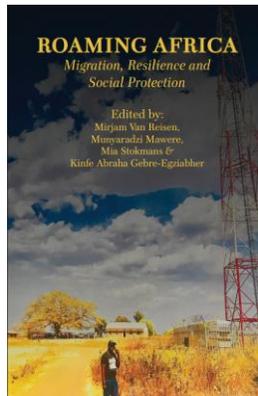


# Moving on to Make a Living: The Secondary Migration of Eritrean Refugees in Tigray, Ethiopia

*Bereket Godifay Kahsay*

## Chapter in: Roaming Africa: Migration, Resilience and Social Protection

From the book Series:  
Connected and Mobile: Migration and Human Trafficking in  
Africa



Cite as: Kahsay, B. G. (2019). Moving on to make a living: The secondary migration of Eritrean refugees in Tigray, Ethiopia. In: Van Reisen, M., Mawere, M., Stokmans, M., & Gebre-Egziabher, K. A. (eds), *Roaming Africa: Migration, Resilience and Social Protection*. Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa Research & Publishing CIG, pp. 255–281. Book URL:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336956357\\_Roaming\\_Africa\\_Migration\\_Resilience\\_and\\_Social\\_Protection](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336956357_Roaming_Africa_Migration_Resilience_and_Social_Protection)

ISBN: 9789956551019

## Table of Contents

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Preface by Zaminah Malole .....	ii
Acknowledgement .....	vii
A Word on the Review Process .....	viii
Acronyms .....	ix
<b>Part I. Theoretical Perspectives .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Chapter 1: Roaming Africa: A Social Analysis of Migration and Resilience .....	3
<i>By Mirjam Van Reisen, Mia Stokmans, Munyaradzi Mawere &amp; Kinfe Abraha Gebre-Egziabber</i>	
Chapter 2: All or Nothing: The Costs of Migration from the Horn of Africa – Evidence from Ethiopia .....	37
<i>By Kinfe Abraha Gebre-Egziabber</i>	
Chapter 3: Why do Foreign Solutions not Work in Africa? Recognising Alternate Epistemologies .....	55
<i>By Gertjan Van Stam</i>	
<b>Part II. Living Borders .....</b>	<b>83</b>
Chapter 4: Continuation of Care across Borders: Providing Health Care for People on the Move in East Africa .....	85
<i>By Dorothy Muroki, Boniface Kitungulu &amp; Leanne Kamau</i>	
Chapter 5: Mobility as a Social Process: Conflict Management in the Border Areas of Afar Region .....	109
<i>By Abdelab Alifnur &amp; Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	
<b>Part III. New Perspectives in Migration .....</b>	<b>141</b>
Chapter 6: Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire: Are Climate Disasters Fuelling Human Trafficking in Kenya? .....	143
<i>By Radoslaw Malinowski &amp; Mario Schulze</i>	
Chapter 7: Standing in Two Worlds: Mobility and the Connectivity of Diaspora Communities .....	171
<i>By Antony Otieno Ong'ayo</i>	

Chapter 8: 'Europe is not Worth Dying For': The Dilemma facing Somalis in Europe .....	203
<i>By Melissa Phillips &amp; Mingo Heiduk</i>	
Chapter 9: Countering Radicalisation in Communities: The Case of Pumwani, Nairobi .....	225
<i>By Reginald Nalugala</i>	
<b>Part IV. Livelihoods .....</b>	<b>253</b>
Chapter 10: Moving on to Make a Living: The Secondary Migration of Eritrean Refugees in Tigray, Ethiopia .....	255
<i>By Bereket Godifay Kabsay</i>	
Chapter 11: Inhospitable Realities: Refugees' Livelihoods in Hitsats, Ethiopia .....	283
<i>By Kristína Melicherová</i>	
Chapter 12: Young and On their Own: The Protection of Eritrean Refugee Children in Tigray, Ethiopia .....	315
<i>By Tekie Gebreyesus &amp; Rick Schoenmaeckers</i>	
<b>Part V. The Challenges of Return Migration.....</b>	<b>345</b>
Chapter 13: Home, but not Home: Reintegration of Ethiopian Women Returning from the Arabian Gulf .....	347
<i>By Beza L. Nisrane</i>	
Chapter 14: Shattered Dreams: Life after Deportation for Ethiopian Returnees from Saudi Arabia .....	377
<i>By Shishay Tadesse Abay</i>	
Chapter 15: Life after the Lord's Resistance Army: Support for Formerly Abducted Girls in Northern Uganda .....	407
<i>By Primrose Nakaajjwe &amp; Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	

<b>Part VI. Social Protection .....</b>	<b>433</b>
Chapter 16: Is Trauma Counselling the Missing Link? Enhancing Socio-Economic Resilience among Post-war IDPs in Northern Uganda .....	435
<i>By Mirjam Van Reisen, Mia Stokmans, Primrose Nakazibwe, Zaminah Malole &amp; Bertha Vallejo</i>	
Chapter 17: Roaming Lifestyles: Designing Social Protection for the Pastoralist Afar in Ethiopia.....	459
<i>By Zeremariam Fre &amp; Naomi Dixon</i>	
Chapter 18: Where is your Brother? Religious Leaders in Eritrea Offer a Counter Narrative to Totalitarianism.....	483
<i>By Makeda Saba</i>	
 <b>Part VII. Defining Responsibilities at the National Level.....</b>	 <b>519</b>
Chapter 19: Peace, but no Progress: Eritrea, an Unconstitutional State.....	521
<i>By Bereket Selassie &amp; Mirjam Van Reisen</i>	
Chapter 20: Moving Through the Policy Window: Women in Constitution Making in Kenya.....	557
<i>By Stella Maranga</i>	
Chapter 21: Where are the Youth? The Missing Agenda in Somalia's Constitution.....	577
<i>By Istar Ahmed</i>	
About the Authors .....	601

# Moving on to Make a Living: The Secondary Migration of Eritrean Refugees in Tigray, Ethiopia

*Bereket Godifay Kabsay*

### Introduction

In its 2016 report, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea found that there are grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been committed in Eritrea since 1991 (UN Human Rights Council, 2016, p. 83), resulting in thousands of youth fleeing the country. Tigray, in northern Ethiopia, is the main first destination for Eritrean refugees. Currently, there are four refugee camps and one screening centre open only to Eritrean refugees: Mai Ayni, Adi Harush, Hitsats and Shimelba – Shimelba being the oldest and Hitsats the most recent.

