



ሐዘወት ኢትዮጵያ
HIWOT ETHIOPIA

Hiwot Ethiopia's Progress Brief: Protecting Unsafe Child Migration



Save the Children

Hiwot Ethiopia

March 2016

1. Background

With the attractive possibilities urbanization brings, such as better employment and urban housing, many individuals are migrating to the city. This form of rural-urban migration tends to be highly practiced by children in Ethiopia. A Rapid Assessment conducted by Hiwot Ethiopia revealed that children from rural areas of Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNPR region migrate to the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. As most individuals migrate from rural areas, many arrive at the long-distance bus station located near Woreda 7 of the Addis Ketema sub city. Currently, on average 30,000 individuals live in the Woreda of which more than 7000 are children (Hiwot Ethiopia Rapid Assessment, 2013). Rather than moving to other areas of the vast city, most reside in the Woreda due to the nearby market providing small jobs, the nearby commercial sex district providing entertainment, and churches and mosques providing free food at times. Hence, to address unsafe child migration, Hiwot Ethiopia has established child led initiatives, community based child protection system, engaging parents in small business and establishing model parent group to promote positive parenting. This project has been running since 2013 by financial and technical support of Save the children.

Reasons for Migration

The reason for a child to migrate is never solely due to one cause, but rather an interrelationship between several factors. Often children are driven to the city because of hopeful prospects of better employment, disintegration of the household, poverty, child trafficking and seeking the benefits of the urban city based on inaccurate information. Among these reasons, a study also revealed that 30% of children

migrate out of their own initiative to explore the city, having been pushed by peer pressure and a desire to achieve independence (Hiwot Ethiopia Rapid Assessment, 2013). However, the process of migrating to the city is often an unsafe one, and thus carries many risks. Both during the travel and once at the destination, child migrants are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse, both physical and psychological illnesses, having a lack of access to basic needs such as food and shelter, and developing a proneness to using drugs. Moreover, children already living in the woreda are equally susceptible to the mentioned risks, especially as majority of such children are from a poor socio-economic background.

Project strategies

1. Child led Initiative

The child led initiative (CLI) was established in 2013 at the beginning of the project. It is called CLI because they are working independently. The club has bylaw, financial manual and check list. The group has got space in the woreda area to hold peer-to-peer discussions, along with the ability to organise cultural, educational and entertaining activities (i.e. football games and cultural dance performances). They also received financial and material support for playing games, football, cultural dance, clothes and office furniture, social support, training and a yearly refresher from Hiwot Ethiopia. As a CLI club, these members discuss a range of topics that affect children, such as child sexual abuse, exploitation, child labour, life skills, and the consequences of child migrations and the importance of boys and men engagements. Discussions are open to all

children (defined as those between the ages of ten to eighteen), and frequently members bring in friends, relatives, street children or peers to the biweekly discussions. Specific training was also provided on unsafe migration, challenges faced by migrated children, how to protect children from unsafe migration and leadership to enable peer-to-peer counselling sessions.

Child lead initiative group there is now a better understanding of issues that children face in the area and an improvement in life skills. Particularly, the participants now have knowledge of child protection and know how to protect themselves and who to report cases of abuse. They have also shared their knowledge with families, peers and friends. Members have an increased level of confidence, have gained friends and have a safe space to speak freely. The performances put on by the club have increased the knowledge of the community on a number of issues.

Elisa, age 17, is living with her 4 cousins cared by



her grandmother. She lost her parents when she was 2 years. She became involved in the project 2 years ago. She was selected by the woreda Women, Children and Youth Affairs office to join the CLI club named Birhu Tesfa. She

was the club secretary and controlled the finance. She believes that she has gained experience for her future life through her involvement in the CLI. After taking the national exam, she has joined Addis Ababa University, department of accounting. She said that I didn't forget my grandmother's stress to buy exercise books, pens and uniform for all of us. As my age increased, I needed to work and support

myself. I get a support from this project to buy chips machine. Then I started to help myself supported by the business skill training which allowed me to create a business by selling chips after school. This income has allowed me to buy the necessary school supplies and to support my family.

2. Temporary shelter

One of the basic issues when attempting to reunify children has been where the children can stay until reunified with their families. To solve this problem, Hiwot Ethiopia requested and received from the woreda a space for the construction of a temporary shelter.

The temporary shelter construction has been finished and furnished with basic materials like beds, blanket, bed sheets, television, games and office materials. It is ready to be used by children awaiting reunification. This will ensure that children are safe while they wait to be returned home and until finding their parents. It will also provide proper reunification process by allowing time for children to receive counselling.



3. Reunification of children

Hiwot Ethiopia's Rapid Assessment of 2013 indicated that main reasons that children migrate to Addis Ababa is curiosity, wanting to explore urban life, death of one or two parents, dispute with family, to help family and peer pressure. Children living and working away from home are among

the most vulnerable groups in society as they lack the necessary information, capacity and support to identify dangerous conditions, exploitation and abuse.

