



Ethiopia Hotspot

2017 Annual Report

ETHIOPIA HOTSPOT OVERVIEW

Program goal and objectives:

Goal:

To ensure that the migration of women and girls to the Middle East for domestic work is safer.

Objectives:

1. Generate improved understanding and practice of safer migration amongst source communities.
2. Develop and improve economic alternatives for the poorest and most likely to migrate women and girls.
3. Strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to empower and coalesce in support of potential and returnee migrant workers.

SLAVERY RISKS AMONG ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS

- Ethiopia is experiencing extremely high levels of migration of women and girls to the Middle East for domestic work.
- In transit and on arrival, female migrants are at high risk of abuse, exploitation and of falling into situations of slavery.
- Many women returning from situations of servitude in the Middle East are in dire need of mental health support and other services.



1. OPERATING CONTEXT

Development of migration systems and processes

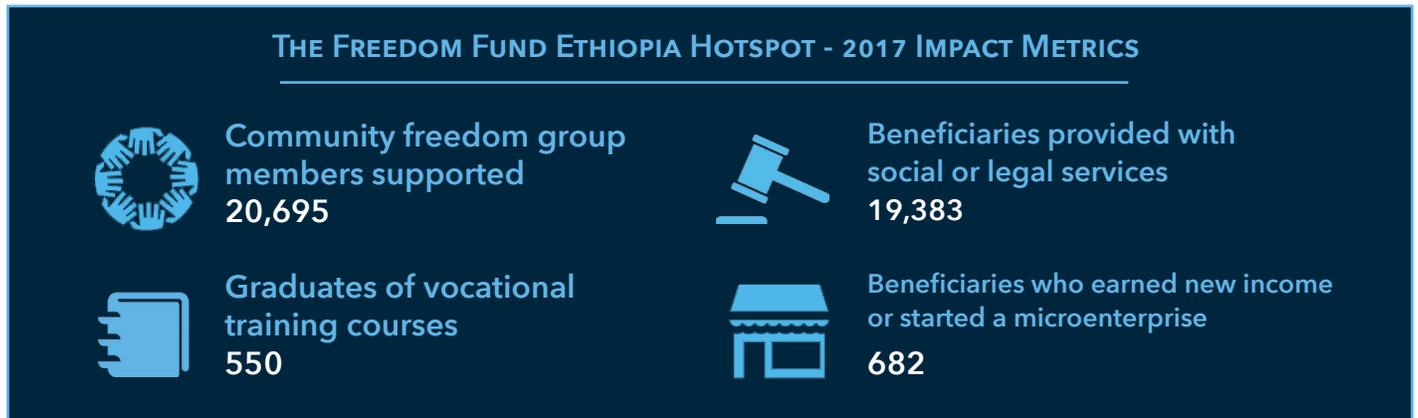
In 2017, the Ethiopian government made positive steps towards achieving several of the goals outlined in the Overseas Employment Proclamation 923, a law that was enacted in 2016 to improve labour migration and safeguard Ethiopian migrant workers overseas. The law established specific age and education requirements for migrant workers, introduced pre-departure skills trainings into official migration processes and prioritised the establishment of bilateral agreements with receiving countries. Some of the key achievements included the signing of a bilateral agreement between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia, the largest destination country for domestic workers, the drafting of pre-departure training manuals in four languages (Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrigna and English), and the provision of pre-departure training of trainers sessions to Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) officers at the regional, zonal and woreda levels. Although progress is being made, the structures and systems necessary to support labour migration are not yet finalised; therefore, at the end of 2017 there was still no legal channel for labour migration and migration to the Middle East for domestic work in practice.

“Nation Without Violation” campaign

In March 2017, Saudi Arabia announced its “Nation Without Violation” campaign, which sought to deport all undocumented migrant workers within Saudi Arabia after 25 June 2017. Upon the announcement of the campaign, the Ethiopian government urged Ethiopian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia to go to the Embassy and collect their travel documents. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia also requested the King of Saudi Arabia to extend the period provided for undocumented workers to voluntarily leave; the period was later extended to the end of the year.