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*Lack of livelihood opportunities is driving Eritreans in refugee camps in northern Ethiopia to embark on dangerous secondary migration journeys. This study looks at the livelihood opportunities available to youth in the camps and identifies the challenges to such opportunities. Although many livelihood projects have been put in place in the camps, ironically, the major challenge facing these projects is secondary migration, as it results in drop-out. This study found that there is much that can be done to improve these projects, which are failing to create a sustainable income for refugees in the camps. The study points to the many possibilities available to counter secondary migration through an increased focus on livelihoods, education and youth employment.*

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Unlike in Eritrea, in Ethiopia, Eritrean refugees are free from indefinite conscription and the violation of their human rights (GSDRC, 2016, p. 1). They are provided with different basic services

by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and concerned organisations, including income-generating opportunities. However, many refugees move on from Ethiopia due to lack of education and employment opportunities, as well as lack of basic services in the camps (UNHCR, 2016, p. 21).

To prevent secondary migration from Ethiopia to third countries, many livelihood projects have been put in place to support the refugees. Ironically, the major challenge facing livelihood projects is secondary migration, which results in beneficiary drop-out from training and income-generating programmes. For example, for the humanitarian organisation ZOA's<sup>1</sup> project Hope for Eritrean Refugees in Ethiopia (HOPE), the challenge is beneficiaries dropping out of vocational skills training (ZOA, 2016, p. 14). Hence, this chapter looks at why refugees are dropping out of livelihood and education projects, and if the lack of such services is a factor in refugees moving on from Ethiopia.

### **Eritrean refugees in northern Ethiopia**

Eritrean refugees living in the refugee camps in Tigray have their own administrative structure. Every matter in the camps is managed by the camp's Refugee Central Committee (RCC), with close supervision by the Ethiopian government's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). The RCC for each camp is responsible for selecting beneficiaries to receive support, including from livelihood projects.

In Tigray, 75% of the registered Eritrean refugee population are children and youths (UNHCR, 2017b, p. 2). The youth category, which is defined as 15 to 24 years of age (UNHCR, 2017b), accounts for 40.3% of the camp population. Migration on from these camps is common among young Eritrean refugees, who initially seek

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<sup>1</sup> The author is currently working in Tigray as area manager for ZOA, creating livelihood opportunities to help young refugees refrain from embarking on illegal secondary migration.

protection in Shire, Ethiopia (USCRI, 2016, p.2), which is the capital of north-western Tigray and the location of four refugee camps. Despite the high influx of refugees, the actual camp population of the refugee camps in Shire has remained relatively stable. In 2017, the registered number of refugees reached more than 150,000, but the actual camp population as at September 2017 was 38,321 (UNHCR, 2017b, p. 1). By June 2018, the camp population had reached 40,820 (UNHCR, 2018). From July 2017 to June 2018, there were 20,817 new arrivals in the camp, out of which 17.7% were unaccompanied and separated children. For the same period, the number of refugees missing from the refugee camps with unknown destination was 23,034 (UNHCR, 2018). Due to poor conditions within the Shire refugee camps and the lack of livelihood opportunities, refugees find it impossible to live comfortably and with hope for the future, and many move on.

### **Research questions**

This study was conducted to investigate the livelihood situation in the refugee camps in Tigray, Ethiopia, with a special focus on livelihood projects implemented from 2015–2017 and the secondary migration of Eritrean refugees from Ethiopia. The research looked at the relationship between secondary migration and livelihood programmes by assessing the livelihood intervention strategies used by the implementing agencies and identifying the livelihood opportunities and challenges facing Eritrean refugees in the study area.

The three main research questions were:

- *What are the intervention strategies of the livelihood projects targeting Eritrean refugees living in Tigray, northern Ethiopia?*
- *What are the livelihood challenges and opportunities facing Eritrean refugees in Tigray, Ethiopia?*
- *Why are Eritrean refugees moving on from Ethiopia, even when supported by several livelihood projects?*

It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide input for policymakers, project designers, and practitioners dealing with the livelihoods of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia.

**Methodology**

The research design for this study was descriptive and explanatory. In the data gathering phase of the study, both secondary and primary data were used. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including: a quantitative survey, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews, as well as the analysis of secondary sources, to ascertain the livelihoods of Eritrean refugees living in Tigray refugee camps and Shire town. The researcher supervised the data collection process, which was conducted by nine data collectors. Eight individuals participated in the survey, two each in Hitsats, Mai Ayni, and Adi Harush and one each in Shimmelba camp and Shire town. One expert and some key informants participated in the focus group discussions. The data collection tools were developed in English, but the actual data were collected using local languages (Tigrigna and Kunama). The data collection was conducted from 28 October to 15 November 2017. Table 10.1 summarises the respondents, sampling methods, and data collection methods used.

*Table 10.1. Respondents, sampling methods and data collection methods*

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Sampling method</b>	<b>Data collection method</b>
<b>407 households from refugee camps and Shire town</b>	Stratified (by camp), random sampling	Questionnaire
<b>12 staff from organisations running livelihood programmes for refugees in the refugee camps and Shire town</b>	Purposeful	Key informant interview

<b>9 groups from the RCCs in the camps and youth groups</b>	Representation from various groups	Focus group discussions
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Stratified sampling was used to select 407 households from the 4 refugee camps in Tigray and Shire town to participate in the survey, using simple random sampling to identify the actual sample beneficiaries. Accordingly, 128 refugees from Hitsats, 109 from Mai Ayni, 47 from Shimelba, 109 from Adi Harush, and 14 from Shire were sampled. Of the total number of respondents to the survey, 242 (59.5%) were men and 165 (40.5%) were women. The sample households were taken from the refugee camps and Shire town based on their proportion. For the purposes of this study, a household was defined as a group of family members living together. The respondent taking part in the survey was the head of the household. In the case of more than one household residing in one shelter, only one household was asked to participate. A list of house numbers of the existing shelters was used as a sampling frame.

