



Research
& Evidence
Facility

EU Emergency Trust
Fund for Africa

March 2022



How does technical and vocational education and training (TVET) influence dynamics of mobility and conflict?

Lessons from the Horn of Africa

Abebaw Minaye Gezie¹

Padmini Iyer²

¹ School of Psychology, Addis Ababa University

² Research and Evidence Facility



Research
& Evidence
Facility

EU Emergency Trust
Fund for Africa

The Research and Evidence Facility Consortium



SOAS University of London
Thornhaugh St,
Russell Square,
London WC1H 0XG
United Kingdom

www.soas.ac.uk

Team Leader:
Laura Hammond
Project Manager and
Research Officer:
Louisa Brain



The University of Manchester

The University of
Manchester
Arthur Lewis Building,
Oxford Road,
Manchester M13 9PL
United Kingdom

www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk

Migration & Development
Key Expert: Oliver Bakewell
Communications Manager:
Chris Jordan



Sahan
Nairobi, Kenya

www.sahan.global

Conflict & Governance Key
Expert: Vincent Chordi
Senior Research
Coordinator:
Padmini Iyer
Research Team Leader:
Lavender Mboya

This report was prepared by Abebaw Minaye and Padmini Iyer, with input from Oliver Bakewell and Laura Hammond. The authors wish to thank the European Union Delegations in the Horn of Africa and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) for providing their insights and for reviewing the report. The authors also thank Altai Consulting for their review of the report and for sharing the MLS datasets with us.

This report was prepared with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Suggested citation: Research and Evidence Facility (REF). March 2022. 'How does technical and vocational education and training (TVET) influence dynamics or mobility and conflict? Lessons from the Horn of Africa'. London: EU Trust Fund for Africa (Horn of Africa Window) Research and Evidence Facility.

Cover image by Sandra Aceng on WIKI Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).

For more information on The Research and Evidence Facility visit the website blogs.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch and follow @REFHorn on Twitter.



Funded by the European Union
Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

Contents

List of Acronyms	2
Executive summary	3
1 Introduction	6
2 Objectives of the Study	7
3 Livelihoods, conflict and migration: underlying assumptions and evidence	8
4 Methodology	10
4.1. Data sources.....	10
4.2. Limitations.....	10
5 Description of EUTF Interventions	14
5.1. Key Consortium.....	14
5.2. Building opportunities for resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA)	14
5.3. Uganda Projects	15
5.4. Ethiopia Projects	15
6 Findings	17
6.1 Key Assumptions	17
6.2 How do TVET and other employment interventions influence conflict and migration?	18
6.3 Intangible/non-financial impacts.....	22
6.4 Impact of Covid-19 on TVET programming.....	23
7 Discussion	24
References	16

List of Acronyms

AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
BEST	Basic Employability Skills Training
BORESHA	Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa
EBT	Enterprise-Based Training
EYE	Employable Youth in Ethiopia
EUTF	European Emergency Trust Fund
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HoA	Horn of Africa
KII	Key Informant Interview
KRCS	Kenyan Red Cross Society
MLS	Monitoring and Learning System
REF	Research and Evidence Facility
RISE	Response to Increased Demand on Government Services and Creation of Economic Opportunities in Uganda
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SDF	Skilling Uganda Fund
SINCE	Stemming Irregular migration in Northern and Central Ethiopia
STRIVE	Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism
SUPREME	Strengthening, Protection and Economic Empowerment in Uganda
SPRS-NU	Support Programme to the Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
YEI	Youth Empowerment Institute

Executive summary

In the Horn of Africa (HoA), investments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and other employability programmes are typically predicated on the assumption that these activities will: a) provide alternatives to migration and reduce young people's incentives to follow irregular migratory routes; and b) reduce young people's incentives to become involved with violent groups, thus contributing to conflict prevention and stability in the region.

This study considers the assumptions underlying TVET and employment generation programmes funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) in Africa by examining the influence of these programmes on young people's decisions around mobility and engagement in conflict. The primary objectives of the study are: to examine the key assumptions of the EUTF and implementing partners about TVET programming; investigate the mechanisms that link engagement in TVET and young people's practices regarding mobility and conflict; explore the positive and negative outcomes in changes to mobility and conflict following engagement in TVET; and distil lessons learnt from such programming in the HoA.

The review systematically brings together data collected from the EUTF's two learning components, the Monitoring and Learning System (MLS; managed by Altai Consulting) and the Research and Evidence Facility (REF). The study's methodology included a review of existing literature on the link between TVET, conflict and migration; analysis of existing datasets from the REF and Altai/MLS and interviews with key informants. The projects examined for this review were drawn from EUTF interventions in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and the cross-border area of the Mandera Triangle.

Key Findings

1. The **central assumptions underpinning EUTF interventions on TVET and employment** revolve around a few key mechanisms thought to be responsible for conflict and unsafe or irregular migration. These are: grievances as a result of marginalisation (political – in relation to the wider context); exclusion or lack of opportunities (social – in relation to reference group, comparisons with peers); lack of money or economic prospects (economic – in relation to household and individual survival and reference group); and absence of alternative activities, leaving young people idle (psychological – in relation to individuals' aspirations and mental wellbeing).
2. Overall, the data show that engagement in TVET and other forms of employment-related trainings has a **positive impact on the prospects of finding employment** and labour market integration. Beneficiaries of these programmes reported income generation, ability to find work and provide for themselves and their families, thanks to their involvement in the interventions.
3. TVET and other employability-related interventions in the HoA also show an **increase in young people's engagement in the community and enhance their self-perception**, in addition to providing economic benefits. TVET and employability programmes, especially when combined with life skills and other 'soft' training, tend to produce several non-material benefits for participants. Trainees and graduates report increases in levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and a positive influence of the training on their standing in the community. As these programmes also bring together diverse groups of youth who may or may not have the

opportunity to interact on a regular basis, they also positively influence socialisation and intergroup behaviours.

4. Despite these successes, key informants expressed **uncertainty about the prospects of beneficiaries acquiring satisfactory employment opportunities**, as trainings do not guarantee employment. Although the programmes provide several non-financial contributions, such as a positive influence on youth self-esteem and confidence, the longer-term impact on propensity to engage in negative behaviours (including joining gangs and violent extremist groups) remains unclear.
5. Due to the short-term nature of these projects and the lack of robust follow-up mechanisms, the **long-term impact or sustainability remains uncertain**. While several successes have been noted – in terms of the number of youth trained, number of businesses launched, number of youth who were employed/self-employed – evaluations of programmes tend to privilege output-level achievements rather than overall impact .
6. TVET and employment programmes may also have **unintended negative impacts**. Those who are left out of these programmes, as a result of beneficiary targeting criteria, may become resentful of others benefiting from the programming and this may lead to incidents of conflict. There is also preliminary evidence of such training disturbing the status quo in some households by empowering women (financially); this has reportedly led to incidences of gender-based violence.

