

Ethiopia

Co-Investigator

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Research Context

It is estimated that out of Ethiopia's circa 100 million people more than 3 million Ethiopians live abroad. The major destinations of Ethiopian migrants are: North America; Europe and the Gulf. South-South migration has primarily been directed to Kenya and the Sudan but recently South Africa has taken over as the major destination in the 'south' for Ethiopian migrants. While the migration of Ethiopians to the Republic of South Africa began in the mid-1990s, the flow has become more significant since the 2000s. However, it not known how many Ethiopians journey to South Africa each year. Recent Government estimate indicates that about 120,000 Ethiopians work and live in South Africa, and the flow has dramatically increased as a result of the effective operation of migrant smuggling networks. Of this, more than 90 percent Ethiopian arrivals in South Africa are irregular migrants. This involves crossing several African countries, entails high risk, including physical and emotional stress, being imprisoned, deportation and death. Despite its irregularity, the migration process is voluntary and self-initiated. Particularly, migrants are taking calculated risks, weighing the material and non-material benefits that migration could bring to the entire household and to local communities, compared to staying at home with unmet aspirations.

There is a geographic concentration of the place of origin of the Ethiopian migrants in South Africa. Most are from Southern Ethiopia; specifically, from two areas: Hadiya-Kembata-Tembaro region (HKT). A total of 2.4 million people lives in this region, with the largest in Hadiya (1,563,441). Preliminary works suggest that Addis Ababa ranks as the second highest place of origin for Ethiopian migrants in South Africa. However, the study will be focusing on the HKT region in Southern Ethiopia with satellite sites in places such as Addis Ababa, based on the findings from and aligned with the South African end of the corridor. The focus on the HKT region is not only because of demographic concentration but also because this will provide an excellent opportunity to observe the communal dimension of migratory processes.

These migrant entrepreneurs have left their home country for political and economic reasons. The general drivers of migration from Ethiopia are economic needs and aspirations (despite or because of rapid economic growth); authoritarian governmental practices; high population growth rate (circa 3 %) and the associated issue of rural youth landlessness as well as the problem of unemployment for the urban youth. The phenomenal impact of remittances on the place of origins is also intimately connected to the migration dynamics. Southern Ethiopia, particularly the

Hadiya-Kembata-Welayta Zones have received one of the highest remittances, evident in the proliferation of state and private banks in their rural areas and the rise of bustling towns such as Hosanna and Durame. Migrants that successfully reach destinations in South Africa often send remittances and savings to their home communities, starting business and making investments. This positive economic impact is one reason the Government of Ethiopia has sought to improve some forms of migration and capitalize on the positive economic impacts of those collective choices. Successful migrant returnees open small business such as in the transport sector, small factories, hotels and restaurants. They are employing local people and their relatives. By sending remittances, migrant youth are helping their relatives and siblings to go to good schools. They are able to pay for their children or siblings in the family better; they support their parents and they build new houses for the family. Studies in the Ethiopian context reveal that households receiving remittance have higher subjective wellbeing than non-receiving households.

Work packages

WP2: Inequalities related to childhood

WP3: Poverty and income inequalities

WP6: Resource flows: finance, trade and knowledge

Research Questions

1. Question of temporality: How do inequalities develop through childhood in relation to migration? (WP2)
2. Question of potentiality: How does migration impact (support or undermine) the human potential of children (including mobility/immobility)? (WP2)
3. Decision making: The role of education and child wellbeing in the decision to migrate (WP3).
4. To what extent does access to migration in the corridor change inequality in the areas of origin? (WP3)
5. To what extent is movement in the corridor shaped by and shaping inequality between origin and destination countries (both sending and receiving country)? (WP3)
6. What are the types of resource that flow in the Eth-SA corridor in terms of trade in goods and services; money in the form of remittances and investment (capital); and knowledge and information useful for economic activities, including business information and skills? (WP6)
7. What are the characteristics of migrant businesses linked by ownership, management or investment financing to diasporas or returnee migrants in Ethiopia with a focus on the HKT region? (WP6)

8. What has been the impact of migrants' professional and technical (non-business) skills brought from South Africa to Ethiopia? What has been the impact in Ethiopia of social remittances sent from South Africa? (WP6).

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