In addition to the survey, 9 focus group discussions were held with RCC members and groups of youth (comprising youth who benefited from livelihood interventions and those who were never targeted by any organisation) in all camps. In addition, 12 key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of organisations implementing livelihood or education programmes and from the monitoring agencies to validate the findings. Only one of the key informants was a woman. The questionnaire aimed at gathering information on the extent to which the refugees had been targeted by livelihood projects, the application of livelihood strategies, the existing challenges and opportunities they faced, and the perspective of the refugees on leaving the camps. The key informant interviews and focus group discussions were designed to gather information on the beneficiary selection process, absolute value chain development, and relationship between livelihood projects and the secondary migration of refugees. The qualitative data sources were also used to obtain facts about refugees' livelihood strategies, challenges and opportunities.

The quantitative data was collected through an open data kit (ODK), using android mobile phones, and analysed via the software in its package. The general tools of analysis are descriptive and explanatory; hence, the data is presented in tables and using other numerical data presentation mechanisms. The qualitative data from secondary analyses, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews is presented using explanation tools to clearly describe the livelihoods of Eritrean refugees living in the Shire area. The next section presents the secondary analysis (of livelihood interventions in refugee settings), followed by the findings of the study (on livelihood project strategies, livelihood challenges and opportunities, and secondary migration) and a brief conclusion.

### **Livelihood interventions in refugee settings**

Livelihood interventions are usually influenced by a variety of economic, social, political and environmental factors (De Vriese, 2006, p. 31). A successful programme is one that considers many issues like physical location, the availability of food and natural resources, and access to markets, among other things (De Vriese, 2006, p. 31). In the implementation of livelihood projects for refugees, various challenges exist in the form of both internal and external constraints. Lack of organisational capacity and expertise, inability to operationalise and achieve 'sustainability', difficulty in reaching the programme's intended beneficiaries, and questionable positive impact are some of the main internal challenges facing livelihood projects in refugee settings (Phillips, 2004, pp. 6–8). External factors include restrictive governmental policies and practices and the limited scope of the refugee market (Phillips, 2004, pp. 6–8).

In addition, “The host country’s asylum policy is indeed a defining factor in inhibiting or facilitating the ability of refugees to establish and secure their livelihoods” (De Vriese, 2006, p. 31). “[W]hen host governments do not allow refugees to settle amongst host communities or do not recognize diplomas or certificates, refugees’ access to the labour market may, in fact, be impeded” (De Vriese,

2006, p. 31). This is also the case in Ethiopia. Being able to drive and hold a driving licence, for example, is marketable and many refugees have an interest in this; unfortunately, such certification is not legally supported in Ethiopia. However, the Ethiopian government has recently made ‘Nine Pledges’ in support of refugees, one of which is “[t]o provide work permits to refugees [...]” (UNHCR, 2017a, p.1). With these pledges, the Ethiopian policy is changing towards the Uganda model of integrating refugees which is widely praised by political and humanitarian actors (Bohnet & Schmitz-Pranghe, 2019).

### **Livelihood project strategies in Tigray refugee camps**

Livelihood project strategies can be classified into supply and demand-side strategies. The supply-side strategies focus on the human or financial capital of refugees, e.g., building their skills and education, increasing their access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), or providing them with livelihood assets or financial resources. On the other hand, demand-side strategies aim to expand the link between refugees, employers, and markets for labour, goods and services, by either directly creating jobs or connecting refugees to employers (Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016, pp. 6–7). The research findings on livelihood project strategies are presented in this section.

#### ***Supply-side strategies***

A number of implementing organisations were found to be operating in the refugee camps in Tigray. The ARRA monitoring and evaluation officer listed the following organisations as providing services to refugees in the camps during the study period: the Norwegian Refugee Council, ZOA, Opportunities Industrialization Centers Ethiopia (OICE), the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission (also called Mekane Yesus), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Innovative Humanitarian Solutions (IHS), World Food Programme, Natural Resource Development and Environmental Protection, and Catholic Relief Services (Tewedaj, interview with Michael, face-to-face, Shire, 3 November 2017). These organisations have generally agreed on collective strategies for implementing livelihood projects.

These strategies, as described by experts from the implementing agencies, include creating livelihood opportunities for refugees to improve their household income/resilience, focusing on youth at risk of migration and vulnerable households (women-headed households) or individuals who do not have any external support; providing support for vulnerable women and youth groups to improve their income/resilience; working jointly with the key actors in all sectors and community-based structures; and adhering to the 75/25 principle<sup>2</sup> to address the livelihood issues of both refugees and local communities and ensure peaceful coexistence. Implementing agencies seek to generate strategically-designed, needs-based and market-driven livelihood opportunities to boost the camp and local economy. They often use beneficiaries to implement livelihood projects to ensure the sustainability and ownership of projects. In most cases, refugees' interests and aspirations are taken into account through the RCC and, at some point, through their direct participation in livelihood projects. These strategies are aimed at providing refugees with the skills they need to enhance their livelihoods.

To comprehend the supply-side strategies, the survey and focus group discussions looked in detail at the activities of livelihood projects. It was found that over the three years of the study (2015–2017) such projects have provided refugees primarily with vocational skills training, business development skills training, and revolving funds to start businesses, as well as start-up materials such as livestock (such as chicken and goats) and agricultural materials including seeds for backyard gardening. Local and international humanitarian organisations, mainly, the Norwegian Refugee Council, ZOA, OICE and Mekane Yesus, have been involved in providing vocational skills trainings. According to the key informants, these organisations have

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<sup>2</sup> The 75/25 principle (sometimes called the 70/30 principle) is a customary practice resulting from an agreement between implementing organisations, monitoring agencies (ARRA and UNHCR) and donors to take 75% of target beneficiaries from the refugee population in the camps and 25% from among those living in the host community, as explained by the ARRA monitoring and evaluation officer (Tewedaj, interview with Michael, face-to-face, Shire, 3 November 2017).

provided training in food preparation, barbering and beauty salon work, mobile and electronics maintenance, metal and woodwork, plumbing, tailoring, traditional garment making, leather crafting, electric installation, brick making, leather crafting for shoe and ball production, photography and videoing, construction, masonry, soap production, and ICTs.

These trainings were selected based on market assessments, as stated by the livelihood experts from the implementing agencies. The first criterion for the provision of training was its feasibility in the local market, in and around the refugee camp. Practical factors were also considered, including the aspirations of the refugees and local laws.

Although many organisations have been providing vocational skills training in the refugee camps, the key informant interviews revealed that the supply of start-up kits for youth who have completed training is limited due to lack of funds. Moreover, some organisations were giving vocational skills training in the form of educational interventions, without considering their application to future businesses in the camps. As a result, hundreds of trainees completed training subjects every semester, but their chance of obtaining employment or the required start-up kits was low.

The RCC representatives in the focus group discussions said that some other livelihood implementing organisations were making start-up materials available for all their graduates, as well as the graduates of other organisations. However, the time gap between completion of the training and the supply of start-up materials was found to affect migration intention, resulting in refugees moving on while waiting for the distribution of work materials. Many of the implementing organisations took months, if not years, to supply the materials to skills training graduates. Business development skills (mainly skills like financial management, preparation of business plans, and entrepreneurship skills) are also being provided in the refugee camps. Business development skills and entrepreneurship training is aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the refugees to enable them to produce profitable and competitive business proposals and manage

their respective businesses. These trainings usually last for a maximum of five days and aim to enable the beneficiaries to identify business types of their choice to undertake in the camp and request a certain amount of cash or materials with which to start the business.

The study found that the organisations implementing livelihood projects use different modalities. Some organisations are able to facilitate access to local financial institutions to enable beneficiaries to open saving accounts through partnerships with the local government, which monitors financial circulations. The Dutch NGO ZOA, for example, has developed a cluster association that allows business groups to have a common bank account with a local credit and saving institution in Hitsats camp called Dedebit,<sup>3</sup> which, according to an ARRA programme officer, was a pioneer in facilitating this kind of service. Other organisations, in particular a local NGO called Mekane Yesus, have followed the self-help group modality, under which groups have a common bank account in which they make weekly savings, which results in them receiving a matching fund from the organisation.

Agri-business, mainly the supply of chickens and goats, has been another livelihood intervention in the refugee camps. For example, as mentioned in ZOA's annual report, *Hope for Eritrean Refugees in Ethiopia*, Mekane Yesus provided 900 goats and 1,000 chickens for 300 and 200 households, respectively, in Shimelba camp in 2016 (ZOA, 2016, p. 12). However, the distribution of chickens without food and appropriate coops has resulted in the death of chickens. Goat production is unrealistic in all refugee camps, as pointed out by the ARRA zonal monitoring and evaluation officer (Tewedaj, interview with Michael, face-to-face, Shire, 3 November 2017). The provision of agricultural materials for refugees and members of host communities, including small farming tools and seeds of different vegetables and cereals, was another livelihood intervention reported by the respondents.

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<sup>3</sup> Dedebit is the name for a local saving and credit institution operating Tigray regional state, with many branches in urban and rural areas.

The livelihood implementing organisations appeared to be very strong in capacitating the refugee population to improve their living conditions. In the timeframe of the study, it was observed that supply-side livelihood strategies were given a lot of attention and the resources received from donors were transferred to the beneficiaries in the form of training, working capital and assets such as animals. However, although there are many livelihood projects in the refugee camps, the survey found that only 45% of respondents had participated in a livelihood project between 2015 and 2017.<sup>4</sup> This means that the livelihood interventions being provided do not match the number of refugees who need support: the refugees participating in the projects provided by existing agencies number hundreds each year, while tens of thousands of youth need such training. The survey also found that 28% of the youth who participated in the study have received vocational skills training alone or vocational skills training plus start-up capital in the form of cash or materials to start their own income-generating activities. From this group, only 39% of them ranked the quality of the vocational skills training as ‘very good’.

From the 55% who said they had not benefited from any livelihood-related activities in the stated timeframe (2015–2017), the survey found that 18% of them want to get vocational skills training, 8% of them want to acquire business development skills training, 26% of them want to obtain vocational skills training plus start-up capital to start their income-generating activities, 33% of them want to obtain basic business development skill training plus start-up capital to start their business, and only 3% of them want to be involved in agribusiness, while 12% said they want to be employed using their former

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<sup>4</sup> By the time of data collection, there were 22,679 refugee households in the refugee camps and Shire town. From this figure, 39.5% (more than 9,000) were children and 12% were unaccompanied and separated children, which accounts for about 3,000 households. So, counting the beneficiaries, 45% is around 8,000 households. The actual target of the Norwegian Refugee Council and ZOA in the study years was about 4,000 individuals. So, the findings show that the beneficiaries of all organisations in all camps that were targeted by livelihood projects appeared to be 45%. However, this figure may differ from camp to camp, as in Hitsats, for example, the number of youth is very high, which could result in them constituting less than 45% of livelihood beneficiaries proportionally.

qualifications. The reason why so few Eritrean refugees wished to find employment within the refugee camps is the very low monthly wage fixed for them by UNHCR and ARRA, which is only USD 26. As key informants from ARRA in Hitsats camp noted, refugees hired as social workers, child-friendly space animators, and community mobilisers etc. are not selected for any livelihood benefits, hence, had no other source of income than their monthly wage.

In general, the study found that Eritrean refugees do want to receive business-related training and funds to start their own businesses. They usually prefer to continue using the qualifications they had previously used in Eritrea, instead of learning new skills from the organisations providing livelihood training. Generally, the livelihood intervention organisations are strong in providing supply-side livelihood strategies and considering the interests of the target beneficiaries. In addition, the services supplied seem to be congruent with the aspirations of the refugees, although the specific trainings and start-up support interventions were found to be somehow divergent from the interests of the beneficiaries.