Recommendations

1. Focus on Impacts rather than Outputs: Independent, third-party evaluations that investigate the longer-term impact of TVET and employment interventions on conflict and migration dynamics and behaviours are essential. Rather than evaluating projects only at their close, a longitudinal perspective must be adopted, tracing the employment outcomes of participants and graduates at several different time points – ideally after at least six months, one year and two years.
2. Apply a ‘Do No Harm’ principle to programming in contexts of actual or potential conflict. A comprehensive conflict sensitivity assessment, which includes an analysis of the context, sources of conflict, and the interaction between the programme and the context is critical (e.g. in the beneficiary selection process). Subsequent to the assessment, projects could devise ways to ensure that conflict mitigation mechanisms are integrated in the framework.
3. Promote employment prospects including ‘positive migration’ of graduates. In evaluating the value of TVET programmes, it is important not to equate the migration of graduates as evidence of a failure. Economic migration undertaken by skilled individuals who have a realistic chance of finding employment and travelling safely is wholly different from irregular, unsafe migration; equipping people with the ability to undertake the former form of ‘positive’ migration may be a positive outcome of TVET projects that helps people to avoid being compelled to move through irregular and unsafe channels.
4. Gather further evidence about the link (if any) between TVET and irregular migration. Research on employability should also explore whether graduates are more or less likely to be engaged in conflict activities (formal or informal) as well as regular or irregular migration. While there is

some literature on the link between TVET and employment generation and conflict, studies on the impact of such programmes on irregular migration are generally scant.

5. Promote linking of TVET initiatives with wider advocacy around decent work conditions. Often TVET activities are implemented as discrete projects without being linked to wider efforts to promote decent work conditions including reform of legal frameworks and labour codes, adherence to international labour conventions, and integration with social protection programmes.

1 Introduction

Across the Horn of Africa (HoA) young people comprise a significant majority of the workforce. Youth unemployment and underemployment, however, remain widespread and are considered to be major drivers of conflict, violence and migration in the region. There are too few job opportunities for young people in the formal sector, especially for those who lack the requisite skills and competences as a result of their incomplete or poor-quality education. The vast majority of youth who join the labour force in the HoA remain in informal employment, if they can find work at all. Unemployment rates for young women exceed those of young men as a result of unequal access to education and training opportunities and unequal gender roles, among other reasons. These dynamics, along with young people's often peripheral position in their communities and other social factors, are thought to have a significant impact on young people's involvement in various kinds of conflict and on unsafe or irregular domestic and international migration.

Interventions seeking to expand employability and entrepreneurship skills through, for example, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) focus on improving young people's skills, strengthening labour markets and increasing the young's chances of finding employment. They also aim to enhance young people's standing and relationships within their communities and sometimes indirectly aim to contribute to their potential for fostering peace and stability.

In the HoA, many investments in TVET and other employability programming are predicated on the assumption that these activities will:

- provide alternatives to migration and reduce young people's incentives to follow irregular migratory routes
- reduce young people's incentives to become involved with violent groups, thus contributing to conflict prevention and stability in the region¹

However, recent research by the Research and Evidence Facility (REF) (2019) in Uganda and Ethiopia and Altai Consulting (2019) in Kenya calls into question these assumptions, painting a more mixed picture of the relationships between TVET, migration and conflict. These studies also draw out the wider challenges of implementing TVET programmes successfully in the HoA, which include: (1) matching TVET skills and programmes with ever-changing job markets; (2) linking TVET with wider investments promoting employment, including private sector development and facilitating self-employment; and (3) facilitating youth employment in quality jobs, rather than measuring the success of programmes based on quantity of jobs secured by graduates and trainees. While recognising the positive value and impact of equipping young people with education and skills training, these recent findings raise important questions about the causal links between TVET and changes in mobility and conflict behaviours.

¹ Exceptions to this within the EUTF portfolio exist – for e.g., programmes in Kenya attempt to address the issue of involvement in conflict more than those in Uganda.

2 Objectives of the Study

This review aims to investigate the assumptions underlying TVET and employment generation programmes funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) in Africa by examining the influence of these programmes on young people's decisions around mobility and engagement in conflict.

The primary objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the key assumptions of the EUTF and implementing partners about TVET programming in case study countries.
2. Investigate data on young people's perceptions around mobility and conflict and what they reveal about these key assumptions.
3. Identify the mechanisms that link engagement in TVET and young people's practices regarding mobility and conflict.
4. Examine positive and negative outcomes in changes in mobility and conflict following engagement in TVET.
5. Identify the impact of Covid-19 on TVET programming.
6. Distil lessons learned from such programming in the HoA thus far and consider how future programming decisions can better respond to a context of shifting and precarious labour markets, and disrupted education as a result of Covid-19.

To meet these objectives, the study uses data gathered by the REF and Altai Consulting's Monitoring and Learning System (MLS) from EUTF projects in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia (as well as the Manderu Triangle which trisects Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia) that have components related to TVET, migration and conflict. Further details on data sources and methodology for the study are below.

3 Livelihoods, conflict and migration: underlying assumptions and evidence

The potential engagement of young people in conflict and violent extremism or irregular migration² is a major concern in the HoA. One of the basic steps towards finding solutions to these problems is to understand what drives young people towards these activities. Many surveys and studies have suggested that youth unemployment and underemployment, which are widespread in the HoA, are major factors driving young people to consider ever more desperate irregular migration or to get drawn into conflict and violence.

Changes to the demographic composition or an increase in youth population numbers (the ‘youth bulge’), a lack of adequate educational and employment opportunities, and young people’s political and social marginalisation and exclusion – in the context of macro-level issues such as poor governance, deteriorating economies and state fragility – are widely cited as explanations for young people’s involvement in violence and conflict (Ismail and Olonisakin 2021).

Many of these reasons, especially those more directly related to the labour market, have also been identified as factors driving youth towards irregular migration. Here it is not just about unemployment in general, but also the quality of jobs to which young people can aspire. In particular, there are too few jobs for young people in the formal sector, especially for those who lack the requisite skills and competencies as a result of their incomplete or poor-quality education. Across the HoA, young people joining the labour force are much more likely to find employment in the informal, rather than the formal, sector, if they can find jobs at all. Moreover, many youth face complex and prolonged transitions to adulthood, a concept known as ‘waithood’, which is characterised by young people’s “inability to enter the labour market and attain the social markers of adulthood” (Honwana 2012, p. 19). Rather than being a transitional stage, waithood becomes a permanent state for many young people (particularly in rural areas), who are unable to live financially independently, start families or reach socially sanctioned definitions of adulthood (Honwana 2014).

In the HoA, a range of development interventions promote livelihoods and employment-related programming as a solution to conflict and violence, drawing a link between youth unemployment, ‘idleness’ and engagement in conflict. Similarly, interventions also presuppose that limited livelihood opportunities – in addition to structural issues such as human rights violations and extremely limited support in basic services – drive irregular migration within and from the region. These assumed links between limited livelihood opportunities and conflict, violence and migration are not only presented as a rationale for the interventions but are also reflected in the interventions’ theories of change and design, and even appear sometimes as evaluation criteria (as in, ‘are there more or fewer people migrating after the programme intervention?’). Whereas several studies and

² Irregular migration is the “movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination”. <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

reports have attempted to investigate the link as well as the impact of livelihoods-based interventions on conflict, violence and migration, the evidence base remains relatively weak and inconclusive for a number of reasons.

First, the underlying assumption that unemployment fosters conflict and violence has been called into question (Mallett and Slater 2016; ODI 2013; Maxwell et al. 2017). Various studies have shown no significant relationship between increased employment and reduced engagement in violence or conflict (cited in Mallett and Slater 2016). As such, this body of evidence contradicts the central tenets of programmes that aim to address peace and stability through economic recovery, job creation, financial inclusion and skills training. One of the main underlying assumptions of such interventions is that increasing the prospects of economic productivity simultaneously decreases the likelihood of engaging in conflict. In addition, ‘employment for peace’ programmes also typically assume that increased employment and other livelihood opportunities can reduce incentives for engaging in conflict; will lead to a decline in grievances, thus contributing to positive peace; and can contribute to social cohesion by bringing disparate groups into contact with one another (International Alert 2020). Not only have these assumptions not been rigorously tested,³ programmes based on them have also been shown not to adequately consider the larger social and political issues that greatly influence labour-market as well as conflict dynamics.