Hiwot Ethiopia works collaboratively with the Women & Children affairs office, the police and the community of the woreda to identify and assist migrated children. Community members have been educated on the issues of migrating children so that they can work better with the children and the community. Identified children are met with and after some discussions have the option of being reunified with their family. Children who decide to be reunified with their families are provided with further counselling and support to ensure that the child will be prepared to stay at home and reduce the chance of them returning to Addis Ababa. Since 2013, 139 children have been reunified with their parents. The children are also encouraged to talk to other children in their home town about the difficulties of Addis. Some of the parents have communicated by telephone that they were happy and that the children continue with their education. This strategy involves community members, government officials, and police to enact change and improve the situation for the migrated children. The children who have returned advice that they prefer to go to their parents to continue their education and work in their area. Some of reunified children have continued their education as their parents witnessed.

4. Positive parenting skill training

Most parents are engaged in a heavy work load to gain a daily income and to sustain their families. In the project area there are a large number of single female headed households. The parents often do not have enough knowledge on positive parenting skill. Children who are in conflict with their parents may turn to the streets. Training and then refresher training was provided to 20 model parents. These trained parents then held discussion groups with the focus on child development, child migration, reunification of migrated children with their family

and giving love and care to these children. Parents have shared their parental experience and the attitude that they had towards migrated children. Children often take to the streets when there is conflict at home between family members, husband and wife, and parents with children. As result of positive child disciplining at home, children will be less likely to spend time on the street. The strategy here is to engage parents and the community to provide a better understanding about the needs of children.

After the discussion, parents understanding improved about child development, parenting skills and the risks for children on the street. Parents are more aware of the risks for their children and the migrated children. This information is shared with the community. Children are less likely to be left to their own devices on the street where they are at risk of abuse. The parents agreed to help in the reunification of migrated children and support them to have better lives and have been working well with the police and government officials to assist these children.

5. Livelihood Support

This strategy is designed to increase economic capacity of parents so that children will have access to their basic needs. Most of the children who reside in the target area are influenced by migrated children. In order to support the family, training is provided by the Small Scale Enterprise office, a government body. The training aims to enhance skills and understanding of how to establish a micro and small scale enterprise. These women gained knowledge in how to establish a micro finance group, generate a saving system, establish loans and efficiently distribute their income so as to avoid spending too much daily. The strategy here is to provide women with skills to improve their lives, their family and the community. Establishing a micro finance group not only provides them with the means to gradually build their income to support their children and their families, but further stimulates psychological benefits such as self-confidence, independence and

assertiveness. Selected IGA supported mothers who are strong have formed three groups having ten members for each group also get additional financial support of 45,000 birr. Over a little more than two years, the program has generated a sense of community support, improved access of psychosocial services for the community and has equipped both the youth and their parents with training skills to stimulate economic resilience so as to support themselves and their families in terms of food, education. Women who are involved in this activity and training are able to continue and change their income generating activities as needed.

Hirut – 45, Single Mother -: Prior to the project,



Hirut advised that she did not have enough money to feed her children or to pay her house rent. Her children were exposed to problems

by spending time on the street. To support her family, she would sometimes work washing clothes and also expected others to give her money. She expressed that she was unable to buy sanitary pads and even underwear for her child, so her child was not comfortable going to school during her menstruation. After the training she learnt how to save money by creating a business. She began making the local “Ambasha” bread, (Ambasha is a type of bread which is prepared at home using local oven). However with the skills she learnt, she changed to ceremonial bread after the cost of flour for the Ambasha bread increased. She has learnt to adapt to changing markets.

She is happy that she can now pay her house rent of 350 birr per month. She can save and also support her two children. She has changed her life.

Recommendation

Due to the fact that the issue of unsafe child migration is so complex, no single solution can be provided. Hiwot Ethiopia has successfully established a range of programs so as to touch upon each impacted area. Several of its programs have illustrated positive results as it reaches a wide audience, namely Woreda community members, parents and migrant children. The different strategies implemented also gives a broad framework from which many can benefit; the group counselling addresses psychological needs, the entrepreneurship and business skill training sessions provide economic opportunities for a brighter future, and the collaboration with community members secures a wider network to monitor the situation of migrant children in Addis Ababa. To further support this growth, a few suggested adjustments are provided to further encourage this progress. Most children who are vulnerable to migration are from single parent families especially mothers. The low economic capacity of these families will lead children to the street and to migration in search of jobs to support themselves and their families. Hence, in addition to the awareness creation, it is also better to strengthen the parents’ situation more work on tracing and post reunification process.

Contact Address

Hiwot Ethiopia P. O. Box 27743 Code 1000 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia PHONE: +251 -11-655 02 38

EMAIL: hiwotethiopia@ethionet.et WEBSITE: www.hiwot.org.et

Hiwot Ethiopia P.O.Box 27743 Code 1000 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia