



# Report on Migration, Return and Remittances Of Ethiopian Domestic Workers From Lebanon

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### Acronyms:

BOLSA: Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs

CETU: Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Union

COC: Certificate of Occupational Competence

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

ILO: International Labor Organization

IOM: International Organization for Migration

KAFALA: Customary practice governing relation of employer & domestic workers

MOLSA: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

MOFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

UAE: United Arab Emirate

ADS: America, Department of State

UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugee

UN: United Nations

WHO: World Health Organization

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## Executive Summary

**Introduction:** This report presents the findings of the situation analysis conducted in Addis Ababa with a specific emphasis on returnee migrant domestic workers from Lebanon. The overall purpose of the assessment is to:

- Analyze the working and living conditions of returnee migrant domestic workers over their stay in Lebanon and after their return to Ethiopia.
- Identify challenges in reintegration initiatives and generate a way forward to improve the lives and human rights conditions of the returnee domestic workers.
- Examine how the remittances sent to their families could be better managed in a way that could benefit the country at large, as well as the domestic workers and their families upon their return back home.

**Methodology:** The consultant used various research techniques and methods in collecting the required primary and secondary data. Based on the nature of the study, a qualitative data collection method has been deployed to capture the necessary information from the study targets. Primary data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with returnees, potential migrants and mothers of domestic workers currently in Lebanon, from representatives of relevant government organizations and financial institutions and civil society organizations. Existing research reports on these issues and documents on secondary data, including policy and legal instruments, have been reviewed. The collected data have been transcribed, coded, analyzed and interpreted in a coherent and systematic manner using detailed qualitative data analysis techniques.

The study was conducted in a participatory manner and the respondents felt at ease during the interview and group discussion. The methodology and data collection instruments used in the study have been shared with the participants to agree on the approaches, in line with the project objectives. In general, purposive method and snowball technique have been used to reach to some of the targets of the study.

The study was carried out in Addis Ababa, as well as in Addis Ketema and Kolfe Keranio sub-cities. The study captured 75 returnees and 10 potential migrants, as well as 10 mothers of migrant domestic workers currently serving in Lebanon. In-depth interviews and consultation sessions with government institutions, international and local organizations, financial institutions and civil society organizations have been undertaken to obtain information on policies and strategies concerning migration and bilateral agreements with receiving countries.

**Findings:** The overwhelming majority of the respondents declared that they migrated to Lebanon as they had been told, among other things, that Lebanon is better than any other Middle East country for migrant domestic workers. They obtained information from the brokers, who were the main actors in choosing the countries of destination, as most of the emigrants had no information about the receiving countries of the Middle East. The majority of the returnee domestic workers noted that the information they used to get from the brokers and friends was incorrect, as it did not reflect the reality on the ground.

The result of the study indicates that some of the domestic workers could not tolerate the harsh working and living conditions of the host family and thus they were forced to terminate their employment contract and return home earlier than expected. Most of the domestic workers

reported that they had faced severe physical and emotional abuses, mainly by the female employers/madams and often had been sexually harassed by the husband and the older sons. The majority of the respondents confirmed that they did not use to work only for the employer, but they were often ordered by the madams to perform additional work at the house of their married sons, daughters, mothers or friends, which are tasks not established in their employment contract.

It appeared to be clear that the majority of the returnees found no job opportunities since they came back home. As indicated in the socio-demographic characteristics of the returnees, most of them did not attain higher education and hence could not be in a position to compete for better job, in both the formal and informal sectors. On the other hand, they had no savings to invest in remunerative business that could change their life and that of their families. As a result, most of them became dependents on their poor families and developed an interest in migrating again to any of the Middle East countries, particularly to Dubai, UAE and Saudi Arabia.

With regard to the issue of remittances, all of the respondents noted that they used to send their monthly salary to the family, keeping little money for their personal hygiene. The majority of the domestic workers earned USD 150-200 per month, while free-lance workers earned USD 400-600 per month. Returnees confirmed that majority of the migrant domestic workers normally send at least 80-90% of their monthly salary, every 2 or 3 months, to be used by their family in Ethiopia for household consumption. However, a few returnee domestic workers reported that they used to send money back home following the Ethiopian national holidays. In both cases, the money is usually sent to a family member's account in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia through Western Union, mainly to their mothers' account, since domestic workers have no saving account in Ethiopia. The majority of the workers reported that although they used to send a large portion of their salary (80-90%) to Ethiopia, they could not utilize the money once they returned back to the country, as nothing was left over for them.

The findings reveal that the majority of the returnees complained about the utilization of the remitted money by their families, though they had intention of helping them. The majority of the returnees stated that they neither brought money with themselves nor had it deposited in their name, as they used to send their salary back to their families. All of the 10 mothers covered by this study are currently receiving remittances from their young girls working in Lebanon. They all agree that their daughters had to drop out from school to work and earn a better salary, in order to help the family back home. The findings of the study show that the remitted money is often used to cover the education expenses for the children; this is considered an invaluable investment in the social capital of the future society.

## **Conclusions**

The review of policy frameworks and consultations with relevant government and international organizations revealed that, though Ethiopia is committed to many of the international values to handle issues of migration, it still lacks a comprehensive policy on migration, that could be a major instrument to protect the rights of the migrant workers, and a leverage in negotiations with receiving countries.

Ethiopian domestic workers migrate abroad without having relevant and proper training concerning the work they are expected to perform in destination countries.

The findings of the study clearly depicted that lack of training has overarching effects in the life of the domestic workers. As they do not possess the required skills, they are not in a position to deliver what the host family expects. This in turn leads to disagreements and consequently to

abuses. When the abuses are frequent and force the workers to leave, they fall in the hands of the police and then are exposed to detention.

The information obtained by means of interviews with returnee domestic workers and focus group discussants clearly shows that the Ethiopian migrant domestic workers who used to work in Lebanon had to survive through harsh working conditions and stressful living situations. Normally, during their stay in Lebanon, the returnee migrant domestic workers had to suffer physical and emotional abuses, as well as cultural isolation, discrimination and inhuman treatments perpetrated by their employers, mainly by female employers/madams.

The majority of the domestic workers did not care for their health, were abused and treated inhumanly and returned home without having changed their life or that of their family. The overwhelming majority of the domestic workers had no free means of communication with their relatives and even with their friends living in the vicinity, since their movements were limited to the premises of the host family.

As it holds true in Ethiopia, the Lebanese labor law does not give recognition to migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. It is the *Kafala system* that governs the employment relation of the domestic workers, giving full rights to the employer over the domestic worker.

The majority of returnee migrant domestic workers experienced frequent abuses and rights violation over their stay in Lebanon. However, in spite of the difficulties they survived through, most of the returnees have the desire to migrate again to work overseas, as they cannot find a job in their home country. In fact, finding decent jobs in Ethiopia is not easy, even for those who graduated from universities and colleges, let alone for returnee domestic workers with a low education level.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the major research questions examined in the report, the suggestions made by returnees and their families, the opinions expressed during in-depth interviews with key participants in relevant institutions and focus group discussants, as well as on the views of potential migrants captured in the study, recommendations are put forward on different issues to be implemented by relevant institutions.

Ethiopia is committed to international values in managing migration issues. However, a comprehensive policy on migration and reintegration has not yet been developed. Hence, responsible government institutions like MOLSA & MOFA are duty bound to put in place migration policy that could reinforce the implementation of legal instruments, including the new regulation of overseas employment.

In order to protect the rights of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers over their stay in destination countries, there is a need to negotiate with the Labor ministry in Lebanon in order to organize an association of Ethiopian domestic workers, that could create a basis for negotiation on their rights and free dome with relevant organizations.

The findings of the study reveal that irregular migration is predominant in Ethiopia, mainly during the ban period. Therefore, concerned government institutions like MOLSA, BOLSA and its structures, down to the grassroot level, need to put in place mechanism that could enable them to combat illegal brokers, who are the major actors of irregular migration and trafficking of young women from rural to urban areas.

The provision in the new overseas employment regulation related to the education level of the potential migrants needs to be reconsidered in a way it could take into account the experiences and the acquired skills of returnee migrant domestic workers who did not reach grade 8, who used to work abroad and want to migrate again.

The current skill training needs to include food preparation and operation of machines, as well as caring for elders and sick persons in the family. It has to incorporate a detailed training in Arabic language and even in Amharic language, including for those who may not understand well Amharic. In this regard, the timespan of the training, which is currently 3 weeks, has to be raised at least to 3 months and the current curriculum needs to be revised to be more inclusive.

Potential migrants and returnees should be provided with entrepreneurship and tailor-made skill training that would enable them to work and get a life-changing income their country. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations are duty bound to equip the returnees and potential migrants with marketable skills that could help them to find decent and wage-based jobs.

# **1. Description of the Study**

## **1.1. Project profile**

Securing Women Migration Cycle is a three-year project financed by Italian Agency for Development Cooperation/ AICS and led by CELIM, an Italian NGO. The main purpose of the project is to protect and empower the migratory cycle of foreign workers employed in domestic work in Lebanon, with a specific focus on the Ethiopian domestic workers. The project aims to strengthen the network of assistance and protection for 1500 domestic workers through the improvement of the reception conditions of three selected shelters and the General Security retention center in Sahet el Abed. The project supports the socio-economic reintegration of repatriated Ethiopian domestic workers in order to enhance their economic remittances, both for the purpose of reintegration and for local economic development.

Furthermore, within the general framework of the project, the CeSPI (Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, an independent think-tank based in Rome) pursues a line of research both in Lebanon and in Ethiopia, with CVM as a local partner.

The research is expected to produce quantitative and qualitative data, useful to support the project activities and to present recommendations to institutions and civil society organizations currently engaged in the empowerment of women, in particular migrant domestic workers, in order to improve their lives and human rights conditions.

## **1.2. Objectives and Purpose of the study**

### **1.2.1 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the working and living conditions of Ethiopian returnee migrant domestic workers over their stay in Lebanon and the challenges they had to face after their return back home, in order to improve their economic and human right conditions. Lebanese returnees in Addis Ababa, potential migrants and families of domestic workers currently in Lebanon, representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as UN agencies, civil society and financial institutions were included in the study. The purpose was to generate opinions on policy and intervention issues for reintegration, that would constitute an input for those organizations engaged in the empowerment of returnee migrant domestic workers in different regions of the country; moreover, they were supposed to indicate a way forward as to how the remittances should be managed to benefit the country at large, as well as the families and the domestic workers from the time of their return back home.



## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1. Background**

History shows that people have always moved from one place to another for reasons linked to natural or man-made catastrophes. Movements of people from their homeland to other locations happened in most cases to escape from conflicts, political instability and poverty. Although, in recent years, new policies, laws and controls at entry points are more rigorous than ever before, migration is continuing on a larger scale in different parts of the world. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/international> )

Migration is a movement of people from one place to another within a country or across national borders, with the intention to settle permanently or temporarily in a new location. Migration can be temporary or permanent, voluntary or forced (J. Masionis, 2004). The most recent report by the International Office for Migration (IOM) estimates that in 2015 there were 244 million international migrants globally, or 3.3% of the world's population; out of this total, 150.3 million were migrant workers (ILO, 2016, IOM, 2018 ). The IOM report (2018) revealed that there were 740 million people who had left their birth places and relocated in some other places within their countries of origin for different reasons, including internal conflicts and lack of security.