To prepare for the returnees, the Ethiopian government created a taskforce comprised of representatives from MOLSA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In order to facilitate the return process for migrant workers, members of the taskforce opened “hubs” in Saudi Arabia to issue travel documents to migrant workers, provided discounts on flights of up to 50%, increased the number of flights from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia to 12 times a day and provided tax free privileges on personal items brought back to Ethiopia. According to some government reports, approximately 70,000 migrant workers had voluntarily returned to Ethiopia between April and mid-November and approximately 14,000 were forcibly deported between mid-November until 31 December 2017. Although exact numbers are unknown, it is estimated that up to 430,000 more Ethiopian migrant workers could be at risk of forced deportation now that the grace period has ended.

2. HEADLINE RESULTS



19,383 individuals provided with social or legal services

In 2017, hotspot partners more than doubled the number of beneficiaries reached with social or legal services. Much of this progress was due to increased community outreach through collaboration with government services. For example, one partner worked with local health offices to train health extension workers on migration and trafficking, causes of migration, and positive and negative aspects of migration. These health extension workers then incorporated information on safe migration into their service delivery approach. Another partner worked with the federal taskforce developed to assist those returning from Saudi Arabia, and helped to provide medical treatment, individual and group counselling and recreational services to returnees. Other partners delivered psychosocial support services to returnee migrant workers, many of whom were subject to domestic servitude.

20,695 individuals engaged in community freedom groups

Leveraging last year's work, hotspot partners continued to implement a variety of community freedom groups to raise awareness of safer migration and equip community members to share this information with others in their local networks. For example, one partner incorporated safe migration discussions into the meetings of savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs). Under the project, SACCO members received basic business skills training to help increase their household incomes, providing an alternative to migration should they choose to stay in Ethiopia. This year SACCO members also discussed migration push and pull factors and were trained on safe migration preparedness. In the Amhara region, partners continued to work with local government officials to reach both potential and returnee migrants through community conversation groups. In these groups, implementing partners worked with community facilitators and returnees to discuss human trafficking, safe migration and information required to make informed decisions about migration.

550 individuals graduated from vocational training

Vocational training provides project participants the opportunity to develop skills and find local employment within Ethiopia or to better prepare them for employment abroad, in anticipation of the ban on migration being lifted. Training was provided through local vocational skill training centres on food preparation and catering, driving, hair dressing and business skills, whilst other project participants were given skills training to facilitate employment in domestic work, including housekeeping and caregiving, as well as Arabic culture and language.

682 people earned a new income or started a microenterprise

To enable self-help group (SHG) members to achieve economic empowerment, a combination of livelihood training and seed money was provided. One partner teamed up with the local university and government development enterprise office to provide training on life, business and financial literacy skills. In addition to the training, eligible SHGs received 450,000 Ethiopian Birr (approximately \$16,636 USD) to use as a revolving fund. Employing a similar approach, another partner also provided skills trainings on microenterprise selection and financial management. Upon completing the training, each individual received 6,000 Ethiopian Birr (approximately \$220 USD) to start their business.



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3. ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC DRIVERS OF SLAVERY

Throughout 2017, implementing partners continued to make progress toward building positive relationships with government officials as well as stronger coordination of anti-trafficking and safe migration measures between three key stakeholders: government, civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations. The specific activities and progress made at each of these levels is detailed below.

Improving coordination among government offices working on migration and anti-trafficking

To this aim, government meetings were held in both the regions in which the hotspot is operating, Addis Ababa and Amhara. The outcomes of the meetings are summarised below.