### ***Demand-side strategies***

Demand-side livelihood strategies are those that deal with market linkages, the identification of demand for products and services, and government policies related to refugees' economic activities. The majority of refugees surveyed (60%) perceived the business services being provided as market-oriented and agreed that the organisations providing livelihood programmes have considered the demands of the market when selecting business types. However, 23% of them said that the livelihood projects provided are not based on their livelihood aspirations.

In general, most of the livelihood project interventions were strategically designed to meet the market demands of the refugee camps, as identified in the needs assessments and reviews of the implementation of similar previous projects. However, all livelihood project interventions experienced a big problem with market linkages, which has been given less attention by implementing agencies, as

explained by the ARRA zonal monitoring and evaluation officer (Tewedaj, interview with Michael, face-to-face, Shire, 3 November 2017). To illustrate, the agencies did not work to create market linkages within the camp or with local markets, which resulted in most of the livelihood projects not producing the results they expected.

The businesses started by refugees with the help of implementing agencies are experiencing problems selling their products and buying materials to increase their production scale. In addition to these market linkage problems, refugees are having difficulty obtaining camp exit permits to enable them to obtain raw materials for production and access to nearby towns to buy materials at wholesale prices, although the Ethiopian government has allowed refugees to access the nearby town with restricted camp exit licences, as stated in many of the focus group discussions. This, by implication, means that the livelihood strategies of the implementing agencies are imperfect in dealing with demand-side issues, particularly linking refugees' businesses to local markets.

### ***Value chains***

The value chain concept refers to “the way in which a set of activities by numerous actors construct a product consumed by the end user” (Chawiche, 2005, p. 13). A value chain not only includes the production stage, but all nodes that influence, add value to, or reshape the product (Kaplinsky & Morris, 2001, cited in Chawiche, 2005, p. 13). So, the development of a value chain in this chapter refers to the establishment of a complete chain with value addition to all the nodes that appear on both the supply and demand side.

Value chains have relevance to the success of any business. Understanding a value chain and opportunities to add value to each stage improves the camp economy and creates market linkages between refugees and refugees, and refugees and locals. Eventually, refugees are able to scale-up their businesses by learning from their business activities, thereby augmenting their earnings. A carefully developed value chain can diversify the livelihood opportunities of refugees and members of the host community, improve the

entrepreneurship skills and business knowledge of refugees, enhance the self-confidence of refugees, and help youth avoid falling into criminal activities or substance abuse.

Figure 10.1 depicts the absolute value chain model used by implementing organisations in the refugee camps in Tigray. It is highly fragmented, which has possibly contributed to the under performance of the livelihood projects. The implementing agencies appear to be applying a model with disjointed bonds between the fundamental nodes of the livelihoods value chain.

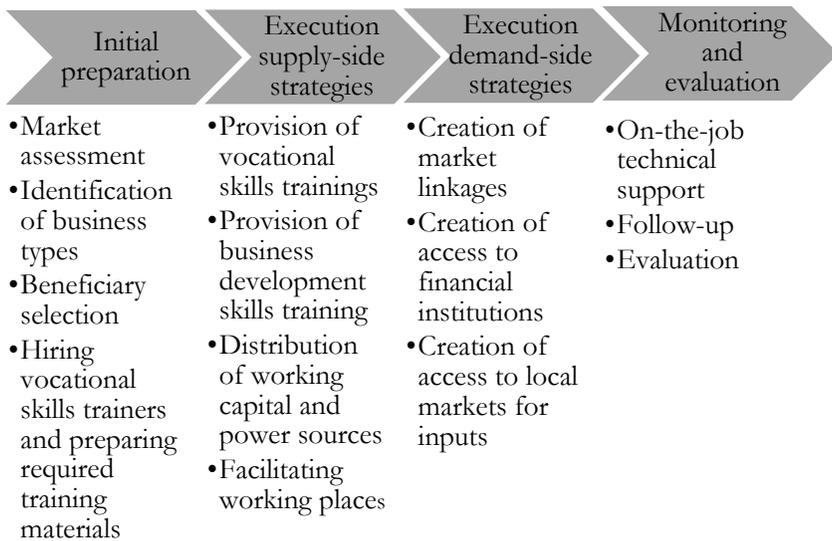


Figure 10.1. Absolute value chain model for vocational skills training (grey arrows represent the main chain; below the arrows are the sub-chains)

Considering the above value chain model for vocational skills training, the model appears to be disjointed in many of the sub and main chains. Some of the problems with the chain, as mentioned in the focus group discussions, are as follows:

- Livelihood projects target interested refugees without considering their probable future and the time they intend stay in camp (the selection of inappropriate beneficiaries).

- Livelihood projects provide vocational skills training without conducting market assessments to select viable business types and regardless of access to working materials.
- Working materials are distributed regardless of their viability, simply because the budgets are secured from donors.
- Working materials are distributed (in cash or in kind) without ensuring that there are work places available or a proper power supply.
- Business groups are granted permission to start trades or other activities that are not necessarily demanded in and around the camp.
- A huge amount of capital is invested to train and fund refugees, but not on monitoring and following-up activities.

Hence, it appears that the value chains used by the implementing organisations in the camps are fragmented and certain steps are skipped, contributing to the failure of livelihood projects to meet the expectations.

### ***Selection criteria***

To ensure livelihood projects succeed in enhancing the financial and technical capacity of refugees, the selection process (and criteria) of participants (whom to select for what capacity gap and resource delivery) used by implementing agencies must be well thought out. This study found that organisations select beneficiaries through community leaders, such as the RCC, zone and block leaders, and civic association leaders. Every agency implementing a livelihood project has its own selection criteria, and these can vary greatly; one may have several criteria while another may have limited criteria (as stated by representatives from ARRA and UNHCR, refugees and experts from the livelihood agencies). However, these organisations seldom went down to the grass-roots level to cross check the selection process. As a result, targeting errors like double targeting, omissions and sometimes biased targeting were apparent across all implementing agencies, resulting in conflicts of interests and the misuse of limited resources. Table 10.2 shows the selection criteria

used by the different livelihood implementing organisations for beneficiaries.