People migrate for various reasons as individuals, in family units or in large groups. In recent years, international labor migration has turned into a livelihood strategy for women and men living in least developed countries. Almost all countries of the world are involved in international labor migration, either as countries of origin, transit or destination (ILO, 2018). The UNHCR's projection for the year 2017 indicated that Africa is expected to host more than 11.4 million internally displaced people, 4.7 million refugees and 1.4 million asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2017). Ethiopia also hosts a large number of refugees in Africa next to Uganda. Close to 900,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers are living in Ethiopia as of the beginning of 2018 (Amnesty International, 2019).

### **2.2. Country Context on Migration**

Both internal and out-migration is prevalent in Ethiopia. Outward labor migration from Ethiopia mainly takes place for the purpose of engaging migrants as domestic workers in Middle East and Gulf countries (UDS, 2015). In the last few years, Ethiopia experienced significant increases in the number of Ethiopians migrating to different countries, including the Middle East and Gulf states (ILO, 2016). Ethiopians' out-migration grew from 442,161 in 2000 to 753,492 in 2015 ( ILO, 2017). This figure, however, does not cover irregular migrants who cross the border through different routes. Currently, there are around 750,000 undocumented Ethiopians working in Saudi Arabia and nearly 250,000 undocumented Ethiopians living in South Africa (Barry Cooper, Antonia Esser, 2018).

According to the East Africa and Yemen Mixed Migration Review report (quarter 3, 2019), 37% of Ethiopian migrants in Saudi Arabia were unemployed. The report further revealed that 46% of men and 17% of women were unemployed, and even those with a job were employed in unskilled and manual labor. 78% of women migrants were employed in domestic work (<http://www.mixedmigration.org/region/east-Africa>)

According to the official report of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (2012), in the year 2012 about 200,000 labor migrants left Ethiopia to different countries; 90% of them were women domestic workers. An assessment done in Lebanon by the Amnesty International shows that there are 144,986 Ethiopian migrant domestic workers who have been given a resident permit in 2019. The following table shows the number of Ethiopians migrant domestic workers who have obtained a resident permit in the last 4 years.

**Table 1. Ethiopians migrant domestic workers who have obtained a resident permit in the last 4 years**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of residence permits delivered</b>
2016	104,714
2017	134,488
2018	156,779
2019	144,986

Source: Caritas Lebanon, 2019 & AI, 2019.

The figures, however, only refer to migrant domestic workers who have been given a work permit by the Lebanese Ministry of Labor. The reality on the ground indicates that the number would have been much higher, had the undocumented migrant domestic workers been captured. According to the view of deportees from Lebanon who participated in the Focus Group Discussion at the CVM shelter (July 22, 2019) for the purpose of this study, the number of irregular migrant domestic workers exceeds the number of those currently working with a regular permit in Lebanon.

Ethiopian migrant domestic workers in Lebanon face all kind of abuses, including losing their life in some cases. According to the data mentioned in Amnesty International's assessment, sourced from the Human Rights Watch report, based on the information taken from the Community Mental Health Journal (50(5), 2014), every week one domestic worker in Lebanon dies from unnatural causes, either by suicide or fall from an upper floor (Amnesty International, 2019). Such incidents and other extreme abuse of migrant domestic workers led many countries to ban migration of their citizens to Lebanon, including the Ethiopian government. The ban was imposed following the forceful deportation of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2013.

In 2013 and 2014 more than 163,000 Ethiopian migrant workers had been deported from Saudi Arabia. Following the deportation of Ethiopian migrant workers from the KSA, countries like Israel and Yemen also took similar measures against Ethiopian migrant workers. Women constitute 33% of the deportees, while men 62% and children 5%, respectively (IOM, 2014). Deportation of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers is still ongoing to-date from different countries under various contexts. According to the mixed migration regional report, 300,000 undocumented Ethiopians have been involuntarily returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia between May 2017 and August 2019. Of these deportees, 78% were men, while 22% were women (<http://www.mixedmigration.org/region/east-Africa>).

On 3 September 2019, Oromo Media Network TV reported that 46 migrant workers who were detained in Saudi Arabia were repatriated to Ethiopia. The same media reported in August that 18 migrant domestic workers were also deported from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which

makes a total of 64 deportees in two months (August and September 2019). The majority of these deportees returned back home empty-handed, as they were denied their salary by their employers. Some of these workers were detained in Saudi Arabia until the day of deportation. As a result, most of the deportees were not in a position to claim their salary as they were irregular migrants with no resident permit (IOM, 2014). The overall hostile working and living conditions for many of them made it difficult to achieve their objectives and realize their expectations.

Having realized the prevalent conditions for outgoing migrants, the Ethiopian Government has put in place protective legal frameworks and structures to promote a safer migration to the Middle East countries and elsewhere in the world. According to the information obtained from MOLSA, relevant laws have been reviewed and structures were put in place to manage the migration process.

As the ban is lifted, the government has signed memorandum of understanding with four Middle East and Gulf countries, namely the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and Kuwait; moreover, a bilateral agreement with Lebanon is in the negotiation process and expected to be concluded in the near future (information obtained from the MOFA). The Ethiopian Government officially lifted the ban in October 2018. From this time on, eligible domestic workers who fulfill all the requirements listed in the new legislation for overseas employment have the right to go and work in the countries who signed, or are willing to sign, the memorandum of understanding with the Ethiopian ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

**The worker:**

- should be 18 years of age or above; have completed grade 8 education or above; attend skill training and have COC; attend a pre-departure orientation course;
- undergo medical examination and present a medical certificate; should have a certificate of clearance from crime; should hold a valid passport; should have vaccination card.

Though almost all domestic workers in the Middle East countries work in abusive and exploitative conditions, those working in Lebanon face unbearable labor exploitation, physical and emotional abuses, as well as sexual and moral abuse, as the Lebanese labor law does not protect migrant domestic workers, whether they are regular or irregular migrants (Yeshiwas D, 2014).

### **2.3. Situation of Local domestic workers**

Internal migration, that often involves human trafficking, is the most prevalent phenomenon in Ethiopia. Trafficking of women from rural to urban areas is a highly prevalent and steadily increasing practice in the country (Siraj K., 2019). A large number of young girls either migrates by their own or reaches big cities and towns through trafficking, to serve as domestic worker by their relatives or acquaintances of their parents (World Vision, 2011).

Young girls usually move to nearby towns and then to big cities, from where they either migrate abroad or end up in different activities, including prostitution (FSTE, 2008). Trafficked women

usually join domestic work in the towns or in big cities through a broker or relatives of their parents (Kifle A, 2002). The majority of women who migrate from rural areas mostly serve either private households, with a fixed wage, or relatives, with no fixed remuneration or compensation. As there is no minimum wage system in the country, the payment can even go as low as birr 500.00/USD 18 (ILO, 2017). However, several brokers found in Addis Ababa (around Semien hotel and Addisu Gebeya) reported to our researchers that domestic workers who are required to perform every house chores and have previous working experience in Addis Ababa may be paid up to birr 2500.00 (equivalent to USD 85) per month, while newcomers with no experience as a domestic worker in Addis Ababa are paid less than birr 1200.00 (nearly USD 45).

Due to the absence of a regulated minimum wage system, employers are free to set the salary of the domestic workers by themselves, and the workers have no option but to accept what the employer offers. It is up to the domestic worker to take it or refuse it. But, as the employment opportunities are scarce and the unemployment rate is high, i.e. 24.9% at the national level (ILO, 2018), the only option is to accept the offer.

In Ethiopia, in most cases, as there is no written contract between the domestic worker and the employer, the worker lives in fear, with no job security (Abiy K., 2002). Domestic workers are beaten and even tortured or sexually attacked by the children of their employers (MOLSA, 2005). The trafficked women are often forced to work in small bars and local alcohol houses (SCF, 2006). A study carried out in seven major regional towns and Addis Ababa revealed that a substantial proportion of women working as prostitutes and domestic workers, as well as children living off the streets, are mostly victims of trafficking (MOLSA, 2009).

## **2.4. Recruitment and Migration Routes**

Many interwoven factors push young Ethiopian women to opt for migration to respond to family problems. Poverty, unemployment, and the social position of women in the community are the major pushing factors behind outward labor migration in Ethiopia. Family and peer pressure, deceiving information and speculation from illegal brokers are also the causes of out-migration (ILO, 2018). Out-migration takes place formally through legal channels and illegally through informal ways, facilitated by relatives or friends in the destination countries and by local brokers. Irregular migration has been exercised since out-migration started in the country and widely practiced throughout the ban, as there was no other alternative left other than migrating irregularly (Amnesty International, 2019).

According to the U.S. Department of state report on women and children trafficking (2015), Ethiopia is considered both as a country of origin and transit for human trafficking. A study undertaken by Save the children Finland in collaboration with (MOLSA, 2009) revealed that Addis Ababa, Shashimenne, Dire Dawa, Dessie/Kombolcha serve as source, transit and destination areas for trafficking, both internally and cross-borders. Dessie/Kombolcha and Dire Dawa mainly serve for smuggling domestic workers to Djibouti via Logia, while Addis Ababa serve as a transit to Middle East countries. Matema, located in the north west of the country, is identified as a trafficking route to Sudan, South Sudan and to other Gulf countries. The Ethio-Sudan border route is a place of suffering for many Ethiopian girls who intended to make their destination at Khartoum. Physical and emotional abuse, rape and starvation, torture and beating are just some of the difficulties that majority of the smuggled girls face while passing through

this route. On the other side, Togo Wouchale and Bossaso routes, located in the South East of the country, are used for smuggling Ethiopian women and children to Yemen via Somalia (Ayalew G, 2011).

A study revealed that brokers operating in the regions and at the center, and returnees who used to work overseas and repatriated for different reasons, are involved in trafficking of young girls from rural to urban areas, mainly to Addis Ababa, in collaboration with tour operators and travel agencies. According to Yoseph, Mebratu and Belete (2006), victims of trafficking usually face exploitation and all kind of abuse during the different stages of their painful journey. The risks that the illegal migrants face during their journey in most cases continue even after they arrive at their destination, through the brokers at the receiving end.

A study shows that a large number of domestic workers from the Horn of Africa migrates to Middle East and Gulf countries, as the demand for domestic workers is rapidly growing (Siraj K., 2019). The majority of these migrants are irregular migrants, excluded from the formal channel without immigration documents (Abebaw, M., 2012). The group of unskilled migrant

**Protection measures:**

Overseas employment proclamation No. 923/2016 has the following provisions that protect the human rights of domestic workers:

- protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violation; they should not be exposed to any harm that affects them physically or morally;
- they should keep their passport, residence and work permit with themselves at all time;
- they should be able to communicate with their relatives at least once a week
- they should be granted annual leave, weekly rest and other similar vacations;
- they should be provided with insurance coverage for life or disability;
- they should not be obliged to perform works other than those agreed upon in the employment contract; etc.

workers has been especially vulnerable to abuses and exploitation, because the labor laws of some of the destination countries do not protect and respect the rights of the immigrant workers (Yeshwas, 2014). Female migrant workers in general, and domestic workers in particular, are the most vulnerable to every sort of abuses and exploitation in the destination countries due to the nature of work they undertake (Emebet K, 2002).

## **2.5. Legal and Policy frameworks**

Ethiopia has different policies and laws that in one way or another have bearing effects on the situation of vulnerable segments of the population including domestic workers, but a comprehensive and sole policy on domestic work and migration has yet to be developed.

Employment Exchange Service Proclamation No. 632/2009, Overseas Employment Proclamation No. 923/2016, Anti-Human Trafficking Proclamation No. 909/2015, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol) and Rights to Employment of Persons with Disability Proclamation No. 568/2008 are among the major legal frameworks that have paramount importance in managing labor markets and labor migration in the country.

Ethiopia's overseas employment proclamation No.923/2016 contains several provisions that commit to protect emigrant domestic workers from illegal employment. The rights, the safety and the dignity of Ethiopians who are willing to take-up overseas employment in pursuance of their qualification and ability are protected by international laws, to which Ethiopia is a party, as well as by national laws. Article 64, sub-article 5, of the new overseas employment proclamation obliges the ministry of labor and social affairs and other authorities to provide legal assistance, should a worker be victimized by their employers or any other actor for the duration of their contract.

The Ethiopian Anti-Human Trafficking Proclamation No.909/2015 has also strong provisions intended to introduce a preventive strategy by devising a legal system as a viable alternative, in addition to economic and social efforts already undertaken, to alleviate the problems related to human trafficking, especially with regard to women and children. According to Article 3, sub-article 1 of the proclamation, the following actions are subject to punishment:

Any person, at the pretext of domestic or overseas employment, sending to abroad for work or apprenticeship; using any threat or force or other means of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, promise, abuse of power or by using the vulnerability of a person or recruits, who transports, transfers harbors or receives any person by giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment from 15 years to 25 years and with fine from 150,000 to 300,000 birr.

Proclamation No. 909/2015, Article 3-sub-article1.

The country has also adopted and ratified UN Conventions and human rights instruments, including various ILO conventions that have strong implication in managing issues of migration. However, the ILO Domestic Workers Convention 2011(No. 189), which offers protection and rights to decent work for domestic workers, has yet to be ratified or acceded by Ethiopia in order to protect and address the rights of domestic workers. The recent Amnesty International study (2019) also revealed that Lebanon did not ratify the domestic workers convention, 2011 (No. 189).

In Lebanon, *kafala* system is the dominant customary practice that governs labor relations between domestic workers and employers. Under the kafala system migrant domestic workers are not in a position to enjoy rights enshrined in the international laws (Yeshiwas, 2014). Thus, migrant domestic workers do not have legal security and employment guarantee under the Lebanese labor law, and they become victims of every type of injustice and moral degradations. They work under strong restrictions and control. The worker is bound to the employer, who

exercises full rights over the legal status, the freedom of movement and the employment mobility of the migrant workers (Hala Kerbage H, 2017).

## **2.6. Remittances**

Labor mobility is an important sector that generates a huge amount of monetary remittances. According to the World Bank report on remittances, the Ethiopian remittance earnings in 2016 stood at USD 742 million (World Bank, 2017). However, the National Bank of Ethiopia estimated remittance flows into the country to be over USD 4.4 billion in the same financial year. Even though there is a substantial difference between the World Bank's estimation and that of the National Bank of Ethiopia, it is beyond doubt that Ethiopia's remittance inflow is a significant contributor to the country's economy. Remittances outflow from Ethiopia is insignificant compared with the inflows, i.e. USD 60 million, according to the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE, 2017). Both the remittances inflow and outflow would be higher, had it been possible to count informal money transfer to and from Ethiopia through different clandestine ways. According to the interviews made with the returnee domestic workers captured by this assessment, the overwhelming majority of the Ethiopian migrant domestic workers remit their monthly earnings through legal channels using money transfer operators.

The inflow of remittances not transferred through formal channels is estimated to be as high as 78% in some cases (Barry C. and A. Esser, 2018). It is true that when the formal channel appears to be too complex and impossible to use the informal way is utilized, and this is happening in reality among the Ethiopian diaspora working in the South Africa. The large majority of migrant workers in South Africa send their remittances back home informally through other means including travelling individuals, as the overwhelming majority of them is constituted by irregular migrants and cannot access money transfer operators (ETV news, 22 September, 2019). Similarly, the vast majority of migrants living in Saudi Arabia uses informal ways, other than the formal channel.

There is clear evidence that the majority of Ethiopian diasporas uses informal channels, in order to get better exchange rates and save the transfer fees. They carry the hard currency with themselves when they visit the family and directly exchange it into birr at the so called 'black market' rate, that is widespread in the capital city, Addis Ababa. It is an observable practice that large number of diasporas send the hard currency to their families through friends and acquaintances. According to an article in Addis Standard issued on 25 July 2018, the other informal channel used to send the hard currency beyond the formal channel is that of the underground market operators available in sending countries. The underground operators arrange the hard currency to remain in the sending country, as they exchange the amount in birr before it is forwarded to the recipient in Ethiopia (Addis Standard, 2018).

According to the information obtained from the MOLSA (as per the memorandum of understanding), a migrant domestic worker is entitled to be paid 1000 real (nearly USD 250 in Saudi Arabia, USD 240 in Jordan, USD 210 in Qatar and USD 250 in Kuwait).

According to the World Bank estimation, although Ethiopians are living in 85 countries, the top ten countries from where remittances flow into the country are the following:

**Table 2. Remittances (in million USD) received from:**

USA	225	Canada	26
Saudi Arabia	191	UK	22
Israel	86	S. Africa	19
Italy	33	Sweden	19
Sudan	32	UAE	18

Source: World Bank, 2017

The flow of remittances from labor migration through the formal channel generates great advantages for the countries of origin. Remittances resolve unemployment pressure and contributes to the hard currency earnings in sending countries, while it solves labor force shortages in receiving countries (World Bank, 2017). As it is shown in the above table, 90.16% of the formal remittance inflow into Ethiopia in 2017 originated from the ten countries listed above.

The remittances Ethiopia receives from its diaspora is relatively a considerable amount of money, as it is not lower than the export earnings of the country. In Ethiopia, there are two State-owned banks, namely the Ethiopian National Bank and the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and 16 private banks engaged in overseas money transfer services. Cross-border money transfer is allowed only for local banks. Thus, international and local money transfer operators are obliged to enter into agreement with local banks in order to do the business. The Ethiopian airlines and the Ethiopian shipping lines are the two non-financial organizations who are allowed to engage in cross-border money transfer. Micro financial institutions, post offices and other remittance service providers only deal with domestic remittances transfer services (World Bank, 2017).

## **2.7. Return and Reintegration challenges**

Migrant domestic workers could not be able to change their own life and that of their families, and generally became victim of the circumstances. According to the information obtained from the Addis Ababa labor and Social Affairs Bureau, as the education level of the returnees is low, and sometimes of them cannot even read and write, they could not be able to find a wage employment; moreover, the reintegration endeavors currently supported by different governmental and non-governmental organizations, both local and international, remain limited.

Reintegration of returnees is a comprehensive effort beyond the immediate and basic assistance needed to be provided right from the time of their arrival in their homeland. A comprehensive reintegration process includes major domains of life, like the economic, socio-cultural and psychological needs of returnees (ILO, 2018). However, reintegration is not only limited to individual returnees, as it is also related to the conditions of the communities in which they are supposed to be reintegrated, as well as the structural environment of the society (IOM, 2016 ). Thus, reintegration should address both the needs of individual returnees and those of the communities to which they return, in a mutually beneficial way.

Reintegration poses an array of challenges that make the process complex and time consuming. The hindrances can be economic, social and psychological in nature. Lack of financial support to start a business, scarcity of technical skills or working space, shortage of business development



services and inaccessibility to available government services are often noted as obstacles to economic integration of returnees (ILO, 2018). Access to loan and revolving fund services, access to production and marketing places and linkages are essential elements in the reintegration process (MOUDH, 2018). Ineffective support structures at the family and community level, as well as access to networks, have significant effects on the reintegration endeavor. Returnees with disabilities, health and psychological problems as the result of the harsh working conditions they had to survive through, both in the host families and detention centers, have a great influence on the process of reintegration.

The role of the community in the reintegration intervention is irreplaceable. Communities can create a conducive environment for returnees to access social networks and re-establish social ties with the community itself. At the same time, the potential resources available in the community have a major bearing effect on the reintegration process. When the number of returnees is considerably high and the resources are scarce, the competition over resources may hamper the reintegration initiative (IOM, 2016). Experience shows that sustainable reintegration is beyond the scope of one actor's engagement. The success of an integrated approach to reintegration therefore largely relies on the combined engagement of a variety of actors - governmental and non-governmental, public and private, local and international - with different mandates and area of expertise. In particular, synergies ought to be explored between different interventions in the areas of humanitarian assistance, community stabilization, migration management and development cooperation (MOUDH, 2018),

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. General**

The consultant used various research techniques and methods in collecting the required primary and secondary data. Based on the nature of the study, qualitative data collection method has been designed to capture necessary information from the study targets. Primary data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions with returnees, potential migrants and families who have migrant domestic worker in Lebanon, representatives of relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, financial institutions and civil society organizations. Existing research reports on this issue and documents on secondary data, including policy and legal instruments, have been reviewed. The collected data have been transcribed, coded, analyzed and interpreted in a coherent and systematic manner using detailed qualitative data analysis techniques. The study has been conducted in a participatory manner and the respondents felt at ease during the interview and group discussion. The methodology and data collection instruments used in the study have been shared with the client to agree on the approaches, in line with the project objectives. In general, purposive method and snowball technique have been used to reach to some of the targets of the study.

### **3.2. Scope and area of the study**

The study has been carried out in Addis Ababa to identify the socio-economic situation of returnees and present recommendations to governmental and civil society organizations engaging in women empowerment initiatives. Under this study pertinent data on issues like remittance management by the families of the migrant domestic workers, employment opportunities, social integration, social acceptance in the family environment and the community at large, returnees condition of life and role of the duty bearers have been given due consideration. In this regard, 60 returnees, 10 potential migrants and 10 mothers of migrant domestic workers currently in Lebanon have been interviewed, while 15 returnee migrant domestic workers participated in focus group discussions. In-depth interviews and consultation sessions with government institutions, international and local organizations, financial institutions and civil society organizations have been undertaken.

### **3.3. Literature review**

Document review has been carried out including assessment of available studies and official reports on issues related to migration in general, and returnee migrant domestic workers re-integration in particular. Relevant documents from the different organizations related to the study have been analyzed to understand the very nature of the migration phenomenon and the role of relevant actor organizations in addressing issues of migrant domestic workers and returnees.