Contrary to the tenuous link between unemployment and conflict, the relationship between unemployment and migration is supported abundantly by the literature⁴. High levels of unemployment and lack of decent work in places of origin are routinely cited as among the top reasons for people to migrate (Aslany et al 2021, p. 29;). Therefore, programmes aiming to address irregular migration adopt as their point of departure the idea that addressing unemployment at the place of origin may act as a deterrent to engaging in (irregular) migration. However, similarly to the case of conflict, the underlying assumptions between economic opportunities and migration have been debated. REF’s 2019 study in Ethiopia and Uganda showed a mixed picture on the impact of TVET and other employment/entrepreneurship programmes on migration. First, the data showed contextual differences in the reasons for and destination of migration following TVET involvement. Those who had taken part in TVET activities often tended to desire to migrate, but their intentions were to move relatively short distances to nearby (usually urban) destinations where they could use their new skills to find employment but not necessarily to move further to destinations further away, including outside the region. Moreover, the study showed that the primary motivation for engagement in TVET was aspirations of employment rather than to improve prospects for migration.

These empirical findings from the analysis of EUTF interventions echo the findings of other research. A review of studies investigating the impact of TVET on migration showed that non-formal and informal training has little impact on emigration decisions, since structurally disadvantaged groups have limited possibilities of migrating (Langthaler and Gunduz 2020). Moreover, the lack of formalisation and certification limits such groups’ ability to access further education or formal employment. Another large review of studies examining the link between livelihood interventions and international migration highlighted the greatly contextual nature of migration (aspirations and decisions); it also demonstrated, overall, that increased livelihood assets and education may lead to or facilitate international migration (DFID 2018).

Nonetheless, there are some notable positive impacts of employment and entrepreneurship-related programmes. Studies show that TVET in conjunction with life-skills training, access to finance, apprenticeships and work placement can lead to participants formulating clear future objectives, securing employment and establishing businesses (Pompa 2014). Although the impact of these trainings on long-term employment and entrepreneurship prospects remains inconclusive, the available evidence does indicate some non-financial benefits of TVET in terms of young people’s self-

³ However, see (Bruck et al. 2016).

⁴ The nature of this relationship is, however, contested and is context dependent.

esteem, status in the community and dignity (Pompa 2014; Maxwell et al. 2017).

Overall, the evidence base for the impact of TVET and other employability interventions on conflict and migration remains relatively weak. What evidence does exist, points to a complex link between young people's aspirations and decisions in the context of variable socio-political and economic circumstances. Interventions attempting to address conflict and irregular migration among young people through livelihoods have been shown not only to have inconclusive and unsuitable theoretical assumptions, but also to have operational, political and other constraints that fall short of recognising the unintended consequences of the programmes on the context and realisation of the intended goals. Lastly, evaluations of such programmes also tend to privilege output-level achievements rather than overall impact (Mallett and Slater 2016; International Alert 2020).

A number of EUTF programmes on TVET in the region, along with many other programmes, have overall goals that are concerned either with addressing the root causes of violent conflict and/or of irregular migration. These are based on assumptions similar to those outlined in this section. This review critically examines these supposed links between TVET, un- or underemployment and conflict and irregular and unsafe migration. Its aim is to review the evidence of how programme activities contribute to these goals, to test the intervention logic and draw out lessons for future programming that could strengthen the relationship between action and intended outcomes. It is important to emphasise that this review does not attempt to evaluate programming. Rather, it seeks to evaluate the logic underlying TVET programmes, a subtle but important distinction.

4 Methodology

This review constitutes the first attempt to systematically bring together data collected from the EUTF's two learning components, the Monitoring and Learning System and the Research and Evidence Facility. It is based on a review of existing literature on the link between TVET, conflict and migration; analysis of existing datasets from the REF and Altai/MLS; and interviews with key informants.

4.1. Data sources

Datasets

Three datasets were used for the study. The first was a quantitative dataset from a 2019 REF study on the relationship between TVET, employment and mobility in Ethiopia and Uganda (Research and Evidence Facility 2019). The second comprises qualitative transcripts from the REF for the same study. The third set of qualitative data come from MLS's interview transcripts related to activities and outcomes of four consortium members implementing projects with TVET components in Kenya (referred to as 'Kenya Consortium' henceforth): the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF).

Existing studies

The study also integrated into the larger analysis research studies commissioned by the EUTF, specifically, studies on the impact of youth training and employment on migration (Research and Evidence Facility 2019) and on the link between skills development and conflict prevention (Altai Consulting 2019). We also reviewed other literature pertinent to the study's primary objectives, including peer-reviewed articles and grey literature on youth employment, skills training, migration and conflict.

Key informant interviews

Ten key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with staff in the EU delegations in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda – particularly those representatives working on the themes of TVET, employment and entrepreneurship, economic recovery and conflict prevention. Key informants also included staff from EUTF-funded projects, as well as from other projects aiming to contribute to youth employment and entrepreneurship. Lastly, a representative from a non-EUTF funded project (EYE, see below) was also interviewed.⁵

EUTF project documents

The project also utilised project and programme documents from EUTF-funded initiatives in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. In addition to individual project documents, we also consulted various

⁵ This interviewee was included in the study because the project has a similar logic model to the EU interventions, aiming as it does to combat unsafe migration and conflict through skills training. Further, we had limited information from Ethiopia (compared to Kenya and Somalia), where this interviewee came from.

quarterly, annual and other reports from the MLS⁶, which was compiled by Altai Consulting.

The projects and the main data sources are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: EUTF projects covered by the review

Programme/project name	Country	Timeframe and budget	Sources
Conflict prevention, peace and economic opportunities for the youth (Kenya Consortium)	Kenya	2016–19 €12,000,000	Best practice studies; Impact study; lessons learned studies; project final reports; case study; interview transcripts; MLS datasets
Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA) project	Mandera Triangle (Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia border)	2017–21 €13,300,000	Lessons learned study on TVET and EBT; impact and lessons learned study on livelihoods in borderland areas; technical briefs; endline evaluation; newsletters
SUPREME RISE SPRS-NU	Uganda	SUPREME – 2020-2024; €18,000,000 RISE – 2018–22; €19,700,000 SPRS-NU (Enabel component) – 2016–24; €4,900,000	Action research; project logframes; project documents and reports
SINCE EYE	Ethiopia	2016 – 2021 €19,845,000 2017-2022 €9,100,000	Mid-term reviews

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/content/results-monitoring-and-evaluation_en

4.2. Limitations

The key limitation of the present study is that it is based primarily on a desk review of previously collected data and available documentation, supported by a limited number of KIIs. We did not speak to project beneficiaries or government stakeholders (among others) to gather their perspectives on the short- and long-term impacts of TVET and other trainings⁷. Our main aim was to examine the assumptions underlying EUTF-funded projects, and to evaluate these against reported successes, shortcomings and lessons learned. Thus, the study is not an attempt to evaluate the impact of these projects in the long or short term, but rather an exercise in furthering our understanding of how such projects can enhance their influence, and of the factors that should be considered. A full impact evaluation of the programmes would be extremely valuable but lies beyond the scope of this review.

⁷ Rapid reviews commissioned by the REF are generally desk based and involve key informant interviews with at most 10 individuals. As such, the authors recognize this is as a major limitation of the study.

5 Description of EUTF interventions

This section provides a brief description of the EUTF projects in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia included in the current review and which are pertinent to exploring the link between TVET and employment, and engagement in conflict or irregular migration.

5.1. Kenya Consortium

The programme *Conflict Prevention, Peace, and Economic Opportunities for the Youth*, funded by the EUTF, aims to address the root causes of conflict in areas of Kenya at high risk of violent conflict and forced displacement. These areas are the coast and the northeast region, as well as Nairobi. The programme comprises three projects implemented by GIZ, RUSI and KRCS.

The ‘Youth Empowerment and Employment in Kenya’ project, was implemented by GIZ and its partner, the CAP Youth Empowerment Institute (CAP YEI). The project provided over 3,000 youth in marginalised areas with vocational skills to enable them to access economic opportunities.⁸ It offered both direct training to young people and capacity building to selected vocational training centres. RUSI’s ‘Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE II) in Kenya’ project contributed to EUTF objectives on peace and security and economic opportunities by setting up a mentorship programme for youth at risk of engaging in violent extremism and providing training to law enforcement officers on it.⁹ Finally, the KRCS’s project provided youth groups with training and equipment for businesses and vocational training, among other activities. The main target group for this project were young people who had previously been involved in gangs.¹⁰

All three programmes were run in parallel for three to four years. The EU brought these three implementing partners together as a consortium since they dealt with similar issues from different perspectives.¹¹

5.2. Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA)

BORESHA is a cross-border programme implemented by a consortium of the Danish Refugee Council, World Vision and CARE International with funding from the EUTF. ‘*Boresha*’ is a Swahili word that means ‘improving quality or conditions’. The programme aims to create greater economic and employment opportunities and strengthen the resilience of communities along the Kenya (Mandera)–Ethiopia (Dolo Ado) and Somalia (Dollow) border. In the tri-border area, thanks to a combination of

⁸ GIZ (no date). ‘Assessment of the Impact of Skills Development on Conflict Prevention amongst At-risk Youth in Coastal Kenya’ (henceforth, GIZ Impact Study).

⁹ RUSI (2021). ‘Final report for the STRIVE II project’. It should be noted that although there was no TVET component to RUSI’s project, we have included it in our analysis given its focus on mentoring and skills building as a way to deter involvement in conflict.

¹⁰ A fourth project implemented by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), funded by the EU (not EUTF) and called *Improving Social and Economic Opportunities for the Youth in Northern Kenya* targets the same age group and deals with the same thematic and geographical areas as the other organisations’ projects.

¹¹ KII, EU delegation, Kenya.

political unrest, conflict, adverse weather events and other historical and structural factors, the level of economic development has remained low.¹² BORESHA works with local communities and public authorities to establish transformative processes to enhance cross-border socioeconomic integration and to support resilience in the fragile and underdeveloped borderland areas.¹³ A major focus of the programme, thus, was the creation of a grant facility to provide financial support and vocational training, and the setting up of Business Development Centres to provide advisory services and technical assistance to emerging businesses.¹⁴

5.3. Uganda Projects

The three main EUTF interventions in Uganda focusing on improving livelihoods and economic empowerment to promote resilience and conflict mitigation are:

1. Strengthening, Protection and Economic Empowerment in Uganda (SUPREME) – World Vision
2. Response to Increased Demand on Government Services and Creation of Economic Opportunities in Uganda (RISE) – Action Against Hunger
3. Support Programme to the Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda (SPRS-NU) – Enabel

All interventions aim(ed) to improve the overall economic wellbeing of and build social cohesion between refugees and host communities through components such as job creation, market and value chain development, education/TVET, various types of livelihoods support, and conflict transformation mechanisms and activities. These interventions were/are also based on the EUTF objective of improved governance and conflict prevention, and reduction of forced displacement and irregular migration.

5.4. Ethiopia Projects

The two main interventions considered in this study are the ‘Stemming Irregular migration in Northern and Central Ethiopia’ (SINCE) and the ‘Employable Youth in Ethiopia’ (EYE) projects. The overall objective of the SINCE programme, funded by the EUTF, was to contribute to reduced irregular migration from Northern and Central Ethiopia by facilitating the creation of employment opportunities for potential migrants and returnees –especially women and youth – in areas of high migration in the country. This was achieved through, among other things, strengthening the capacities of TVET centres and Public Employment Services (PES) providers, and promoting Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) in strategic value chains.

The EYE project is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs. It focuses on four issues: migration, employment, TVET and conflict. The programme assumes that, when youth face unemployment or underemployment, they are more likely to engage in irregular and unsafe

¹² Tetra Tech (2020). ‘Lessons from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Enterprise-Based Training (EBT) Initiatives’. BORESHA [available at https://boresha.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BORESHA-TVET_EBT-Lessons-Learned.pdf].

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The BORESHA programme’s overall objective is: “To promote economic development and greater resilience, particularly among vulnerable groups, including youth, women, displaced persons and persons living with disabilities.” The main indicator in this regard was the percentage decrease in households applying negative coping mechanisms – irregular migration being one of them. (From the BORESHA Year 1 Report.) BORESHA also coordinates with the RASMI (Regional Approaches for Sustainable Conflict Management and Integration) programme on the link between TVET and violence prevention among youth. As such, a proportion of BORESHA’s TVET graduates are youth identified as being at risk of radicalisation, who participate in peace training provided by RASMI prior to BORESHA’s TVET intervention.

migration. A similar logic underpins involvement in conflict in the absence of livelihood opportunities. Thus, EYE focused on job creation and TVET. After providing training, the project connects job seekers with employers through its business service officers.

6 Findings

This section presents the key underlying assumptions for the projects covered in the review (see Table 1) and evidence on project outcomes. The main assumption underlying EUTF's overall intervention logic for its *greater economic and employment opportunities* strategic objective is that “short and long-term grievances arising from economic and social exclusion, marginalisation and inequality are amongst the most significant drivers of violence, forced displacement and illegal migration”.¹⁵ Therefore, several projects under this strategic objective followed the logic that providing access to educational and employment opportunities – especially to young people – would lead to a decline in grievances, reduce vulnerability, enhance economic stability, and contribute to positive peace and a reduction in unsafe migration.¹⁶

6.1 Key Assumptions

The Action Fiches of the projects reveal that the central assumptions underpinning the interventions revolve around a few key mechanisms thought to be responsible for conflict and unsafe or irregular migration. Four basic contextual features recur throughout many of the projects, each of which can be related to a particular dimension of young lives:

1. grievances as a result of marginalisation (political – in relation to the wider context)
2. exclusion or lack of opportunities (social – in relation to reference group, comparisons with peers)
3. lack of money or economic prospects (economic – in relation to household and individual survival and reference group)
4. absence of alternative activities, leaving young people idle (psychological – in relation to individuals' aspirations and mental wellbeing)¹⁷

The interventions are based on lessons learned from similar initiatives and research studies on the drivers of violence, conflict and irregular migration. For instance, the Kenya Consortium action substantiates the intervention logic that “if young people have inclusive access to better vocational educational opportunities, then their grievances will decline”. It does so with studies on, eg, youth political violence that show that, if young people are employed, they will be less likely to join violent movements for economic gain (Mercy Corps 2011). The low opportunity cost associated with engaging in conflict and violence in a context of limited and unequal economic opportunities is, thus, a frequently cited assumption.

