboard? Somali migrant networks in Uganda between crisis and opportunities’
2. Meron Zeleke, ‘Close and Yet Far: Lived Experiences of Ethiopian Maids in Djibouti’
3. Tekalign Ayalew, ‘En Route to Exile: Organising Refugee Journeys from the Horn of Africa Towards Europe’

We continue to invite researchers to submit proposals for working papers. For details on submission, and to access the papers already published, see: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/working-papers/>

Looking Ahead

We are currently engaged in several research projects that will be completed in the coming months.

Migration management on flows, livelihoods and development change

Further migration management research is being conducted in Metema, Ethiopia which is one of the main crossing points for migrants leaving or transiting through Ethiopia. Our research explores people’s awareness and perceptions about migration, smuggling and trafficking, and of the existing interventions addressing these issues. The research also examines the impact of migration on the wider socio-economic conditions and what impact (if any) migration interventions may make.

The Impact of youth training and employment on migration dynamics

This new research, also conducted in collaboration with researchers at Makerere University (Uganda), Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia) and the Organisation for Social Science Research in East Africa (OSSREA), explores the relationship between youth unemployment and irregular migration in Ethiopia and Uganda. It asks what impact improved access to better quality employment through education and vocational training has on young people’s inclination to migrate to other countries in the region, other parts of Africa, the Gulf states or Europe. While the connection between migration and the search for better employment opportunities is well established, this research critically examines the links between job creation and decision-making about migration.

Cross border economies

This ongoing research in Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya and Somaliland extends previous work on borderlands conducted by the REF in 2016. The study will consider movement in and across border regions, considering how borders both present opportunities as well as challenges for migration management and for would-be migrants.

Nairobi regional conference

Finally, we are organising a regional conference in Nairobi on 21 and 22 January 2019. This event will be an opportunity to showcase not only the work of the REF over the past two and a half years, but also that of research institutions and individuals from across the region, and to discuss how to translate recommendations and research findings into action.

If you would like to attend, please contact Lavender Mboya at lavender@sahanresearch.net.

About the Research and Evidence Facility

The Research and Evidence Facility (REF) was established in May 2016 to conduct research relevant to the formulation and implementation of EU Trust Fund activities in the Horn of Africa. It was created to collate and produce evidence and policy relevant knowledge on themes related to the Fund's activities. The REF is implemented by a research consortium led by SOAS University of London with the University of Manchester, and Sahan Research, based in Nairobi.

Research themes include (but are not limited to) the drivers of migration, dynamics of cross-border economies and centre/periphery relations, urbanisation and rural-urban linkages, return and displacement of refugees and internally displaced persons within the region, the features and limitations of migration management systems and social service provision, drivers of radicalism and violent extremism, and opportunities for strengthening resilience in the greater Horn of

Africa. This region includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

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Blog series: <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/>

Funding:

The REF is funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The Trust Fund has been created to support the most fragile and affected African countries. The Trust Fund aims to help foster stability in the regions to respond to the challenges of irregular migration and displacement and to contribute to better migration management.