### **3.4. Data collection tools**

Semi-structured and open-ended data collection instruments were prepared for the four categories selected as targets of the assessment. Checklists for focus group discussion were also designed and utilized. Secondary data like policy documents, proclamations, research documents and program and strategy documents were collected and reviewed accordingly.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

All concerned institutions selected to participate in the study received a communication through formal letters from the client. The objectives of the study were explained to all participants of the assessment in order to get their consent before proceeding to specific questions and answers. Moreover, participants of the study were informed that their name would have never appeared in any part of the assessment document and the information would have been used only for the research purpose. Those participants who were not willing to participate were never forced to do so.

### **3.6. Quality Control**

One of the responsibilities of the consultant in conducting this study was to produce a high-quality document. In order to achieve this, the consultant developed standard control procedures for each critical stage of design and implementation of the study, to ensure the quality of the assessment tools, document review and final report. The quality of the final assessment report was further ascertained by conducting consultation meetings with stakeholders, staff of the client and its partners.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Migration to Lebanon**

This section of the report presents an analysis and discussion of the findings. The data obtained all through the study process were transcribed, organized, categorized, interpreted and presented under this section. To obtain primary data on migration and remittance management, returnee migrant domestic workers, mothers of female domestic workers currently working in Lebanon and potential domestic workers who were in the pre-departure training were interviewed.

Key in-depth interviews were held with representatives of several institutions, namely: Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Addis Ababa bureau of labor and social affairs, Shogole branch of Commercial Bank, Medihanealem branch of Oromia International bank, District 10 Gullale Sub-city saving and credit institution, Misirak TVET college, Sister Misirach Training institute, ANNAPCAN-Ethiopia charter, Habasha Foreign Employment Agency, Dagiteri foreign Employment Agency and Saam foreign Employment Agency.

Consultations also took place with 8 organizations, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Union, Addis Ababa University Human Rights Department, Italian Embassy in Addis Ababa, European Union office based in Addis, Catholic relief service-Ethiopia and International Office for Migration.

Documents obtained from the relevant public and private offices regarding existing regulations on migration and the status of support packages for returnee domestic workers were reviewed. Two Focus Group Discussions in which returnee migrant domestic workers participated have been conducted to triangulate the data obtained through interviews. Information regarding socio-demographic characteristics of the returnee domestic workers are also presented here below.

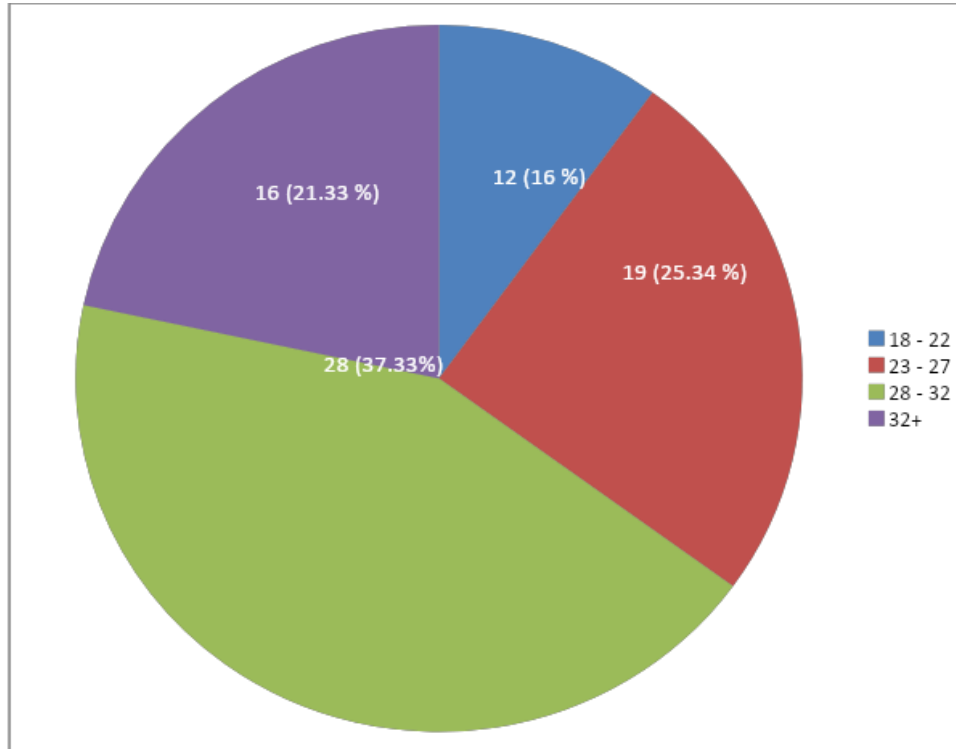
#### **4.1.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

##### **Age of interviewee returnee migrant domestic workers**

For the purpose of this study, the age of the returnee migrant domestic workers interviewed was categorized as shown on the chart presented hereunder. As it is seen on the chart, the age range from 28-32 years is the most represented among the returnees observed by this study. This age category comprises 28, or 37.33%, of the returnee migrant domestic workers. It has been found that respondents of this age group had stayed abroad about 6-8 years before returning back home from the host countries where they used to work. The majority of the respondents belonging to this age group had got married and currently manage their own life with their husband and children. The second age group, that ranges from 23 to 27 years, is also considerably large, as it includes 19, i.e. 25.34%, of the returnee respondents. Returnee aged 32 years old or more are 16, or 21.33% of the sample. This latter group includes a 43-year old woman who was in Beirut along with her daughter at the same time. This clearly indicates that migration becomes a social phenomenon covering several generations and different categories of women. either married, divorced or single. Last, but not least, is the age bracket from 18 to 22 years. This age group is smaller than the other age ranges described above, as it is comprised of 12 respondents (or 16%

of the sample). The findings of this study also indicate that migrant domestic workers included in the 18-22 age group normally were those women who could not manage to shoulder the workload, and hence decided to terminate their employment earlier than expected and return back home. Generally, the age of returnee migrant domestic workers covered by this study ranges from 19 to 43 years, including the whole range of youth age category (15-29) and the lower layer of adulthood. The new overseas proclamation has fixed the lower limit for migration at age 18, though it does not limit the upper age.

**Chart 1: Age distribution**



Source: Author’s assessment, 2019

**Educational background**

This study revealed that most of the returnee domestic workers decided to migrate as they did not succeed in either 8<sup>th</sup> grade or 10<sup>th</sup> grade examination. However, school dropout or unsuccessfulness in education are not the only factors that push young women to migrate. Family pressure and scarcity of employment opportunities are major factors for migration of young girls in search of jobs and better salary. The overwhelming majority of the respondents confirmed that they decided to migrate in order to help the family and improve their life.

The findings of the study indicated in the chart below depict that more than half of the returnee domestic workers included in this study are under grade 8<sup>th</sup> and have no high school education. According to the new regulation of the overseas employment, any potential worker who wants to

migrate as a domestic worker is not eligible unless she/he attains grade 8 and has a certificate of occupational competence.

According to this provision, returnee migrant domestic workers whose education level is under 8<sup>th</sup> grade have no other option but to use irregular pathway to re-migrate, as they could not find a job and any sustainable support here in the country. The information obtained from the overseas employment agencies shows that the new regulation has to take into consideration the previous experience of domestic workers who used to work overseas and are familiar with the working and the living conditions in the destination countries.

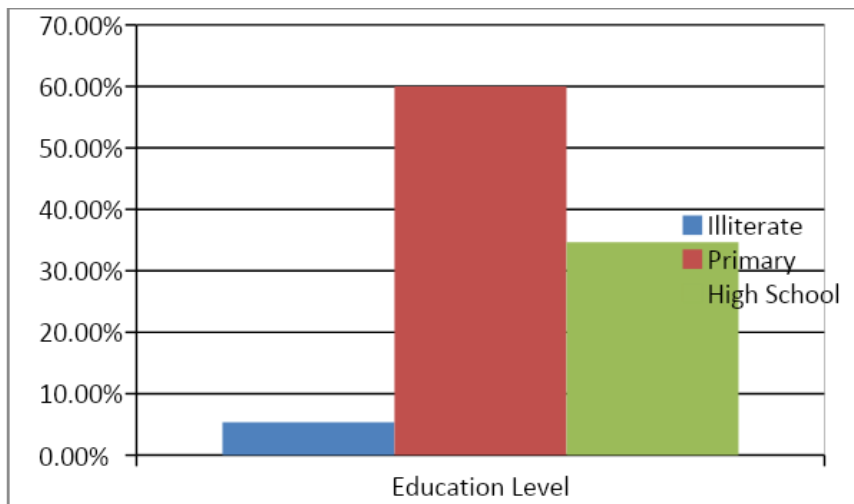
As shown on the chart, 45 (i.e. 60%) returnee migrant domestic workers had not reached a high school education, that is a relatively high number out of the total cases covered by this study. On the other hand, the proportion of those who had attained a high school education level is not negligible, as it includes 26 respondents (i.e. 34.67%).

The findings of the study show that some of the domestic workers migrated to the destination country in order to respond to family problems, while others opted to do so as they could not succeed in their education. Thus, school dropout rates and family poverty are correlated factors for migration. Finally, 4 (i.e. 5.33%) returnees, a relatively small number, had no schooling at all and cannot even read and write.

**Table 3. Educational level**

Educational level		percentage
Education level	No.	%
Illiterate	4	5.33%
Primary and junior secondary	45	60.00%
High school	26	34.67%

**Chart 2: Educational level**



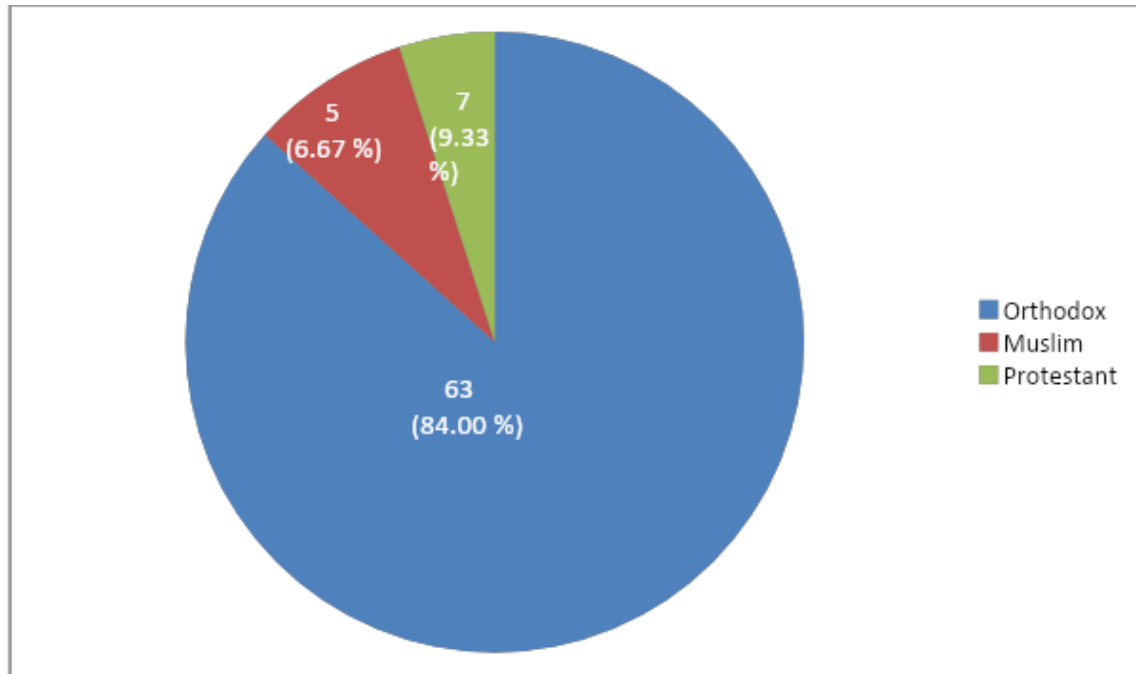
Source: Author's assessment, 2019

### Religious affiliation

The majority of the returnee domestic workers covered by this study are Orthodox Christians (84.00%), followed by Protestants (9.33%) and Muslims (6.67%) respectively

The findings of the study show that one of reasons why the overwhelming majority of the returnee domestic workers chose to migrate to Lebanon was the fact that there is a large number of orthodox Christians in Lebanon, so they hoped to get an opportunity to go to church on weekends. Some of the returnee migrant domestic workers also noted that they had heard that in Lebanon they would not be obliged to cover their face, as it happens in other Muslim Arab countries. However, many of them confirmed that what they assumed before their departure proved to be wrong. They were not even allowed to go out of the premises of the host family, let alone getting a chance of going to the church on weekends or during annual ceremonies. According to the overseas proclamation (2016), one can practice his or her own religious belief by respecting others religion and culture.

**Chart 3: Religious affiliation**



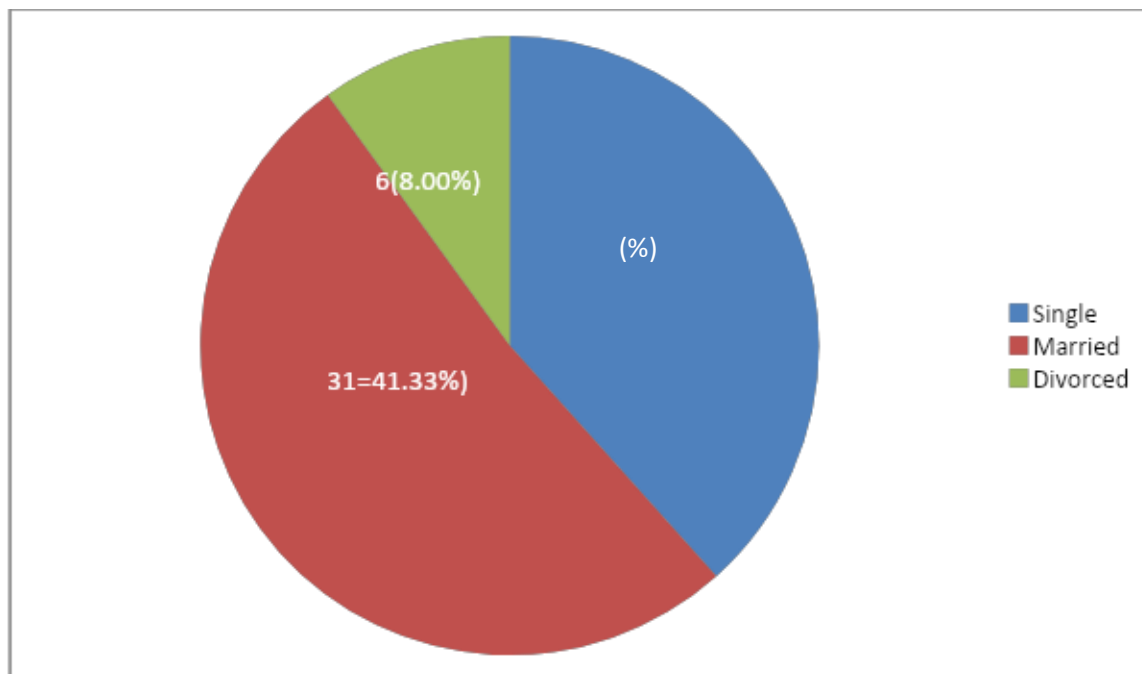
Source: Author's assessment, 2019

### Marital status

Chart 4 below shows that the majority of the returnee domestic workers are single and still living with their families. This category of the returnees constitutes slightly more than half, namely 38 (i.e. 51.67%) returnee domestic workers covered by the assessment. The second group in size order is composed of married respondents. This category is comprised of 31 (i.e. 41.33%) returnees out of a total of 75. Respondents in the single category are those who are still considering to re-migrate, as they have not many dependents and are relatively free to migrate

anywhere, anytime. However, the study revealed that some of those who are identified as single also have a child or children, though they are not leading married life. The other category is represented by those who used to lead a marital life but are now divorced. As shown on the chart they are less in number, i.e. 6 (or 8.0%). It has been revealed during the interview and focus group discussions that women in this category are the most vulnerable among the returnee migrant domestic workers, as they are not in a position to care for their children, because they have no permanent work and an income that could enable them to lead a normal life.

**Chart 4: Marital status**



Source; Author’s assessment, 2019

**Number of siblings**

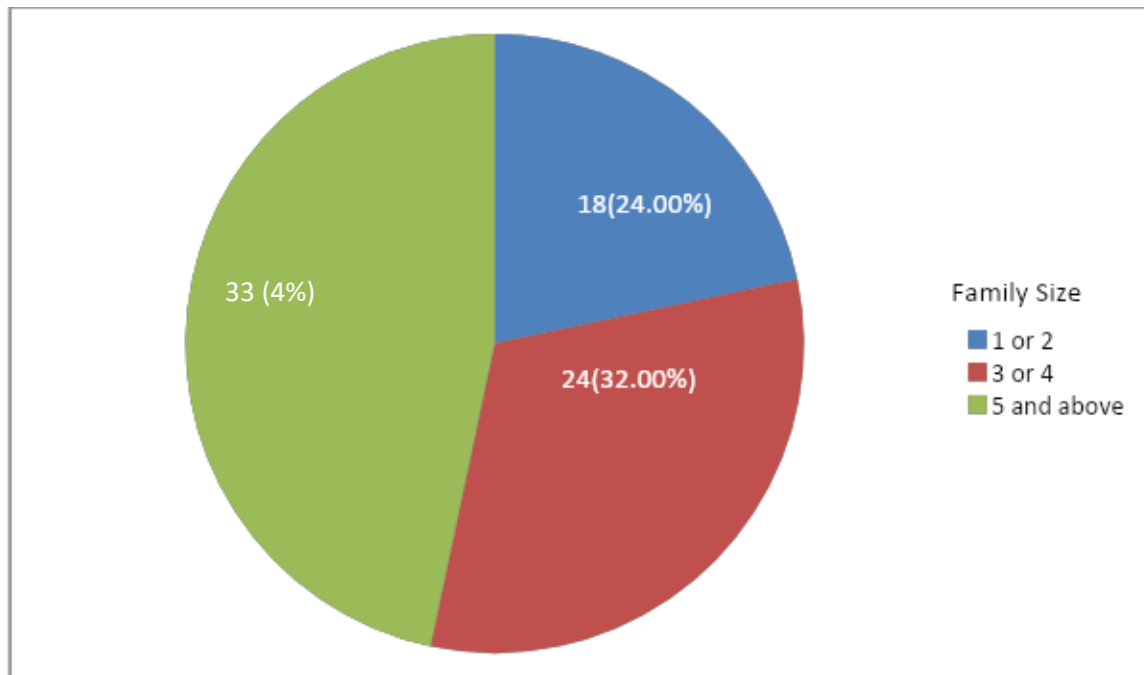
As indicated in the chart below, the majority of the returnee domestic workers have large families. A large family size is one of the pushing factors for migration, as it is not easy to meet all the necessary material needs and fulfill the interest of all members in a poor family. Interviewed returnee domestic workers noted that female family members often feel that they have a duty to take the responsibility to supplement the income of the family, and this is why they forgo their education and decide to migrate. School dropout can be either a cause or a consequence for migration, as young women migrate when they do not succeed in their education, or they drop their education in order to respond to their family’s economic problems.

Most of the time, the responsibility for sharing these economic problems falls on the shoulder of the oldest female members of the family, who decide to migrate in order to help their households with the money they earn working abroad. It has also been found that those women, who first migrated to help the family, then try to facilitate the migration process for their younger sisters left behind, for them to follow their footsteps.



The chart indicates that 33 returnee migrant domestic workers, i.e. nearly half (44%) of the sample covered by this study, have 5 or more siblings. However, 18 respondents (i.e. 24%) have a lower number of siblings. Thus, there is a correlation between large family size and migration, even though there are migrants from families of a relatively smaller size, either on woman's own initiative or due to family pressure to address their financial difficulties. As the findings revealed, the choice of the family usually targets the elder daughter, instead of the younger ones.

**Chart 5: Number of siblings**



Source: Author's assessment, 2019

#### **4.1.2. Factors behind migration to Lebanon**

Returnee migrant domestic workers participating in the study responded in different ways when asked for what reason they had chosen Lebanon as a destination, instead of opting for other Middle East countries.

Some replied that they went to Lebanon as there was no other country which used to receive Ethiopian migrant domestic workers at the time they migrated; others asserted that they had heard that there was the freedom to go out at least once a month and there wasn't need to cover their face, like in other Muslim countries. Others stated that Lebanon was not their own choice, but they had to accept the only country that the brokers offered them. The majority of the respondents also reported that they migrated to Lebanon due to the fact that they had either sister or friends already working there, who facilitated their travel with the brokers in Ethiopia and the Agency in Lebanon. Thus, the network of their friends overseas had a paramount importance in their choice. Few of them migrated to Lebanon because they had heard that there was less workload and better working conditions than in other Middle East countries; moreover, they believed that there would be a possibility to go to church and see friends on weekends and

holidays. These pulling factors of migration to Lebanon were also shared with the focus group discussants, as they migrated hoping to find normal working conditions and better earning.

Some of the returnees stated that they were not informed of the situation in other Middle East countries and were not in a position to compare and choose the best destination. However, providing the necessary information about destination countries, before a decision to migrate is taken, is a responsibility of the public and private institutions in the country of origin. Disseminations of pre-migration information can take place through media and/or publications of different types.

Others reported that the costs of the whole process were relatively lower for Lebanon, as compared to other Middle East countries. The reduced payment for the migration process has motivated many of the domestic workers to choose Lebanon. However, even in this case, payments may change based on the routes and the demands from the brokers. In a few cases the payment may be as high as birr 15,000, nearly USD 500 (interview respondents, 2019). In addition to this pre-departure payment, their first 2 or 3 months' salary is paid to the Agency in Lebanon. This is implicitly the money which is divided between the broker in Ethiopia and the Agency in the host country.

On the other hand, some respondents confirmed that many young women of their surrounding community used to work and help their families back home; this fact pushed them to migrate to Lebanon, assuming that they could work and help their families, just like the young girls in their communities did.

Some of the returnees stated that they had heard that employers in Lebanon are not friendly to domestic workers. However, they had no option other than migrating to Lebanon, as their financial capacity could not allow them to opt for other countries, due to the higher costs of the process.

The majority of the returnees noted that they were forced to migrate due to the fact that the father, who was the breadwinner, had passed away and the mother was unemployed. Consequently, they decided to give up their schooling and migrated in order to help their poor families with the salary they expected to earn.

However, most of the returnees asserted that they could not fulfill their expectations for various reasons, including the fact that their monthly salary was very low, around USD 150-200 for the first two or three years. Disagreements with the employers, that often resulted in early termination of the employment contract before the agreed date, loss of interest in the renewal of the employment and the desire to return back home are some of the factors that affected their plans to stay longer and return home with some savings.

The monthly salary for domestic workers here in Ethiopia is very low, it can even go as low as birr 1500, or USD 55 currently, while the highest pay is as high as birr 2500, or USD 85SD (interviewed brokers, 2019). This is nearly twice less than the monthly salary that an Ethiopian domestic worker may earn in Lebanon. The free lancers who are out of the kafala system and irregular are getting up to USD 600 (Caritas, 2019). However, free-lance workers are at permanent risk, as they have no regular status and resident permit.

According to the new Ethiopia's overseas employment proclamation, an appropriate minimum wage has to be set in the bilateral agreement to be signed between the sending and the receiving countries. Annual leave, weekly rest and other similar vacations are also among the items to be included in the bilateral agreement between the Ethiopian government and the receiving country (MOLSA, 2016).

#### 4.1.3. Working and living condition of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon

Though the majority of the respondents migrated to Lebanon based on the information they had received from different sources, almost all of them found that the working and living conditions in Lebanon were quite the opposite of what they had heard before departure.

The majority of the returnees faced heavy workload and pressing living condition. Many of them portrayed the difficult behavior of the madam, the unmanageable characteristics of her children and the sexual harassment from her husband. One respondent said that,

**“My working and living conditions were full of miserable circumstances. I was forbidden to get enough food to eat. I faced harassment from the husband and his son. The husband handed me to rape me, but I forcefully pushed him away and he couldn’t to do so”.**

The majority of the interviewees reported, in tears, the challenges they faced, the physical and psychological abuses by the madam. One of the migrants underlined that

**“before migrating to Lebanon I heard evil things like beating, forbidding of food, throwing from the building, locking in the toilet, pouring hot water on the body of domestic worker and the like; and I practically faced some of such things. I was beaten by my madam and hospitalized, forbidden food, and often forced to eat from the garbage/leftover foods. I was also denied 4 months of salary. I run away and finally returned with bare hands to Ethiopia”.**

The returnees’ experience shows that migrant workers have no means to collect their unpaid wages once they run away from the host family. There is the case of an employer who owed 13 years of salary to a migrant domestic worker, amounting to USD 23,000 (Caritas Lebanon,2019). This woman had worked for about 15 years in Lebanon. It is also assumed that employers often use the deportation of migrant workers to avoid paying them the accumulated salary, as some of the employers do not pay the salary every month. Thus, running away from the employer’s home for different reasons leads to salary denial and deportation. In this case, the workers leave the country without getting their due payments and often they are not allowed to collect their luggage.

The majority of the returnees specifically expressed the humiliating and degrading words uttered by madams to them. Expressions such as *sharmuta*, meaning harlot, *rehabteгна*, meaning someone who has nothing to eat and the likes are common. They also stated that they had no time to rest, as their workday normally goes from 6:00 in the morning until midnight. Majority of them work nearly 18 hours a day. They had no right to open the refrigerator and take something to eat when feeling hungry; they were not allowed to go out of the home premises. Some of them joined a large-sized family, with a big house full of workday and night. One of the respondents said, **“I used to work in a big apartment with 14 rooms; and I was expected to clean all of the rooms and the glasses daily”**. The daily ups and downs to clean the rooms, particularly to climb on the ladder to clean the windows, exposed the workers to different health risks and were also among the reasons for many of them to terminate their contract and return home.

One respondent described her stay as follows:

**“I didn’t get things as expected, similar to what I had heard before my departure to Lebanon. During my two-tear stay, I did not get a single day of leave and did not go church at all; what you hear before departure is different from what you face in the host family”.**

Another returnee stated that

**“the working conditions coupled with the psychological and physical abuses were beyond my tolerance and hence I tried to commit suicide; but finally I changed my mind and decided to terminate my employment contract and return to Ethiopia covering my expense by myself”.**

She further noted that her return was due to serious physical abuse and harassment by the madam beside the workload. She reported that she left the house and applied to the agency to come back home. The agency by communicating the incident to her family back home arranged her return to Ethiopia. The expenses of her return were covered by her family by collecting the money from family members and close relatives.

With regard to the workload, five workers reported that they developed kidney problems as the result of the long hours they spend on ironing the cloths during the night immediately as they finish the cleaning and related activities. They were not allowed to sleep unless they completed all the work that was supposed to be done on that particular day. Almost all, except very few, of the domestic workers do not prepare food, they are assigned to clean the house, wash and iron cloths, care for children and, in rare cases, the elderly, wash dishes after breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Returnee domestic workers noted that as a result of the workload and the cruelty of most of the madams, some domestic workers ran away from their employers and were caught by the police, detained and deported to Ethiopia. In connection with the problems she faced, one of the respondents said:

**“I acquired backpain called disk dislocation and even couldn’t stand let alone work, plus I understood that my life could not be changed by my salary. And hence I terminated my employment contract and returned to Ethiopia.”**

It has become clear that there are returnees who had not been subjected to unpleasant working and living conditions and are thankful to their employers for their kindness throughout their stay in Lebanon. These groups of domestic workers who had good working and living experiences still keep in touch with their former employers and maintain their relationship with the family to date. These workers used to save their salary as the madams usually provided them with necessary supplies mainly during holidays.

It was found that the youngest workers and those who had gave birth to a child/children before migration were the most favored by the employers, especially for childcare. However, those who had children before migration left the responsibility of caring for them to their mothers, who were not in a position to look after them in a proper manner. In some cases, this resulted in reduced care for the children.

Such favored workers usually do not enter in disagreements with their employers, and their relationship continues even after they return home. It was also noted that most of the migrant domestic workers do not perform up to the expectations of the employers, as they do not have the skills required to accomplish the work the way it should be done. Lack of skill is, therefore, the main source of disagreement between the domestic worker and the employer. Both the lack of training and the inability to understand the language spoken by the employers have overarching negative effects on the life of domestic workers and are a major source of misunderstandings between the domestic workers and their employers.

The returnees noted that migrant domestic workers who left on a tourist visa were more subject to serious rights violation and humiliation by their employers. As they had no complete

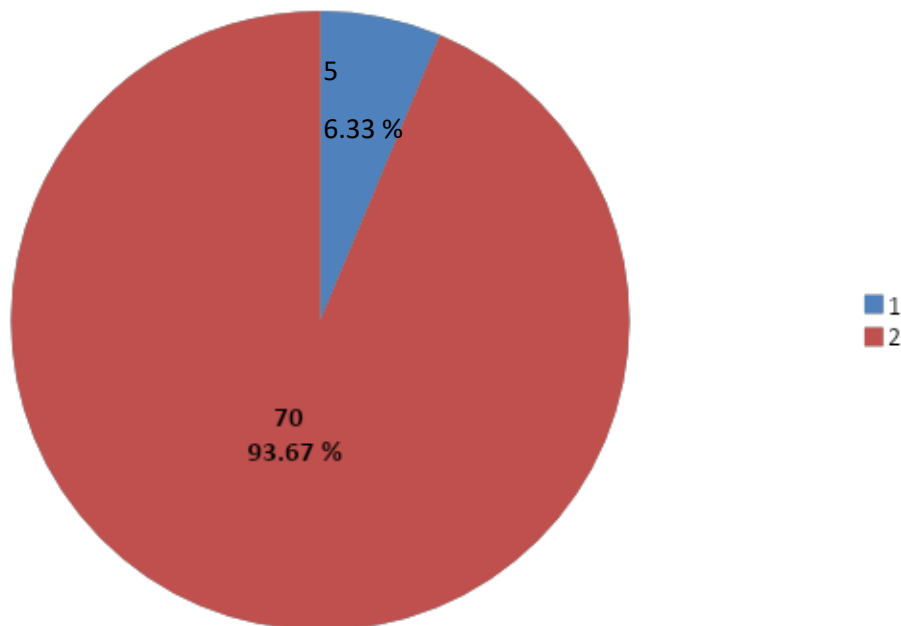
immigration documents, they had no option but to do whatever their employers asked for and were often exposed to forced labor (interview respondents, 2019).

#### 4.1.4. Migration patterns from Ethiopia to Lebanon

With regards to the migration routes, it was confirmed that the vast majority of migrants to Lebanon travelled either via Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya or Sudan. Although there are hundreds of overseas employers' Agencies in Ethiopia which are registered and licensed by the government, only 5 workers, out of the 60 interviewees and the 15 group discussants, reported having processed their travel formally through licensed Agencies. The migration process of 93.67% of domestic workers to Lebanon had been facilitated by illegal brokers in Ethiopia, in collaboration with the employers' Agencies in the destination country. The migration process usually is started illegally by unregistered individual brokers, and is subsequently merged with the formal process, as soon as the migrant reaches destination point and is transferred to the Agency in Beirut at the airport.

Illegal brokers have been operating since the start of the migration of Ethiopians to Middle East countries. However, they got a chance to control the whole migration process as the result of the ban on the outgoing migration (2013) by the Ethiopian government. From the beginning of the ban, and up until it was lifted, the emigrants had no other option but to use the brokers. Therefore, the employment agencies in Lebanon used to work with illegal individual brokers during this time and up to-date, as the bilateral agreement has not yet been signed.

**Chart 6. Agency versus individual illegal brokers**



As shown on the chart, the overwhelming majority of the migrants reaches its destination through the channels arranged by illegal individual brokers working with legal agencies in the destination countries. The process is facilitated by the network of informal operators in the country of origin and formal agencies at the other end. This clearly indicates the level of integration between informal and formal networks, operated by brokers and employment agencies, respectively.

Almost all of the domestic workers contacted for the purpose of this study asserted that the brokers did not forewarn them on the exact living conditions at the destination country; hence, they were not prepared to face all kinds of possible incidents they came across once they had reached the destination country. As a result, the majority of them travelled without having appropriate information and could not be in a position to bear the workload; some were forced to terminate their employment contract and return home earlier than expected.

According to the new regulation, potential migrant domestic workers should go only through licensed private agencies, and migration cases need to be handled by professional staff. Article 24, sub-article 7, of the proclamation says that the general manager has to have at least a first-level degree and 3 years of managerial experience. This could help to handle the process in a professional way, that may avert mistreatment, abuse and harassment of the potential migrants during the recruitment period.

The illegal brokers do not tell them the truth, as their aim is to send them abroad and get money.

One returnee mentioned that **“the broker did not tell me anything about the situation that might be faced during the travel to the destination. My travel was full of misery!**

**I started travelling from Addis Ababa to Metema (Ethiopia-Sudan border), and it was life risking. I was abused by the broker on the way and at the shelter in Khartoum. I had bad experience with brokers, and urge the government to take serious measures against individual brokers”.**

Crossing desert areas exposes the migrants to extreme heat and dehydration, and the travel route via Ethio-Sudan border is a deadly route. Returnee migrants who experienced that hardship reported that Ethiopian brokers in Sudan transfer the migrants who cross the Ethio-Sudan border to different Middle East countries, including Lebanon.

The returnees firmly suggested that the government should take measures on the illegal brokers and make them responsible for their evil deeds against their citizens. It was also reported that some brokers deceive potential migrants and take their passport and some money, pretending that this would facilitate the migration process; however, they often change their address and disappear, putting the potential migrants at jeopardy.

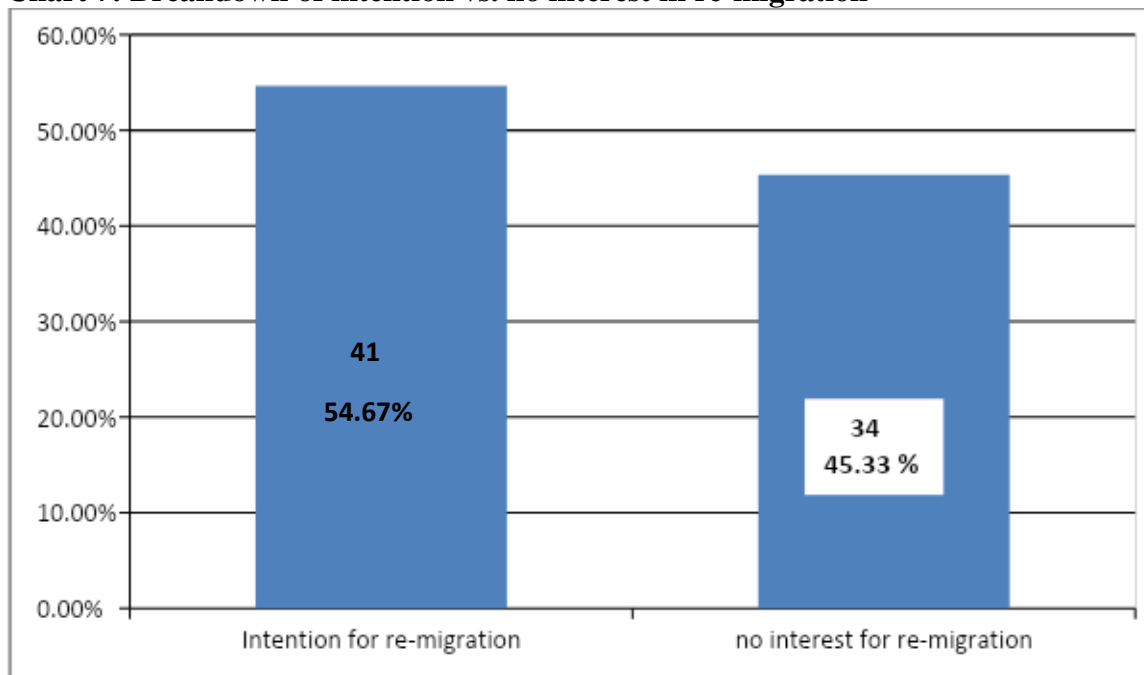
#### **4.1.5. Problems faced by migrant domestic workers in Lebanon**

It is clear that the majority of the returnees were not provided with full information on the situation in the destination country at the time they migrated. However, most of them revealed that, even if they had been given full information about the hostile situation at the destination country, they had no other option but to migrate, in order to help their families and improve their living conditions. One returnee said **“I had no alternative; I went there knowing the situation. I decided to help my mother, no one could stop me from going and I did it”**. This reveals to what extent the family poverty in the home country becomes a main of the pushing factor for

migration, as a major option to address their immediate financial difficulties. However, there are some returnees who would have never attempted to travel, had they been provided with full information about the situation in Lebanon. One of the interviewees described the lack of information as follows: **“Have I had full and correct information about the working and living conditions in Lebanon I would not have gone. I went as I had no correct and full information about the working condition and the attitude they have against migrant domestic workers”**.

However, in spite of the difficulties they survived through, the majority of the returnees we interviewed have still an interest to go back to other Middle East countries, because they could not get a job that would allow them help themselves and their families here in Ethiopia. There are few returnees who expressed their interest to migrate again to Lebanon. It is understood that the workers were eager to return back home, but after their stay in Ethiopia out of a job for long time they changed their mind and dreamed for re-migration to other Arab countries, but not to Lebanon, as wages in Lebanon are much lower, USD 150 as compared to other countries, where they may go as high as \$350 USD and above (interview respondents, 2019).

**Chart 7: Breakdown of intention vs. no interest in re-migration**



Source: Author’s assessment, 2019

As shown on the chart, the majority of the returnees reported their intention to re-migrate, as they could not get a job since they returned home; some of them stayed for about 8 years. Nonetheless, there are some returnees who are determined to work in Ethiopia and hope to improve their living conditions, though the opportunity to get job is low due to their education level. This determination to work and improve their life in the country is in consistent with the opinion of the participants in the first round group discussion, who expressed their commitment to work and improve their life in the country, whatever their condition would be.

Potential migrants and overseas employment agencies seriously commented that the new overseas employment proclamation should have been taken into consideration the experience of those returnee migrant domestic workers who are familiar with the working and living conditions in the destination countries. In a country where the unemployment issue is alarming, such restriction increases considerably the level unemployment to the already weak labor market currently prevailing.

Studies show that the unemployment rate in Ethiopia is slightly higher as compared to other sub-Saharan African countries and it is deeper in the countryside, from where the majority of the Ethiopian migrant domestic workers to the Middle East countries are assumed to come. A statistical forecast from the Central Statistics Agency shows that the average unemployment rate in Ethiopia stood at 16.8% in 2017. This clearly depicts how serious the unemployment problem is in Ethiopia and the attention that should be given to the issue of safe and regular migration, in order to address employment problems at all levels, and manage migration to benefit the migrant and the country at large.

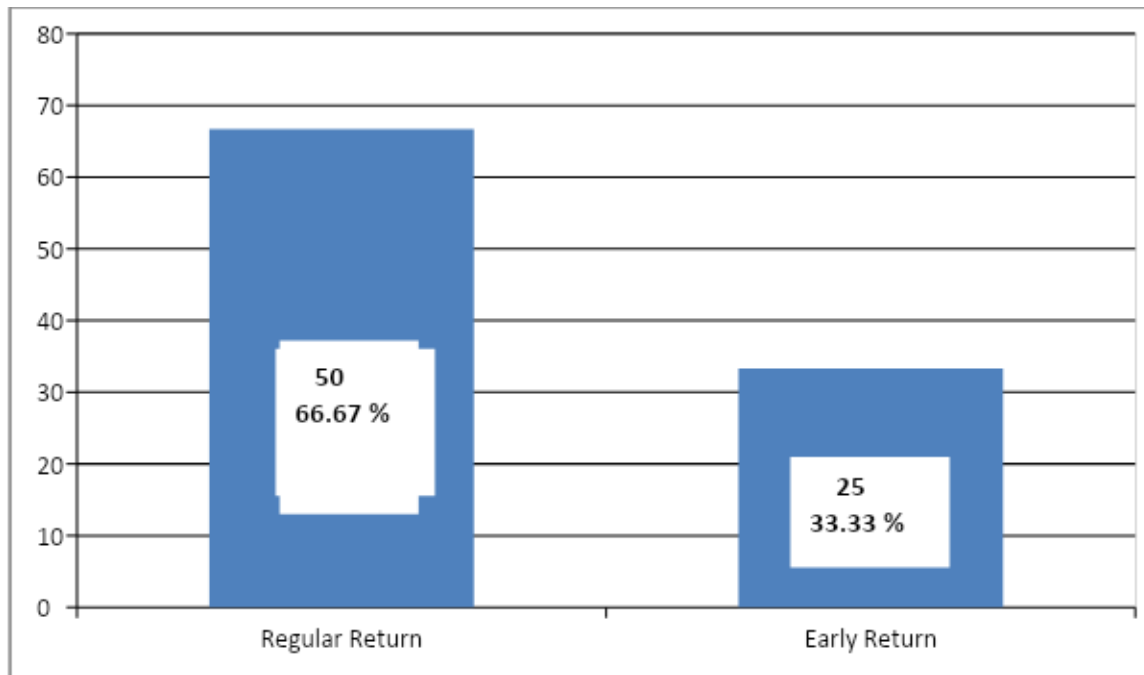
#### **4.1.6. Early Return of Migrant Domestic Workers**

The returnees mentioned many factors concerning the reasons why migrant they returned from Lebanon before completion of their employment contract. The main reason mentioned in connection to early return was the disagreement between the domestic workers and employers/madams for different reasons, including the misunderstandings due to the language barrier. Migrant domestic workers hardly speak English and Arabic and, as a result, they cannot understand their employers; and that often becomes a source of disagreement between domestic workers and the madams. An inconsistent behavior of some of the madams was also among the reasons why the domestic workers resolve to return back home before their contract is over. Domestic workers mostly return back home when they could not bear the working and living conditions, as they are forced to work not only at the host's house, but are also ordered by madams to work for others, without being given a possibility to rest.

Many of them reported that the health problems they faced due to the nature of their work could not enable them to carry on with their job and hence they decided to return, terminating their employment contract. A few migrant domestic workers terminated their employment contract and returned back home when their parents, either the father or the mother, got sick. They keep on staying at home, especially if the sick parent passes away, as they should care for younger sisters or brothers.



**Chart 8: Regular and early returns**



Source: Author's assessment, 2019

#### **4.1.7. Current Working and Living conditions of returnees**

The majority of the returnees regretfully expressed that they stayed abroad for many years without permanent work, both in the formal and informal sectors. Many of them reported that they often engaged in informal jobs such as traditional women hairdressing, which in Amharic is called “*shuruba*”, and handicraft like embodiment and others. One of the workers said “ **I stay without a work most of the time, since “*shuruba*” work is temporary and need-based. Thus, unless I am requested, it will not be possible to do it**”. Many interviewees asserted that they perform such works like handicraft called “*yetilf sira*” in Amharic. It means decorating a traditional cloth with a design, that is a way to increase its value and eventually its selling price. However, they reported that with this work they earn a subsistence-level income, not more than birr 1,200 or USD 45 per month, which cannot cover the expenses of their household.

The overwhelming majority of the returnees are engaged in petty trade, like selling fruits on the road, making coffees in highly and densely populated areas, in roasting potato and in general in activities known as “*gulit*”. This term in Amharic defines the roadside trading, where people sell and buy petty items like potato, tomatoes, cabbages, pepper, onions etc. Many of them reported that these petty activities could not enable them to lead their life; consequently, they are frustrated and loose hope to find a decent job that could help them to sustain their family.