Similarly, youth ‘idleness’ is said to be a ‘significant challenge and driver of vulnerability’.¹⁸ Manipulation by conflict actors thrives in a situation of idleness and lack of productive alternatives. Moreover, idleness is also held responsible for ‘bad habits’ such as drug use, engagement in crime and gangs, and prostitution. A phrase used in a focus group discussion (FGD) with youth TVET participants was that “an idle mind is a devil’s workshop”.¹⁹ This suggests that the benefits of TVET

¹⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/thematic/greater-economic-and-employment-opportunities>.

¹⁶ It is also worth noting that each project, typically, operates alongside complementary initiatives that contribute to the achievement of some overall objectives within a strategy.

¹⁷ This is pertinent particularly for those interventions targeting young people’s propensity for conflict and violence. ‘Idleness’ – or the lack of a productive alternative – is thought to be one of the main drivers of violent behaviour among youth. See Altai Consulting (2019).

¹⁸ GIZ Impact Study.

¹⁹ RUSI FGD.

are not simply concerned with securing livelihoods but also with providing young people with employment in the sense of something to do and keeping them occupied.

Aside from having an effect at the individual level, limited economic opportunities are also assumed to be instrumental in fomenting intercommunity conflict – such as between refugees and host communities. This appears to be one of the basic assumptions of the SUPREME project in Uganda, which aims to improve the overall safety and economic wellbeing of refugee and host communities.²⁰ It assumes that fostering economic empowerment through financial inclusion, PPPs and livelihood support will not only enhance the material situation of refugees and host communities, but also mitigate long-term conflict. This rationale is also applied by the RISE project, which aims to decrease “risk of conflict and secondary movements” by supporting the development of value chains between refugee and host communities, and therefore increasing livelihood opportunities for both communities.

A similar logic underpins projects addressing irregular migration. The SINCE project, for example, assumes that “the creation of productive value chains, the access to economic stability and the improvement in prospects reduce the risk of irregular migration”.²¹ Here, too, grievances play a critical role in theorising the relation between economic opportunities as a deterrent to unsafe migration: two main assumptions of SINCE are that short- and long-term grievances as a result of economic and social exclusion, marginalisation and inequality are important drivers of forced displacement and irregular migration and that, if the project can create economic opportunities, especially for young people and women, it will “catalyse stability, inclusive economic growth, social cohesion and development in the target area”.²²

6.2 How to TVET and other employment interventions influence conflict and migration?

Several projects covered in this review aimed to address conflict either directly or indirectly – for instance, the Kenya Consortium’s project targeted youth at risk of engaging in criminal activity or violent extremism, in order to contribute to peace and stability, particularly in peripheral areas. Project components follow the EUTF intervention logic in addition to being closely aligned with similar preventive models. RUSI’s STRIVE project, for instance, is predicated on the ‘Danish Model’, which states that preventive activities – such as strengthening livelihood opportunities for at-risk youth and enhancing youth engagement and a sense of belonging in their communities – can mitigate specific push factors encouraging young people to join violent extremist groups.²³ TVET and livelihood opportunities are thought to provide a substitute for engaging in negative behaviours such as drug use and involvement in gangs and conflict.

A central channel through which this is thought to occur is by fulfilling monetary incentives, the lack thereof being a reason for young people’s engagement in violence, in addition to other non-material factors. By contributing to skills development, training and job creation, the projects aim to reduce

²⁰ SUPREME Action Fiche [available at https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-ug-68_-_security_protection_and_economic_empowerment_supre.pdf].

²¹ SINCE Action Fiche [available at https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/t05-eutf-hoa-et-02_since_incl._2_addenda.pdf].

²² Ibid.

²³ RUSI (2021). Final Narrative Report; DANIDA (2015). ‘Lessons learned from Danish and other international efforts on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in development contexts – Evaluation Study’ [available at <https://um.dk/da/udenrigspolitik/sikkerhedspolitik/skroebelige-stater//~/media/um/danish-site/documents/udenrigspolitik/fred-sikkerhed-og-retsorden/201503studycve.pdf>].

the monetary incentives to participate in violence or criminal groups as other opportunities for economic development become available. In the case of the Kenya Consortium programme, evaluations show that young people who received mentorship, life skills and livelihood opportunities reported reduced drug use, less involvement in crime, and a stronger desire not to return to their previous life (characterised by drug use and criminal or gang-related activities).²⁴ Some TVET and employability-related interventions have also been shown to increase young people's engagement in the community and enhance their self-perception, in addition to providing economic benefits. Through its TVET training, the BORESHA project is said to have improved the resilience of youth in terms of: human capital, by improving young people's technical skills and ability to run businesses; financial capital by improving their ability to earn and invest; and social capital through improving both their self-perceptions and their standing, and their perception of their own families' and communities' future.²⁵ Similarly, RUSI's own analysis of its programme shows that employed and self-employed youth were 10 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, more likely to report positive changes in self-confidence levels than those who were unemployed.²⁶

Engagement in TVET and various forms of employment-related trainings has shown a positive impact on the prospects of finding employment and labour market integration. This can be seen in the context of the Support to Skilling Uganda Strategy (SSU), implemented jointly by the Belgium Development Agency Enabel, and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), with financial support from the Belgian government, EUTF, Irish Aid and GIZ. The results of a survey of 1,200 trainees and 58 employers²⁷ indicated that, of those who undertook regular trainings (between six- and nine-month periods), 65 per cent found employment, with 16 per cent in wage employment and 49 per cent self-employed.²⁸ Likewise, GIZ's skills development programme under the Kenya Consortium showed a job placement rate of 87 per cent in formal and self-employment in the seven counties of implementation.²⁹

Despite these successes, key informants expressed uncertainty about the prospects of beneficiaries acquiring satisfactory employment opportunities, as trainings do not guarantee employment.³⁰ Although the programmes provide several non-financial contributions, such as a positive influence on youth self-esteem and confidence, the longer-term impact on propensity to engage in negative behaviours (including joining gangs and violent extremist groups) remains unclear. Moreover, according to one interviewee, trainings may even foment conflict, as those who are not selected to participate in economic empowerment programmes feel neglected, which may create conflict between them and project staff as well as beneficiaries.

Regardless of these outcomes, the review of selected project documents and interviews with key informants did not adequately address the impact of these employability initiatives on conflict and migration. A central issue with answering this question is the short-term and limited timeframe nature of such projects, which do not always – if ever – have robust follow-up mechanisms with graduates and trainees; moreover, labour market information and job placement systems in these contexts (whether related to projects or not) remain limited. While, in the life of the project, several successes (output level) have been noted – in terms of the number of youth trained, number of businesses launched, number of youth who were employed/self-employed – there have been few attempts to understand the long-term impact or sustainability of such initiatives.

²⁴ RUSI (2020). *STRIVE II: Lessons Learned Report*; Altai Consulting (2019).

²⁵ BORESHA, 2021. *TVET Tracer Study*; KII with BORESHA representative.

²⁶ RUSI, *STRIVE II*.

²⁷ The programme was implemented in the Northern Uganda, Albertine/Rwenzori and Karamoja Regions.