- **Partners present to the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BOLSA) in Addis Ababa.** A one-day workshop was conducted in coordination with the Addis Ababa Anti-Trafficking Taskforce to outline what government and CSO stakeholders are doing to support safer migration and identify areas of collaboration.
- **Updating regional officials on the progress of work in Amhara.** As the Freedom Fund project was extended one year ago from Addis Ababa to include Amhara, a progress update was provided to regional officials at a one-day workshop. At the end of the meeting, the government officially endorsed the hotspot's approach within Amhara. In 2018, there are plans to explore opportunities for further collaboration with government agencies to scale some of the hotspot's approaches in more zones across the region.

Improving coordination among CSOs working on migration and anti-trafficking

In 2017, the 12 partner organisations that comprise the Ethiopia hotspot continued to establish a strong track record for how to engage communities and promote informed decision making about overseas employment. To help further the impact of the program, partners shared lessons learned and best practices with other organisations.

- **Establishment of a national migration forum.** In 2016, following an exposure visit to the Philippines, CSOs, partners and government officials put together a report that detailed recommendations for improving labour migration processes in Ethiopia. The report recommended the creation of a permanent mechanism for CSOs to provide informed feedback to the government to promote migration policies and processes that better reflect the communities' needs. In 2017, the Ethiopia hotspot sought to facilitate the development of such a mechanism by bringing government and CSO stakeholders together through a national migration forum. During the initial meeting, five locally-based organisations including two hotspot partners, government officials and a Freedom Fund representative were selected to serve as the board of the forum.

In 2018, the board will draft a working document that details the specific purpose of the forum, develop by-laws and provide ideas for how the forum might complement other networks working within the sector in Ethiopia.

- **Engagement with Ethiopia's largest NGO network.** The Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA) is the largest NGO network within Ethiopia, with over 400-member organisations. In 2017, Freedom Fund representatives had the opportunity to present to the network's migration working group. The presentation covered topics such as the need for a formal labour migration policy, the importance of collaboration among CSOs and government, ways to address the need for comprehensive services for overseas workers and the benefits of communicating a balanced approach on migration - one that recognises the potential risks and benefits of overseas employment. During the session, a representative from the Attorney General's Office was present and answered questions.

Improving coordination among community-based organisations

Through a partner organisation working in Addis Ababa, the Freedom Fund was able to work with community structures called "iddirs" to incorporate a safer migration mandate within their by-laws. This is a promising approach that allows communities to more efficiently raise awareness of safer migration and build the capacity of their local structures to do so in a sustainable manner. Noteworthy progress from 2017 is described below.

- **Strengthening community-based organisations.** A Freedom Fund representative participated in an iddir council meeting, which was attended by leaders representing 7,500 iddirs across Addis Ababa. During the meeting, the iddir council endorsed the hotspot's model and voiced support for scaling the approach to other sub-cities within Addis Ababa. The iddir council was also encouraged to think about how they could share this approach with iddirs in other regions of Ethiopia.
- **Scaling successful approaches.** Leveraging the support provided by the Addis Iddirs Council, the hotspot organised a learning trip for iddir leaders from Addis Ababa to visit the Amhara region. The purpose of the visit was for the Addis leaders to share the different methods they use to raise awareness of safer migration and discuss ways in which Amhara leaders and government officials could incorporate a similar approach. Upon returning from the learning visit, the Addis Iddirs Council signed an MOU with BOLSA to incorporate safer migration awareness raising into the iddirs within all sub-cities of Addis Ababa. The council also committed to formally collaborate with BOLSA to work on safer migration issues. The buy-in of the model, as seen in Addis, may help it expand into other regions.

4. ENHANCING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY

Nepal learning visit

In August 2017, the Ethiopia hotspot conducted a week-long learning visit in Nepal for 12 NGO representatives. Similar to Ethiopia, the Nepal government has instituted intermittent travel bans to help regulate the migration of Nepalese workers, specifically women traveling to the Middle East for work. Given the two countries' parallel experiences with migration, the learning visit aimed to harness the learnings of the Nepali government and local NGOs to inform the hotspot work in Ethiopia. Whilst in Nepal, the trip participants attended meetings with government officials, local CSOs working on migration, a trade union, media groups and a research and policy expert. Upon returning to Ethiopia, the partners developed a report of lessons learned and approaches that could be applied to the work within the Ethiopia hotspot. Ways to leverage this report will be explored further in 2018.

