

ADOLESCENTS IN TRANSITION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA



Save the Children



BACKGROUND

Cycles of drought, conflict and political instability in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia) continue to impact the wellbeing of children, and the situation is getting worse with the frequency of crises and growing population pressures. Internal and cross-border displacement and migration is increasing across the region, resulting in unplanned growth of small town centres and urban areas. While in transition, adolescent boys and girls face challenges in accessing services in new locations, are exposed to violence and exploitation, have limited livelihood opportunities on arrival and often lack access to development assistance.

Adolescents in Transition is a body of thought and programmatic approach that Save the Children is developing to support vulnerable youth to ensure that they are protected, empowered and healthy as they move throughout the region. The target group of boys and girls aged 12-18 years is characterized by their physical “transition” from their rural areas of origin into growing town centres, and beyond, sometimes moving back and forth between different locations. It also encompasses their transition from traditional livelihood practices to new ways of earning income and supporting their families with an eye to preventing child marriage as a coping strategy.

Save the Children focuses on breakthroughs for children in survival, learning and protection. Focusing on adolescents in transition contributes to this ambition by ensuring that young people are healthy, empowered and safe during transition, and that boys and girls have equal opportunities. There is also a recognition that adolescents are still connected to family units and as much as possible, we want to ensure that caregivers are able to invest in their children’s wellbeing and education to prevent unsafe migration.

Boys and girls in transition are often seeking entry into new environments whose social and economic dynamics they neither understand nor are prepared to navigate, leaving them vulnerable to violence and exploitation and with limited access to opportunities.

In late 2017, Save the Children conducted research on motivations for, and programming around youth in transitions in the Horn of Africa. A key finding of this research is that despite efforts by the humanitarian system to address shocks to communities’ livelihoods in the Horn of Africa through existing humanitarian and resilience programming, young people continue to transition to more urban settings. The report further revealed that access to education, shifts in gender dynamics, rapid urbanization and migration related to climatic shocks and conflict are changing the landscape of opportunities for adolescents in the three countries.

To address this, Save the Children plans to design and implement programmes that take into consideration these unique challenges and opportunities for young people in the region. This brief provides Save the Children’s steer to programming for adolescents in transition in the Horn of Africa, drawing on contextual realities, its experience in programming in the region and existing research and learning on adolescents in transition.

KEY STATISTICS ON YOUTH



11.2% of the youth in Sub-Saharan Africa are unemployed

172 M people in the Horn of Africa

77% of population in Sub-Saharan Africa are <35 years old

4.1 M Internally Displaced People in the region

CHALLENGES FACED BY ADOLESCENTS IN TRANSITION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Adolescents in transition continue to be vulnerable in the Horn of Africa because they are often separated from their families, have not completed their education, are not yet able to access services as an adult, lack social and financial capital, and/or are expected to generate income for themselves and others in a new location. Their increased vulnerability impedes their ability to remain healthy, empowered and protected, and their aspirations often remain unmet.

Limited Skills & Access to Financial and Social Capital

Once in new areas, adolescents struggle to access opportunities due to limited financial literacy skills and little or no social networks to enable them settle in and survive

Violence and Exploitation

Disintegration of families often leaves adolescents at risk of exploitation as they attempt to manoeuvre new environments with limited life skills resulting in negative coping mechanisms in order to survive

Misinformation Attraction to Urban Centres

Many adolescents yearning for a better life get information from their peers and social media which is sometimes inaccurate. Often aspirations are misaligned to their skills and needs in the labour market

Poor Policy Environment

Policies need to take into consideration the needs of adolescent in transition, be disseminated effectively to ensure awareness and effectively implemented to ensure that they get the support they need

Limited Access to Education

As families and older children migrate in search of better conditions, many adolescents drop out of school thus limiting their acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills

Limited Livelihood Opportunities

Adolescents in transition often have challenges in getting opportunities due to lack of necessary skills and knowledge needed to meet the needs in the labour market



YOUTH LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMING IN ETHIOPIA

Youth comprise close to a third of the population in Ethiopia, with over one million people on the move annually through rural to urban migration. Save the Children has for the last five years, implemented programmes aimed at addressing the livelihood needs of the youth in both rural and urban settings.

Ayitu Bekele (pictured left), is a twenty-five-year-old girl who dropped out of school while in grade seven to support her ailing and elderly parents. She lives in Akaki-Kaliti sub-city of Addis Ababa.