Producing skilled youth who could be engaged in income-generating activities for themselves and their respective families is a common livelihood strategy. However, not every individual is interested in, or capable of, starting a business, as not everyone is endowed with an entrepreneurial mind. Therefore, projects need to select beneficiaries, not just for the sake of giving training, but also taking into account the end goal.

The integration and coordination by organisations implementing livelihood projects was not as expected. Implementing organisations did not complement each other, but seemed to compete among themselves, resulting in the duplication of efforts and depletion of the limited funding available. However, some progress was achieved after the establishment of the Livelihood Working Group (LWG), which was initiated by the Norwegian Refugee Council. This working group has enabled livelihood agencies to discuss all matters to do with livelihood programmes on a monthly basis to eliminate some of the challenges and share some of the lessons learnt so as to enhance service delivery. Unfortunately, so far, there is no common working manual for livelihood projects (such as a standard operating procedures), which would reduce the replication of efforts. The formulation of such a manual or standard operating procedures manual could optimise the effective and efficient use of the inadequate resources available for livelihood projects, establish common selection criteria for beneficiaries, and align the aspirations of the beneficiaries with the programmatic interests of the livelihood agencies. Moreover, having a standard operating procedures manual could improve the implementation modalities of the implementing organisations and facilitate monitoring and evaluation by ARRA and UNHCR.

Table 10.2. Selection criteria and number of beneficiaries of livelihood programmes in 2016

Organisation	Livelihood training	Number of beneficiaries	Beneficiary selection criteria for vocational skills trainings used in 2016
<b>ZOA</b>	Electronics and mobile phone maintenance Food preparation and spice making Hair cutting Beauty salon	120 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries must be interested/self-motivated to do business development/ vocational skills training and to start a business; to be part of a small homogenous group of 6–8 members and to contribute their own labour and materials to start an income-generating activity; and to work hard to achieve goals.</li> <li>• The first target group of beneficiaries shall be refugees with an already existing small business who require additional capital.</li> <li>• Preference will be given to more stable beneficiaries who have lived in the camp for more than 1 year and who will stay in the camp for at least the next 2 years.</li> <li>• Priority will be given to people with a disability, female-headed households with children, and individuals belonging to categories of refugee classified as extremely vulnerable.</li> <li>• Refugees with a large family size (at least greater than or equal to 3) and with very low income should be considered.</li> <li>• Beneficiaries should be youths aged 18–35.</li> <li>• Preference will be given to refugees with a failed migration process or who have not started the process yet.</li> <li>• Beneficiaries should not be targeted by other implementing partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Innovative Humanitarian Solutions</b>	Leather shoe crafting Beauty salon	68 students	<p><b>General requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees who are vulnerable; motivated and have the ability to work; will stay for a minimum of 1 year; are not currently engaged in any income-generating activity</li> </ul>

	Leather ball making		<p><b>Specific criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor and marginalised adults</li> <li>• Disciplined and free from socially-unacceptable habits</li> <li>• Interested in receiving training</li> <li>• Completion of at least grade 4 education</li> <li>• Youth and adults with disabilities</li> <li>• Destitute single women and female-headed households</li> <li>• Refugee who will stay for a minimum of 1 year</li> </ul>
<b>Norwegian Refugee Council</b>	Food prep Beauty salon Electric work Computers Metal work Carpentry General tailoring Traditional garment tailoring	Around 900 students in all camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15–25 years old for long-term target beneficiaries and adults for short-term training</li> <li>• 50% female</li> <li>• Host community (50% of total Youth Education Pack [YEP] beneficiaries) and close to YEP centre/refugee community</li> <li>• Education background: refugees and host beneficiaries with low access to education and training opportunities for short-term skills training; host community beneficiaries for long-term skills training should have completed grade 10</li> </ul> <p><b>Vulnerability criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double orphans, child-headed households, former conscripts, youth, single mothers, other vulnerable people (people with disabilities/victims of conflict); one from each family is eligible and they must be without other education support, have stayed in the camp for at least a year and be unlikely to leave for at least one year.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities Industrialization Centers Ethiopia</b>	Plumbing Beauty salon Electrical work Tailoring	Around 400 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every interested individual who is a refugee living in the camp can attend any of the training in every term.</li> </ul>
<b>Source: Based on interviews with livelihood experts from each organisation in Shire (2–6 November 2017)</b>			

## **Livelihood challenges and opportunities**

### ***Challenges***

Selection of appropriate beneficiaries is the first step in any successful project. Selecting people who cannot realise the aims of projects is a major obstacle to the success of livelihood projects in the refugee camps. In addition, selection errors in the type of activity provided (business and vocational skills training), as well as shortage of market linkages or deficiency of demand, are also major challenges for livelihood projects in the Tigray refugee camps. Many challenges are equally shared by all organisations and in all refugee camps. Shortage of basic utilities like water and energy, availability or delayed distribution of start-up kits, incorrect placement of business centres (locations), group-based support modalities (number of beneficiaries), and poor market linkages are challenges faced by most livelihood projects. Moreover, new business ideas are not being innovated in the refugee camps. Resource limitation, which is a problem for all livelihood projects in the camps, problems with loan disbursement and repayment modalities specific to microloan and revolving funds, lack of formal micro institutions that specifically support and facilitate loan provision and saving for refugees, and shortage of working spaces for urban refugees are issues mentioned by all agencies, but stressed by the Norwegian Refugee Council livelihood coordinator (Tewedaj, interview with Solomon, face-to-face, Shire, 2 November 2017) .

There are also some refugee-driven challenges for livelihood projects, like the localities in Eritrea from which the refugees came and ethnic group segregation, which can cause conflict among groups and result in the theft and misuse of the start-up kits for personal purposes. Refugees' high expectations and limited motivation, as well as lack of commitment to spend time and effort to improve their livelihoods, were other critical challenges. Such refugee-driven problems have resulted in refugees dropping out of projects and sitting idle or engaging in secondary migration. Business skills gaps among selected beneficiaries, business selection problems (i.e., copying and pasting

business ideas), lack of interest in working in a team, and lack of trust in one another are challenges for livelihood projects. In most of the challenges mentioned by the refugees, there are hidden factors. To appropriately address each challenge, the root causes must be identified. In relation to lack of motivation and commitment and lack of trust among refugees, for example, livelihood projects need to ask 'why' when planning project activities.