Mental health service delivery for returnee migrant workers

One of the Freedom Fund's Addis-based partners provides comprehensive services to returnee migrants, including counselling, livelihood training and assistance in reconnecting with families and communities. To continue strengthening the provision of these services, a mental health expert worked with the organisation to develop a robust set of standard operating procedures (SOPs). The SOPs seek to ensure the delivery of quality, consistent services within a returnee/survivor-focused approach. Given the nascent stage of mental health service delivery for trafficking survivors in Ethiopia, the SOPs may also be used as a model for others working within the sector.

Improving conceptual clarity among implementing partners

To help promote a rights-based approach across the hotspot, the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) provided a five-day training on issues relating to safer migration and trafficking. Some of the key objectives of the training were to: (1) strengthen a rights-based perspective among partners, (2) clarify the concepts and definitions related to human trafficking and migration, and (3) equip hotspot partners with the tools to identify survivors of trafficking and incorporate survivor-centred approaches into their work with returnee migrants.

Following the GAATW training, all participants developed a plan for sharing this new knowledge and information; as a result of this, 790 individuals participated in the partners' follow-up trainings, including partners' project staff, leaders from other local CBOs (such as women's associations and iddirs), local government officials, students, volunteers and community members, including returnees.

5. LEARNING



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Government's willingness to engage with the hotspot

In 2016, the Freedom Fund sponsored a trip for a delegation of 10 Addis Ababa government officials and NGO leaders to travel from Ethiopia to the Philippines to learn about the country's advanced migration system. To strengthen the relationships built during the trip, in 2017, the hotspot continued to engage with members of the learning trip delegation. The delegates attended partner meetings, presented with Freedom Fund representatives at the CCRDA meeting, and helped launch the national migration forum. Furthermore, officials at different governmental levels have expressed interest in collaborating with the hotspot program and its partner organisations. Government engagement has been essential to the hotspot program's success since it began in 2015. These relationships were not only maintained in 2017 but strengthened. This collaborative, strategic approach will continue to be applied in 2018.

LSHTM research uncovers approaches for further exploration

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) produced a mid-term report in 2017 that provided a qualitative assessment of the program's progress thus far. Through interviews with implementing partners, project participants, government officials, and other local stakeholders, the report outlined perceptions of the hotspot and safer migration. Some of the lessons gleaned from the research are as follows:

- In Amhara, there was a qualitative difference in the way community members talked about migration, depending on whether or not they were exposed to hotspot activities. In intervention areas, participants accurately listed the measures potential migrants could take to reduce their risks during migration. Individuals in comparison sites were not able to provide this level of clarity when describing migration routes and hazards.
- The research also confirmed that collaboration between implementing partners and government is progressing well. Respondents on both sides of the implementing partner-government partnership mentioned that effective cooperation and integration through formal initiatives were particular strengths of the hotspot program.
- Some respondents noted dissatisfaction in some of the vocational training components, such as having to establish group businesses or feeling like the seed money provided was too small an amount. Although some participants admitted that their expectations had been high, this may be an area for the program to explore more moving forward. It will be beneficial to understand if more expectation setting needs to be done, or if there should be adjustments made to the vocational training approaches.
- One aspect of the program that received significant praise was the active involvement of returnees and other trainees in conducting "community conversations" and other forms of awareness-raising. Participants found these approaches to be an extremely rewarding experience and talked about how their involvement gave them "morale." They described how it made them feel that they could give back to their communities and provide useful knowledge to others. Given the positive feedback received about the community conversations, it may be worth exploring how the Amhara partner-developed community conversation approach can be scaled for use in other regions.

6. LOOKING AHEAD

Key priorities identified for 2018 include the following:

Strategy review and renewal

The initial three-year phase of the hotspot will be ending in 2018. To properly plan for the next phase of the program, a comprehensive review and analysis of the current strategy will be conducted. The review process will include capturing lessons learned, assessing the impact and relevance of the current program objectives, soliciting feedback from current partners and conducting a stakeholder analysis. Based on the findings resulting from the strategy review, a two-year renewal strategy will be developed to be launched in 2019.

New strategic technical assistance opportunities

In 2018, the hotspot will actively engage in forging new partnerships with technical assistance providers. Applying lessons learned from the past couple of years of program implementation, the hotspot will explore ways to improve two of its current approaches: awareness-raising and vocational/livelihood skills training. Building off of research conducted in 2017, the use of technology in promoting safer migration will be explored further. The research will seek to produce technology solutions that are both innovative and practical, reflecting the needs of potential/current migrant workers and the capacity of local partners to implement the solution proposed. Additionally, applying some of the learnings from the LSHTM research, an assessment of the program's current approaches to vocational/livelihood training will be conducted. Based on this assessment, the hotspot will explore areas for adapting the approach and providing trainings to secure partner buy-in and ensure effective dissemination of the findings uncovered through the assessment.

Exploring other areas for systems-level change

In 2017, the hotspot identified strategic areas to help promote systems-level change and focused on improving coordination among different stakeholders. In 2018, the hotspot will continue to build upon this initial progress and identify next steps to push for more impact in this area through coordinating collaboration among different groups and amplifying the positions of key stakeholders in promoting safer migration.

7. SYSTEMS CHANGE CASE STUDY



Irregular and oftentimes dangerous migration to the Middle East for domestic work is the norm for Ethiopian girls living in impoverished communities. Seeking economic opportunities abroad, many of these young women face risks of abuse and exploitation, and most don't know enough about safer migration to make an informed decision. The Freedom Fund's Ethiopia hotspot promotes safer migration for women and girls travelling to the Middle East for domestic work and supports education and recovery services for potential migrants and returnees.

The Association for Forced Migrants (AFM) focuses on providing support to community-based structures called "iddirs" to effectively and sustainably include awareness-raising through their regular activities. AFM works with 123 iddirs within the Addis Ketema sub-city of Ethiopia's capital city, Addis Ababa. By closely working with the iddirs, AFM was able to ensure that 80% of the iddirs incorporated safer migration promotion into their bylaws, making it an official mandate of the iddirs, thus promoting the sustainability of the approach.

Having heard about AFM's approach to promoting safer migration in Addis Ketema, the Iddir Council, which represents more than 7,500 iddirs (each with an average of more than 200 members), wanted to learn about the approach and the hotspot's overall strategy. The Council endorsed the hotspot's model and voiced support for scaling AFM's approach to other sub-cities within Addis Ababa. The Addis Iddirs Council signed an MOU with the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs to incorporate safer migration into the bylaws of iddirs within all sub-cities of Addis Ababa and committed to formally collaborate to work on safer migration issues.

Leveraging the support provided by the Addis Iddirs Council, we organised a learning trip for iddir leaders from Addis Ababa to visit the Amhara region. The visit was an opportunity for the Addis leaders to share the different methods they use to inform potential migrants about safer migration and discuss ways in which Amhara leaders and government officials could potentially incorporate a similar approach. The buy-in of the model, as seen in Addis, may help expand this approach into other regions.



Sarah Mount

Senior Program Officer
The Freedom Fund
London
+44 203 077 2102
smount@freedomfund.org

The Freedom Fund (UK)

Lighterman House
26-36 Wharfdale Road,
London, N1 9RY
United Kingdom
+ 44 203 077 2222

The Freedom Fund (U.S.)

33 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003
USA
+1 (929) 244-9722

freedomfund.org