She was identified as marginalized in her locality through Save the Children's Success/Youth Livelihood Programming. She took part in a five-day training on street business toolkits, received support to develop a business plan and was linked to a financial institution (Addis Ababa Credit and Saving Institution-ACSI) that lent her money to start her business which together with her savings enabled her to open her shop. Ayitu can now afford healthcare for her mother and has paid a down payment on a subsidized government housing scheme, and will hopefully be a home-owner in the near future.

SAVE THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH TO ADOLESCENT TRANSITIONS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Save the Children's approach to adolescents in transition is focused on providing adolescents with the opportunities to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to navigate their transitions safely and to successfully reach adulthood in line with their hopes and aspirations. This includes both technical and life skills, coupled with linkages to adequate public and private sector partners, to provide a full complement of services based on market research identifying gaps in service delivery.

Specifically, in the Horn of Africa, we envision that our programmes will help adolescents to:

Have Realistic and informed expectations of urban and peri urban life

- a. Contribute to positive influence or migration based on increased knowledge on the realities in areas of migration and skills needed in order to survive
- b. Facilitate real and unbiased diaspora influence that builds on adolescents social capital and provides support as they navigate their transition

Access to quality services in transition

- a. Awareness and equitable access to quality services for adolescents in an affordable manner
- b. Advocate for the inclusion of adolescents into safety net programmes in a way that addresses their needs

Engage in diverse and relevant livelihood options

- a. Provide evidence through market research on sustainable agro pastoral livelihoods
- b. Facilitate access to inclusive financial services for adolescents in transition
- c. Contribute to the acquisition of relevant skills tailored to market needs through development of a market driven curriculum and access to quality basic education
- d. Strengthen linkages between policies and systems
- e. Facilitate access to modern technology and extension services

Be free from violence and exploitation

- a. Contribute to development of supportive and strengthened social networks for adolescents in transition
- b. Train in life skills to ensure that adolescents are empowered and resilient
- c. Create avenues and forums for meaningful participation and inclusion of adolescents
- d. Push for zero tolerance to and practice of child marriage through law enforcement, changing attitudes through consistent engagement with stakeholders and creating awareness on Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights among adolescent

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING IN SOMALIA

Save the Children is helping adolescents in transition to acquire skills through the Technical Training and Vocational Skills Education Programme. The programme is focused on three main objectives: equipping adolescents with skills needed in the market, increasing the capacity of the Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and strengthening vocational training frameworks, and building a body of evidence to support the development of adolescent skill models.

19-year-old Hodan Mohamed Hussein is one of the young people who have just completed hospitality management course skills training programme implemented by Save the Children in partnership with European College of Hospitality in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

"I now feel like I'm in a better position to support my family and community. See who I am now just after one year of your investment! You should be proud of yourselves and what you're doing for the youth of this nation. Every girl in this country has the potential to become like me, they can learn skills as it is the easiest way to be employed and you will support your people" Hodan exclaimed in excitement during their graduation ceremony.





NEXT STEPS:

ADOLESCENTS IN TRANSITION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Most of the work on resilience, urbanization and migration has focused on one specific aspect, such as livelihoods or protection. Save the Children would like to take a more holistic approach to ensuring that young people have realistic expectations about movement in the region, and can access services that strength not only income earning, but learning opportunities, adolescent reproductive health and protection. We seek to secure funding to support research, build expertise and expand programming on adolescents in transition, with plans to scale up to other countries where Save the Children works and youth are transitioning into urban settings.

We will develop a logical framework linking the aspects of our project together, including drawing on Save the Children's Life Skills for Success Common Approach. Our goal is to initiate a second phase of coordinated research to synthesize knowledge on the issues affecting adolescent transitions and successful packages of services, or specific interventions that demonstrate impact in the region. The result will be used to design programmes that bridge young people affected by drought, conflict and drivers of migration so that they successfully navigate these transitions.

We seek to develop cross-thematic and specific technical expertise to lead the East and Southern Africa steer on adolescents in transition, taking into consideration relevant sectors and cross-cutting issues of policy, gender and resilience. The ultimate goal is not only healthy, empowered and protected boys and girls, but national and local systems that are prepared to support the influx of adolescents, and help them develop fully as citizens.