There are also challenges posed by the local community. For example, conflict with the local community over the use of firewood and grazing of livestock mean that refugees are unable to easily access natural resources around the camps, as stated in the focus group discussions. The livelihood experts also said that there is conflict between the host community and refugees over the use of natural resources by the refugees.

Programming related challenges can also be observed. Key informants reported that livelihood projects often fail to meet their intended outcomes, because they are based on a rough needs assessment, not a detailed and clear appraisal. Key informants also mentioned misunderstanding of the refugee context, lack of standard operating procedures, fragmented monitoring and supervision, and lack of coordination and partnerships among livelihood project implementing organisations as some of the major challenges facing organisations in the Shire area. Therefore, livelihood project implementing organisations need to professionalise their projects, particularly their project initiation and planning stage. Whatever project idea they wish to implement must be based on the actual context and should fit the existing needs of the beneficiaries.

Remittances received from relatives abroad remain an important source of money for Eritrean refugees dwelling in urban areas. In addition, a few reported working as daily labourers. Remittances are also a source of income for refugees living in camps, but their main source of sustenance is the World Food Programme's monthly food ration. The main constraints hindering urban refugees from participating in income-generating activities and diversifying their

sources of income include lack of working capital and access to credit, lack of technical skills, and lack of a workplace. There are no livelihood interventions for urban refugees by either the government or NGOs, except the recently launched Addressing the Root Causes programme (funded by Dutch Ministry of the Foreign Affairs) and Regional Development and Protection Programme (funded by the European Union) in Shire and Addis Ababa. These programmes have found that the small number of urban refugee households in Shire and the lack of commitment and excessive dependency of Eritrean refugees living in urban settings on livelihood programmes or remittances, specific to Shire town, are major challenges for livelihood projects for urban refugees (Abrha, interview with Kahsay, face-to-face, Shire, 24 October 2017). Conceivably, all the identified challenges could be solved through the existing structures and with existing resources, with strong collaboration among the responsible organisations, led by ARRA, the organisation that manages the camp.

### ***Opportunities***

Some of the opportunities in the camps that have positively contributed to the implementation of livelihood projects include the exemption of camp refugees from taxation on business activities, the provision of house rent and other support, the provision of technical and material support by livelihood agencies, the potential to sell goods or services on refugee and local markets, and the gridline connection that helps organisations conduct metal and woodwork training in Shimelba refugee camp, as mentioned in the focus group discussions. Moreover, the availability of the vegetable gardening centre in Shimelba camp and access to land for small business activities (like shops, cafes and restaurants) also present refugees with opportunities.

Data collected from the interviews with key informants shows several opportunities that have positively contributed to livelihood projects, such as the existence of business franchises between the locals and refugees, a cadre of refugees and youth who have received vocational skills training, the availability of different structures like vocational skill training centres, and the availability of community-based

structures. The livelihood officer from Innovative Humanitarian Solutions added that the stable environment in Shimelba camp, availability of land for small business activities, peaceful coexistence between the two communities (refugee and local), and their language and cultural similarities have helped in the execution of livelihood projects (Tewedaj, interview with Michael, face-to-face, 28 October 2017).

There are many unexploited opportunities that could positively contribute to livelihood programmes. The key informants pointed out the following: the proximity of camps to local towns, availability of refugee and local markets, availability of large numbers of educated and trainable youth, large cash flow inside the camps due to remittances, culture and language similarities, access to land to start small businesses, and the existence of vocational skills graduates. The survey found that about 39% of the respondents believe that refugees' occupational backgrounds are one of the main opportunities underutilised by livelihood projects. In addition, 36% believe that existing demands in and around the camp present more opportunities. For example, the discussants in the focus group mentioned demand for bakery bread (although the production of bread has started in Adi Harush and Mai Ayni, the bakeries are not yet meeting market demand), dairy products, butchers, boutiques, and power suppliers. In addition, there is demand for metal and woodwork, electronic maintenance, agro-processing (industries like milk and meat factories), and leather crafts, which have good prospects for livelihood projects. The availability of large numbers of trained and experienced youth is also an opportunity that has not yet been exploited by livelihood projects.

### **Reasons for secondary migration**

Secondary migration is the foremost challenge for livelihood projects, as it leads participants to drop out of programmes. The vast majority (85%) of the refugees who participated in this study considered lack of livelihood opportunities to be one of the main push factors for the secondary migration of refugees from camps in Ethiopia. In addition,

youth also move on due to lack of basic recreational facilities, services like water, energy, and shelter, and, most importantly, income-generating opportunities. A total of 90% of the survey participants believed that the provision of livelihood opportunities for Eritrean youth refugees living in Tigray could reduce their movement to third counties.

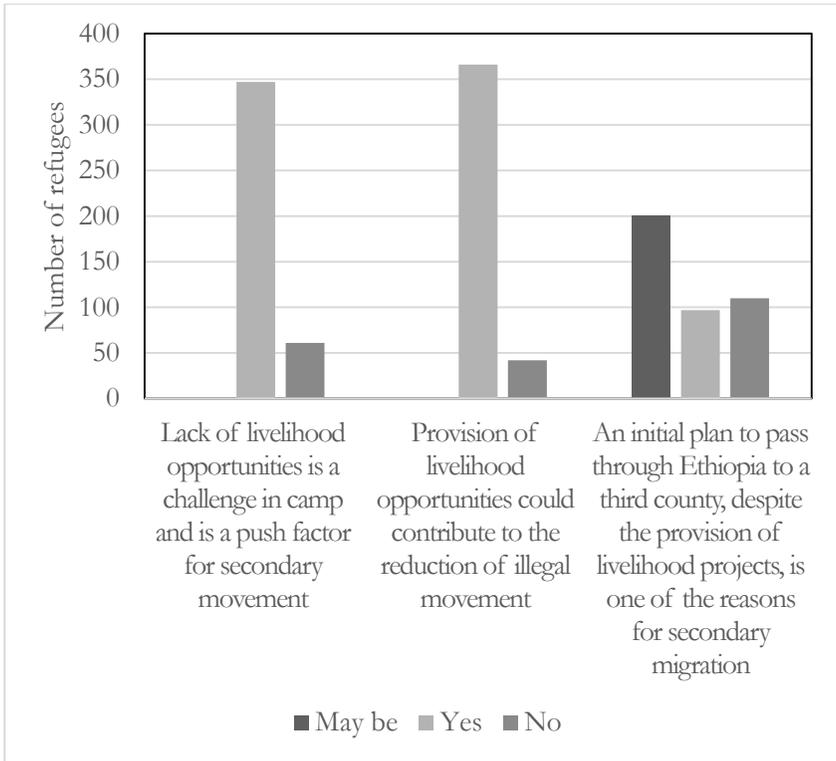


Figure 10.2. Respondents' perception (N=407) of the role of livelihood challenges and opportunities in secondary migration (2017)

Secondary migration may also be due to an initial plan by refugees to flee Ethiopia. The relationship between livelihood projects and secondary migration is inconsistent. When asked whether an initial plan to pass through Ethiopia was a reason for refugees who have benefited from a livelihood project to move on to a third country, 21% of respondents said 'yes', 28% said 'no', while 51% said 'maybe'. At the same time, the survey found that 72% of respondents believed

that having an initial plan to pass through Ethiopia was the reason for the secondary migration of refugees: “refugees seem programmed to flee Ethiopia, to just pass through; however, they do not know the next chapter of their life” (M, interview with Michael, face-to-face, 25 October 2017). In this study, all livelihood project interventions were found to encounter this problem across all refugee camps. Moreover, the focus group discussions revealed that the refugees themselves believe that the initial plan to leave Ethiopia is the reason why Eritreans go to third countries, even when supported by livelihood projects.

When participants were asked in an open-ended question why refugees are leaving Ethiopia, even when supported by livelihood projects, some said that some youth are invited by their families to go to third countries. The diaspora community, therefore, plays a role in the secondary migration of Eritreans living in Tigray. The role of smugglers is also substantial. Furthermore, the lack of communication opportunities with relatives back in Eritrea is an additional push factor for refugees to leave Ethiopia and move to Sudan or another country where there is access to direct phone calls.

## **Conclusion**

This study looked at three research questions: What are the intervention strategies of the livelihood projects targeting Eritrean refugees living in Tigray, Ethiopia? What are the livelihood challenges and opportunities facing Eritrean refugees in Tigray, Ethiopia? And, why are Eritrean refugees moving on from Ethiopia, even when supported by several livelihood projects?

Looking at the first research question, the intervention strategies of livelihood implementing organisations working with refugees in Tigray can be broken into two categories, supply-side strategies and demand-side strategies. Supply-side strategies include the provision of vocational skills and business development training, distribution of working capital in cash or kind, the supply of livestock, and provision of agricultural materials. Demand-side strategies include creating

market linkages and ensuring demand for the products and services being promoted. However, many of the businesses started under the livelihood projects are having difficulty finding markets for their products and accessing raw materials (market linkages). In addition, refugees have difficulty obtaining camp exit permits to enable them to access raw materials from nearby towns. Hence, while most implementing agencies had strong supply-side strategies, their demand-side strategies were found to be imperfect, particularly in linking refugees' businesses to local markets. Livelihood projects have also been criticised for not selecting appropriate beneficiaries, failing to create absolute value chains, and not coordinating among themselves or developing common operation standards, such as selection criteria for beneficiaries and a start-up capital distribution modality. Moreover, lack of value chain development has resulted in the limited success of livelihood programmes in the camps, which impacts on secondary migration.

In relation to the second research question, the study found many livelihood challenges and opportunities in the refugee camps. Some of the major challenges include: linking refugee businesses with demand and local markets (demand-side challenges), conflict between Eritrean refugees of different ethnic origin, theft and misuse of resources by refugees, as well as high expectations and limited motivation and commitment to improve their livelihoods (refugee-driven challenges), conflict over resources such as firewood and grazing land (challenges originating from the local community), and lack of detailed and clear appraisals, misunderstanding of the refugee context, lack of standard operating procedures, fragmented monitoring and supervision, and lack of coordination and partnerships among livelihood project implementing organisations (programming-related challenges). There are also numerous livelihood opportunities in the camps, such as the existing infrastructure in the camps, availability of basic services, existence of training centres, refugee potential (human resources), existing demand in and around the camps, and availability of natural resources. However, because most of interventions are based on shallow assessments, several opportunities (such as refugees' existing

skills and occupational backgrounds and markets in and around the camp) have been underutilised by livelihood projects. These failures impact on the success of projects, which in turn impacts on secondary migration.

To answer the third research question, why are refugees migrating on from Ethiopia when supported by different livelihood implementing organisations, the study found the following. First, the problems with livelihood intervention strategies, especially on the demand-side, and the fragmented value chain mean that these projects are failing to meet the goal of creating a sustainable income for refugees in the camps, who are moving on in search of a better life. Second, the number of livelihood beneficiaries targeted and the number of youth living in the refugee camps needing livelihood projects does not match; the livelihood implementing organisations are reaching hundreds, whereas tens of thousands of youth need such interventions every year. Third, significant numbers of refugees are crossing the Eritrea-Ethiopia border with the intention of passing through on their way to a third country. Therefore, regardless of the provision of livelihood projects by implementing organisations, a proportion of Eritrean refugees are still moving out of Ethiopia.

Therefore, it is concluded that flanking measures are needed that will strengthen the sense that a sustainable livelihood in Ethiopia is viable. Such measures include the matching of skills and business opportunities, strengthening basis conditions in the camps and ending the operations of human traffickers in the camps as these encourage refugees to engage in secondary migration.

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