²⁸ SSU/SDF Tracer studies infographic.

²⁹ GIZ Impact Study.

³⁰ KIIs in Uganda.

A mid-term evaluation of the EUTF for Africa (2015–19) published in October 2020 raises similar points *vis-à-vis* the impact of improved employability and economic opportunities on migration.³¹ Although the Fund has recorded various successes in training young people and providing employment and entrepreneurship options to target populations, there is limited evidence that TVET, particularly in remote areas, has resulted in jobs for trainees in the local labour market. In such cases mobility towards larger towns or cities may be necessary for trainees who want to use their new skills. It is equally unclear whether the trainings have led or will lead to a stronger integration of the target population into the local labour market such as to prevent people from becoming irregular migrants (internationally). This, according to the evaluation, is because the target populations for the trainings – women, displaced persons and young people – are less likely to engage in high-risk, costly and long-distance migration. Therefore, although nearly 700,000 people are said to have benefited from EUTF livelihoods support in various forms in the Horn of Africa and Sahel and Lake Chad regions, the impact on irregular migration remains unclear.

The REF's 2019 study on the impact of TVET on migration in Uganda and Ethiopia yielded some critical results in this regard. It found that participation in TVET appears to have increased the likelihood that people will develop plans to migrate. However, respondents were much more likely to express a desire to move internally or to a neighbouring country than to travel further afield. In Ethiopia, having received training, many graduates of the TVET courses were anticipating moving to other parts of the country in search of work. In Uganda, any relationship between employment and migration is tempered by the broader refugee context from South Sudan. Since a large proportion of the respondents were refugees from that country, many of those planning to move were looking to return there. As in Ethiopia, only small numbers were thinking of moving further afield (fewer than 6per cent), referring to Europe, the US and South Africa.

Moreover, data showed that nearly all Ethiopian respondents were planning to move in search of better job opportunities, while a third of the respondents in Uganda gave reasons such as joining family members, returning home, or simply looking for adventure or the good life. These differences between the refugee setting of Uganda and the relatively more stable environment of the Ethiopian research sites highlight the fact that the particular mix of factors that shape people's movements varies with the context.

Ultimately, the study found that ideas about migration are not major factors in explaining young people's interest in participating in TVET. In Uganda, fewer than 2per cent of respondents referred to their interest in moving as a reason to start training. In Ethiopia, 13per cent of respondents acknowledged 'making it easier to move' as one of their reasons for enrolling and fewer than half of these (just over 5per cent) listed this as the most important reason.

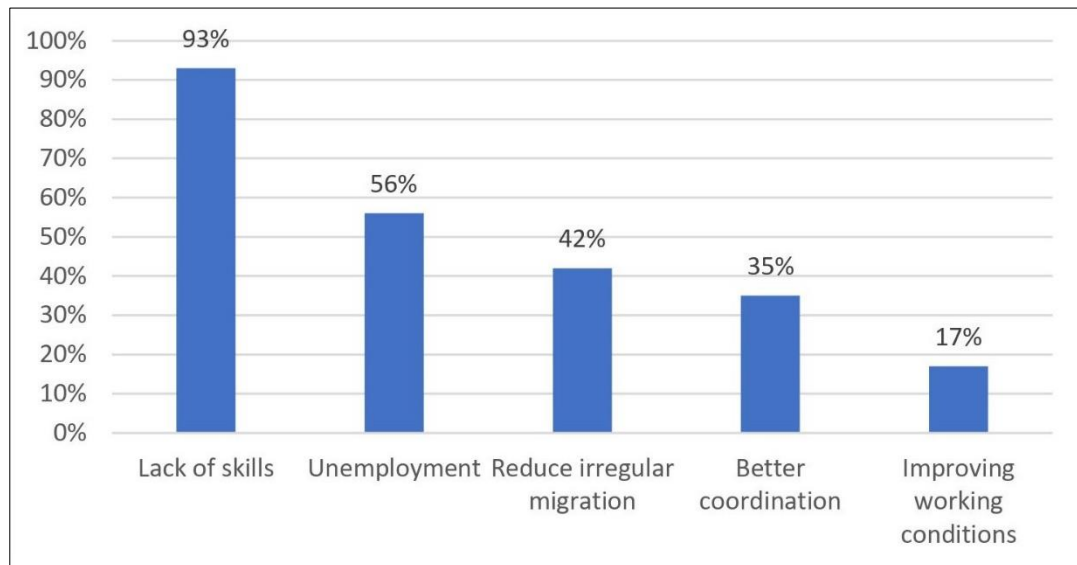
Here a key distinction needs to be made between internal mobility or regular migration, on the one hand, and irregular migration, on the other. Those who had participated in TVET were in many cases able to use the skills they had gained to seek employment, and thus arguably had more choice about where they went and could move more safely than those who lacked skills, resources and choice, and who therefore opted for irregular migration.

That the link between economic opportunities and irregular migration is not so straightforward is also visible in the final evaluation of the SINCE programme, where a greater percentage of respondents believed that SINCE is more likely to be able to address the 'problem' – lack of skills –

³¹ 'Mid-term Evaluation of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa 2015–2019' [available at https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/default/files/mtr_final_report_1.pdf].

than to 'reduce irregular migration' (see Figure 1 below).

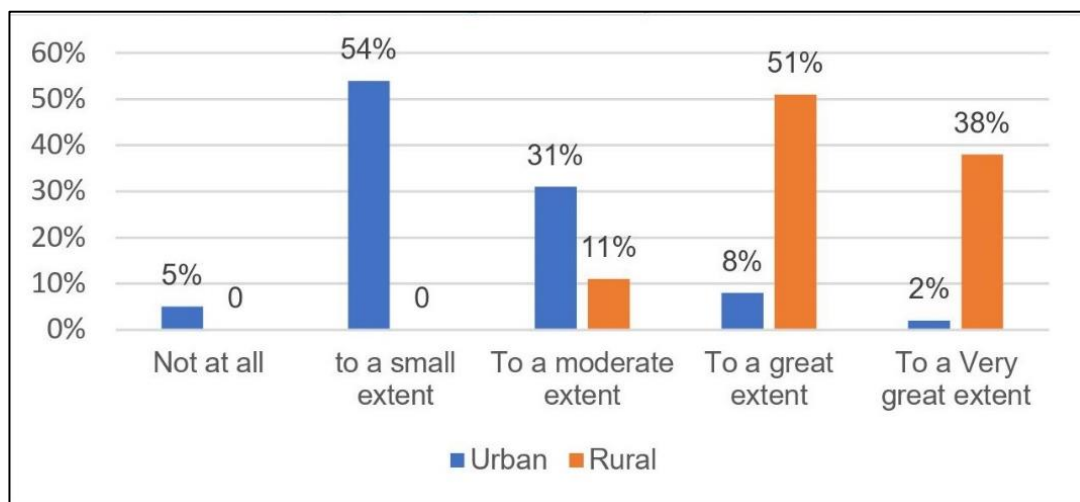
Figure 1: SINCE capacity to address problems



Source: SINCE Final Evaluation

However, this view differed between the rural and urban areas, with more rural respondents mentioning the programme's contribution to reducing irregular migration.

Figure 2: Contribution to reducing irregular migration as perceived in rural and urban areas



Source: SINCE Final Evaluation

In its lifetime, the SINCE Programme registered some key achievements vis-a-vis skills development and access to the labour market. For instance, 41 TVET short-term training programmes based on market demand were introduced or improved; over 7,000 trainees completed a certified TVET short-term training supported by SINCE; 207 job creation-oriented Public Private Partnerships were supported and created; and nearly 7,000 job placements were facilitated. However, the Evaluation also states: *If we look at the level of the general objective in terms of the Programme contribution to the reduction of irregular migration or to the reduction of the propensity to migrate due to difficult economic conditions, current information does not allow to draw final conclusions although the*

economic dimension clearly emerges as one of the main factors that can influence irregular migration choices (SINCE Programme Final Evaluation, Page 16).

6.3 Intangible/non-financial impacts

Despite the unclear long-term impacts and sustainability of employment-related interventions on the lives of graduates and trainees, there is little doubt about the immediate non-financial and intangible effects. These less tangible impacts, which are more related to young people's individual sense of hope and direction, have been of particular concern for programmes that have the goal of reducing engagement in conflict and violent extremism. As mentioned above, trainees and graduates of such programmes report increases in levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and a positive influence of the training on their standing in the community. Since these programmes also bring together diverse groups of youth who may or may not have the opportunity to interact on a regular basis, they also positively influence socialisation and intergroup behaviours. For instance, in an FGD, participants noted that programme activities allowed for young people from conflicting sides to come together and befriend each other.³²

Mentorship components – such as in the Kenya Consortium project linking at-risk youth with mentors and other stakeholders in their communities for various meetings and activities – were shown to have a positive impact on youth belonging and mental wellbeing. In an FGD, a mentee reflected that he had more friends now than previously and the other mentees were like family to him (a viewpoint with which everyone else in the FGD agreed).³³ Mentorship and having a community of youth in such programmes has also provided young people with a new social network through which to seek advice, companionship and camaraderie. These aspects have further helped them deal with anger and stress-related behaviours. Moreover, a few mentees, through the help of their mentor, mentioned having gained leadership and mentorship skills, which they are using to support other young people at risk of radicalisation, or those who may engage in negative behaviours such as gang activity or drug use. Many young people reported that 'being busy' or having their 'mind or time occupied' through skills training helped to deter them from continuing to engage in negative behaviours.

These thoughts were also echoed by key informants: anecdotal evidence suggests that among refugees in Uganda, acquiring some kind of training was beneficial beyond its material impact by helping trainees "come out of a depressive condition and express themselves".³⁴ However, this was not a view shared in other settings. One key informant reflected that being employed does not automatically lead to reduced conflict – the employment or training must be accompanied by other skills, a strong work ethic and "psychological and intellectual" maturity.³⁵ Nevertheless, the same informant added that training and employment do seem to influence youth grievances, and even if young people continue to have grievances, they learn to express them in a healthy manner through discussion.

Thus, TVET and employability programmes, especially when they are combined with life skills and other 'soft' training, tend to produce several non-material benefits for participants. It should be noted, however, that such programmes may also have unintended negative effects. Those who are left out of these programmes in a given location, as a result of beneficiary targeting criteria, may become resentful of others benefiting from the programming and this may lead to incidents of conflict in the community. There is also preliminary evidence of such training disturbing the status

³² MLS data; KRCS field KIIs; and FGD notes.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ KII, EU delegation, Uganda.

³⁵ KII, EU delegation, Ethiopia.

quo in some households by empowering women (financially); this has reportedly led to incidences of gender-based violence.³⁶ Therefore, while the projects have registered several successes in terms of empowerment of girls and women, power and household dynamics, and mitigation measures to deal with unintended negative consequences need to be more thoroughly and intentionally integrated into their design.

6.4 Impact of Covid-19 on TVET programming

As the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic started surging in the HoA, various measures such as curfews, lockdowns, school closures, border closures and bans on public gatherings were imposed by governments. Humanitarian and development efforts in the region were negatively influenced by these measures. This was particularly relevant in the case of TVET because most countries in the region enforced the closure of educational institutions. As TVET training can be challenging to carry out exclusively on the internet, this led to a decrease in gains made through the programmes in terms of implementation and other factors. For example, the Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS, part of the Kenya Consortium project) was supposed to complete its intervention by December 2020 but had to request a one-year extension. Moreover, the closure of schools and institutions had a disproportionately negative impact on girls and women, contributing to increases in gender-based violence, food insecurity, early pregnancies and various other protection issues (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2021). Given that girls and women are more likely to drop out of their educational programme or institution entirely, for many the disruptions brought a premature end to their training.

In addition to the closure of educational institutions, the closure of borders also negatively affected the delivery of TVET programming. For the BORESHA project, several activities were affected: because training was provided in Mandera (Kenya), trainees in Somalia could not access these as a result of the closures. Some adaptive measures taken at this time were to use other facilities in Somalia for the training and to call on village savings and loans associations to cushion the impact of Covid-19 on households. Other programmes, such as STRIVE II and EYE, used online training or training through videos uploaded on WhatsApp or YouTube. Lastly, in Uganda, trainees were taken directly to places of work to teach them on the job rather than in a classroom setting of an institution.

³⁶ KII, EU delegation, Uganda.

7 Discussion

Project data, impact and lessons learned studies, and interviews with key informants reveal a complex but somewhat inconclusive picture of the impact of TVET and employability-related interventions on conflict behaviour and unsafe migration. Although the data show that the EUTF-funded projects were (and are) successful in improving the lives of young people by providing them opportunities for employment and income generation, their longer-term impact in relation to the overall goals remains unclear. One possibility, which requires more in-depth research than was possible for this study, is that the skills and assets that TVET participants gained from the projects have made them more able to choose whether, when and where to move, and to do so safely, thereby having a positive impact on their lives and allowing them to engage in productive mobility or migration rather than unsafe irregular migration. It remains to be seen how young people who acquire training are able to sustain jobs and whether the quality of jobs that they are able to get as a result of their training improves.³⁷ Analysing this longer-term impact in relation to the programme goals of improving the future lives of young people in the region but also improving their opportunities, their livelihoods and their overall wellbeing in a sustainable way will provide an important learning point for the future development of TVET programming.

As noted above, in addition to the tangible impact on young people's career and economic prospects, TVET and other employability-related interventions do have several non-material positive benefits. The Altai study (2019) on the Kenya Consortium noted five mechanisms by which TVET contributed to a reduction in the likelihood of conflict: by increasing economic outcomes, by keeping the youth busy, by reducing grievances, by providing opportunities for socialisation, and through conflict management training. Although mostly anecdotal, evidence from the projects reviewed here shows positive outcomes *vis-à-vis* several negative behaviours, such as reduced crime and drug use. Other non-material benefits of these programmes include promoting youth self-confidence, fostering engagement with the larger community and contributing to localised social cohesion. However, whereas some of these behavioural problems might be relatively easy to address, others (such as radicalisation) may not be as easily resolved through the kinds of economic interventions that TVET represents.

The available data demonstrate the significant positive impact of employment on young people's self-confidence and aspirations for the future. Securing employment and being able to provide for self and family were the ultimate goals to which the young people interviewed in the various research projects aspired. Being given the opportunity to do so was generally viewed as a positive impact by the beneficiaries. Stories of beneficiaries who, thanks to TVET, were able to acquire new skills and therefore new modes of earning were noted as key successes by the projects. Despite the uncertainty of their sustainability in the long term and of the greater impact on young people's decisions to engage in unsafe migration or conflict, the evidence points to several successes in the short term *vis-à-vis* income generation.

This review reinforces the findings of other studies that TVET can generate important benefits for young people, the labour market and the improvement of living conditions in the HoA. However, there remains great uncertainty about how far such improvements may contribute to the reduction of young people's engagement in either conflict and violent extremism or unsafe and irregular migration. Moreover, the mechanisms by which TVET may contribute to these outcomes appear to

³⁷ It is important to note that another facet of some programmes has been to boost the quality of employment. For example, the SINCE programme has supported the adoption of decent work principles in Ethiopia in general, and this has one criterion for the selection of employers as partners in the programme.

be contingent upon the context. Adopting the recommendations (below) on understanding and evaluating programme impacts may in time give more robust data to explain these linkages. However, there presently is not yet a reliable basis on which to attribute changes in conflict and migration to the delivery of TVET programming.

From this conclusion, it follows that greater caution needs to be taken about setting migration or conflict outcomes as the goals of TVET programmes against which they are evaluated. Improving young people's skills, prospects for employment and livelihoods may contribute to improving the wider conditions that reduce the likelihood of their engaging in conflict or irregular migration. These may be important outcomes in themselves and good reason to continue to implement TVET programmes. However, suggesting that TVET can deliver outcomes beyond these, in terms of preventing violence, conflict or irregular migration may result in programmes being evaluated as failures, or else having to prove their success without adequate empirical justification. This caution about setting individual development programme objectives too narrowly with the overall of EU funding streams is one which may resonate in other settings. The EUTF may have particular goals (we could say 'super-goals') and pillars of action, which directs programming to particular locations and sectors – as it certainly has with TVET. Development programmes such as TVET may deliver huge benefits for people, even as they make a minimal or untraceable contribution to the super-goal of preventing conflict or irregular migration. It is important this does not undermine the recognition of their developmental success.

Recommendations

1. Focus on Impacts rather than Outputs: Economic empowerment projects that aim to influence conflict and migration outcomes tend to focus on *outputs* rather than *impact*. Although end-of-project documents reveal numbers of graduates and trainees, jobs acquired, and other financial and entrepreneurial services provided to beneficiaries, they are generally silent on the wider impact of these trainings beyond anecdotal evidence. Independent, third-party evaluations that investigate the longer-term impact of such projects on conflict and migration dynamics and behaviours are, thus, essential. Rather than evaluating projects only at their close, a longitudinal perspective must be adopted, tracing the employment outcomes of participants and graduates at several different time points – ideally after at least six months, one year and two years.
2. Apply a 'Do No Harm' principle to programming in contexts of actual or potential conflict. All TVET programming/projects must include a conflict-sensitivity assessment at the baseline stage in order to ensure that the intervention minimizes negative impact and maximizes positive impact. A comprehensive conflict sensitivity assessment, which includes an analysis of the context, sources of conflict, and the interaction between the programme and the context is critical (e.g. in the beneficiary selection process). Subsequent to the assessment, projects could devise ways to ensure that conflict mitigation mechanisms are integrated in the framework. In some contexts, livelihoods programming can also be a vehicle through which peace is fostered³⁸.
3. Promote employment prospects including 'positive migration' of graduates. In evaluating the value of TVET programmes, it is important not to equate the migration of graduates as evidence of a failure. Economic migration undertaken by skilled individuals who have a

³⁸See for example - https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2020_USAID_Livelihoods-and-Conflict-A-Toolkit-for-Intervention.pdf

realistic chance of finding employment and travelling safely is wholly different from irregular, unsafe migration; equipping people with the ability to undertake the former form of 'positive' migration may be a positive outcome of TVET projects that helps people to avoid being compelled to move through irregular and unsafe channels. Providing TVET graduates and participants with diplomas or certificates and investing in matching workers with employers and national-level training and enterprise funds can help people to make the most of their training. If they move, having such support may enable them to pursue legal migration pathways rather than unsafe and irregular ones.

4. Gather further evidence about the link (if any) between TVET and irregular migration.
Research on employability should also explore whether graduates are more or less likely to be engaged in conflict activities (formal or informal) as well as regular or irregular migration. While there is some literature on the link between TVET and employment generation and conflict, studies on the impact of such programmes on irregular migration are generally scant.
5. Promote linking of TVET initiatives with wider advocacy around decent work conditions.
Often TVET activities are implemented as discrete projects without being linked to wider efforts to promote decent work conditions including reform of legal frameworks and labour codes, adherence to international labour conventions, and integration with social protection programmes.

References

- Altai Consulting. 2019. Conflict Prevention, Peace, and Economic Opportunities for the Youth: Lessons learned from a consortium approach to stability and conflict prevention in Kenya. Altai Consulting & European Union Emergency Trust Fund for the Horn of Africa.
- Aslany, M., J. Carling, M. B. Mjelva and T. Sommerfelt (2021). *Systematic review of determinants of migration aspirations*. QuantMig Project Deliverable 2.2. Southampton, University of Southampton.
- Bruck, T., N.T. Ferguson, V. Izzzi, and W. Stojetz. 2016. Jobs Aid Peace: A Review of the Theory and Practice of the Impact of Employment Programmes on Peace in Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries. Berlin: International Security and Development Center.
- DFID. 2018. Understanding the impact of livelihood opportunities and interventions on migration patterns. UK: Research and Evidence Division, Department for International Development.
- Honwana, Alcinda. 2014. 'Waithood': Youth Transitions and Social Change. In *Development and Equity: an interdisciplinary exploration by ten scholars from Africa, Asia and Latin America*, edited by D. Foeken, T. Dietz and L. Haan. Leiden: Brill.
- Honwana, Alcinda. 2012. *The time of youth: work, social change, and politics in Africa*. Sterling, Virginia: Kumarian Press.
- International Alert. 2020. Can more jobs bring peace: Understanding peace impact in employment programme design in Kenya and Somalia. London: International Alert.
- Ismail, Olawale, and Funmi Olonisakin. 2021. Why do youth participate in violence in Africa? A review of evidence. *Conflict, Security & Development* 21 (3):371-399.
- Langthaler, M., and D. Gunduz. 2020. Preventing migration with vocational education? Understanding the migration-vocational education nexus. In *OFSE Briefing Paper*. Vienna: Austrian Foundation for Development Research (OFSE).
- Mallett, R., and R. Slater. 2016. Livelihoods, conflict and aid programming: is the evidence base good enough? *Disasters* 40 (2):226-45.
- Maxwell, D., E. Stites, S.C. Robillard, and M. Wagner. 2017. Conflict and Resilience: A Synthesis of Feinstein International Center Work on Building Resilience and Protecting Livelihoods in Conflict-Related Crises. Boston: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.
- Mercy Corps. 2011. Understanding Political Violence among Youth: Evidence from Kenya on the links between youth economic independence, social integration, and stability. Portland, OR: Mercy Corps.
- Mo Ibrahim Foundation. 2021. COVID-19 in Africa one year on: Impact and prospects. London: Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

ODI. 2013. What is the evidence on the impact of employment creation on stability and poverty reduction in fragile states: A systematic review. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Pompa, C. 2014. TVET and skills training in fragile and conflict affected countries. UK: Economic and Private Sector; Professional Evidence and Applied Knowledge Services.

Research and Evidence Facility. 2019. The Impact of Youth Training and Employment on Migration Dynamics in the Horn of Africa. London and Nairobi: EU Trust Fund for Africa (Horn of Africa Window) Research and Evidence Facility.