The majority of the returnees is married and has got children; they are not in a position to raise them in a proper manner and provide them the necessary care, unless they find a job and earn some kind of income. This is one of the reasons why some of them expressed their interests in re-migrating, in order to work and help their families and their children. The majority of them noted that this time they would find better working conditions, as they have full information

about the situation in destination countries and speak the Arabic language better than the previous time. As mentioned in the previous section, Arabic language was one of the sources of misunderstanding and disagreement mainly with female employers/madams, especially during the early months of their tenure.

#### **4.1.8. The status of support to reintegrate returnees**

Most of the returnee domestic workers have complained that the government did not assist them in their attempts to work here in Ethiopia. They mentioned that they did not receive appropriate assistance, both from the government and non-governmental institutions, from the moment they returned back home. Similarly, most of them could not manage to contact the Ethiopian Embassy in Beirut when they faced difficulties and needed support from the Consulate. Some said that the Ethiopian Embassy has no concern for its citizens; hence, nobody is interested to contact either the Embassy or the Consulate.

On the other hand, returnees who came back to Ethiopia more recently, and participated in focus group discussions, revealed that the Ethiopian Embassy and Consulate in Beirut are currently sheltering Ethiopian those migrant domestic workers who run away from their employers and are taken to the embassy by the police, or any other person who finds them on the street. The Embassy assists these runaway migrant domestic workers in collaboration with the Ethiopian communities in Beirut and other civil society organizations, like Caritas Lebanon, until they are repatriated to Ethiopia. As it is well known, the main responsibility of the Embassy is to protect the rights of its citizens and provide the necessary support whenever they face difficulties in the destination countries.

Once they are back to Ethiopia, the returnees get immediate support in some shelters like CVM, Catholic Churches and other institutes found in Addis Ababa, until they rejoin their families. However, the follow up by these institutions appears to be weak; the support provided after they leave the shelter is limited and needs to be strengthened, based on concrete evidences obtained through active researches.

Very few returnee domestic workers reported that they tried to get organized to access micro-finance institutions to start some sort of business, while other individuals do not want to work in a group, as they are not ready to take on them both the risk and the responsibilities. On the other hand, a considerable number of returnee domestic workers has no information about the micro-finance institutions and how they could be accessed. Any person who wants to access funds from the financial institutions needs to fulfill the following requirements:

- a 20% deposit of the requested amount of money
- get organized and have a valid trade license
- business plan of the intended project
- present, as collateral, house possession

If the above mentioned requirements are fulfilled, the institute offers 1.5 million birr, which is equivalent to USD 51,000.

Almost all of the returnee migrant domestic workers, except very few, do not have any communication and participation with local institutions through which they may access government assistance and employment opportunities. Many of the returnees stressed that they have no interest in participating in civil associations, like women and youth associations including Kebele (a grassroot government structure), as they associate these institutions with politics and prefer to distance themselves from such institutions.

The majority of the returnees did not get any sort of training, except very few who got an opportunity to get training courses offered by different non-governmental organizations working in areas related to migration. Some of the returnees reported that their respective Kebele gave them orientation on the effects of out-migration and the importance of working and improving their life here in the country. Many of them, however, pointed out that they have no trust in Kebele as it does not work genuinely and impartially. They underlined, based on their information and observations, that Kebeles usually offer opportunity only to those who maintain a close relationship and usually respond to their call to participate in events to promote the political agenda of the ruling party. However, the endeavors currently exerted by different international and local non-governmental organizations could create a more enabling environment to re-integrate the returnees into their community.

With regard to the available vacancies, the returnee domestic workers reported that their education level is low and cannot compete with others who have higher qualifications; hence, the only hope they have is to undergo skill training that may help them to get a job, provided that they pass the examinations set for the selection of potential candidates for the available vacancies. Regarding to the question presented on the issue of future training, almost all of them expressed their interest in the following areas:

**“Hairdressing, food preparation, tailoring, housekeeping, designing and makeup, childcare, business plan, garment, textile, mechanic, urban agriculture, poultry and other related areas.”**

However, these sectors are crowded and oversaturated. Hence, other options in new industrial parks need to be assessed.

As one of the requirements to be eligible to be hired overseas as a domestic worker is the completion of grade 8 and having COC, majority of the returnee migrant domestic workers have no other outlet except engaging in any activity available in their surrounding areas, though it may not be life-changing. Thus, skill training is of paramount importance for domestic workers who cannot fulfill the new regulation set for overseas employment of the domestic workers.

Very few returnee domestic workers reported that they are currently engaging in a Safety Net Program designed by the government for the poorest of the poor population of the Addis Ababa City Administration. Those who got opportunity to be involved in this program earn monthly salary of birr 1000-1200, or USD 45, depending on their family size. Those who are covered by the program are duty bound to save 20% of their monthly earning as such provision is one of the requirements of the program. The workers noted that it was only those who have dependents and have no other means of income that were eligible for the Safety Net Program.

Most of them asserted that returnees become again dependent on their families and extended families, as they cannot get work and are out of a job for a considerable number of years. Some of them remained without a permanent work for about 8 years or more; that made many of them frustrated, as they lost their hope and confidence to work and improve their living conditions in their own country. Returnees who survived through such conditions can easily engage in

irregular migration, which would expose them to violation of their rights and exploitation of various kinds, including sexual harassment and rape; sometimes they lose their life on the way to, or upon arrival in, the destination countries.

Some of the returnees confirmed that as a consequence of their unemployment, which prevents them from contributing to the family income, they are unhappy, though their families try to do their best to make them feel good.

## 5. Management of remittances

### 5.1. Utilization of the money transferred

This section of the report mainly deals with the utilization of the remittances transferred to Ethiopia from Lebanon and how this benefits both the receiving family and the senders upon their return home.

Almost all the returnee respondents covered by this study confirmed that the very objective of their migration was to work and earn a better salary, in order to help their families and change their life. To this effect, most of the returnees noted that they sent their monthly salary every 2 or 3 months to be used by the family here in Ethiopia for household consumption and other related expenses. Those migrant workers who got married before migration usually send their salary to cover their children's expenses, including feeding and school fees. Some domestic workers who send their salary following the major national holidays in Ethiopia.

The money is sent is mainly sent to the mother, and in rare case to sisters, brothers, father, uncles, aunts and, in case of married domestic workers, to the husband. They send it to the account of the family member, as almost all of the returnees did not have their own bank account in Ethiopia at the time of migration. Thus, they had no other option but to send it to the family account, even if they wished to save some part of their salary for their own use after their return back to the country. Only a few returnee domestic workers had the chance of saving some of their salary in the host country, keeping it with the employers. They mentioned that they could not open a bank account in their name in the host country, as it is not possible to do so without an identity card, which they cannot possess. Opening a bank account in the host country is possible only if the host family is kind enough and cooperates with the domestic worker. This kind of cooperation, however, depends on the relationship prevailing between the domestic workers and the employers.

Many countries do not consider the migrant workers as residents and for this reason they do not give them an identity card. However, international documents show that migrants who worked and lived more than one year in the host country should be considered as residents (World Bank, 2017).

The majority of the returnee domestic workers reported that, although they used to send almost all of their salary to the recipient in Ethiopia, they could not utilize the money when they returned back to the country, as it is had been used for family consumption. Three respondents who used to send their salary to their brothers and sisters reported that their money had been misappropriated and they could not use it upon return. One of the returnees said **“when I returned back home, there was not any deposit or saving left for me from the money I used to send. I thought my family had used up all what I was sending; but, later I knew that my sister was taking it from the bank and used it for her own purposes”**.

As mentioned by some of the returnees, they do not send their money back home for only their family's total and exclusive use, but also to be partially saved for them, in order to start a business once return back home. However, this has not been happening in reality and the majority of them did not get any money upon return. This condition often creates misunderstandings between the domestic workers and their families. Many of the returnees

complain about the utilization of the remitted money by their families. Though their priority objective was to help the family, they also expected the family to save some money for them.

The returnees mentioned that they were not directly involved in sending the money as their salary was kept by the employer, who eventually sent the money to the address provided by the worker. Many of them sent the whole salary and kept nothing for them, while others saved some money for personal sanitary materials and telephone costs. Moreover, some of the domestic workers did not know what amount was actually sent to their family as they had no information about the money transfer.

As to the modalities of the money transfer, the majority of the returnees confirmed that they used to transfer it to the family's account in the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, while some others used Western Union and, rarely, MoneyGram. They also mentioned that there are persons who receive US dollars from the sender and order their agents in Ethiopia to pay it to the family in birr. This kind of money transfer, which excludes the bank and the recognized money transfer operators, affects not only the individuals, but the country as a whole, due to gains on foreign currencies.

The majority of the domestic workers stated that they neither brought money with them nor had it deposited in their name here in Ethiopia. On the other hand, there are some mothers who care about the future of their young daughters and keep some money to be used by them upon return. One worker said **“my mother used to save some of the money I was sending in my name and the saving reached over 100,000 birr when I returned to Ethiopia”**. But the majority of them returned home with 2- or 3-month salary, while those who were deported due to various reasons returned home empty-handed.

Those who had saved money spent it on house furniture's and to buy some assets for the household. Few of the returnees reported that they used the money to pay condominium's fees and to buy plots of land from peasants to build a resident house; some of them had their land confiscated by the local authorities, as the agreement was taking place without providing the due information to the local government. The farmers who sell the land usually do not possess a legal property document on the land. On the other hand, land cannot be sold; it is only the property on the land that can be sold. Thus, the buyers often are considered as land-grabbers; hence, they lose their plots and the money spent on it. Thus, this constraint on the purchase of land is one of the bottlenecks that limit one of the most important and traditional investments the returnee migrant domestic workers aspire to, in order to build their own asset.

## **5.2. Utilization of money sent by the recipient family**

The major issue to be discussed under this topic is the status of remittance management and its utilization by the recipients, as well as whether it is invested on sustainable family wellbeing that would promote not only the family income, but also the human capital like education and health.

All of the 10 mothers covered by this study are receiving remittance from their young girls currently working in Lebanon. They all agree that their daughters migrated not to enjoy the civilization in the host country, but to work and earn better salary in order to help the family back home. The majority of the mothers stated that they allowed their daughters to migrate as they have no wealth and no permanent income to feed the family. Some of them motivated their daughters to migrate and help the family, while others agreed to the decision of their daughters and were not in a position to reject their daughters' position as a consequence of the poverty the

family used to experience. One of the mothers said **“I wouldn’t have sent my daughter, had I had enough income; my wealth is my children, I have no other wealth.”**

As to the contribution of their daughters to the family income, the majority of the interviewed mothers asserted that their daughters did a lot to change the life of the family, though the amount of money they usually remit is not enough to cover the daily expenses of the household. However, as it is mentioned in other parts of the report, it is still much better than what a domestic worker earns in Ethiopia. As some of the mothers are raising the children of their daughters, a large portion of the remitted money goes to the expenses for the children, including their school fees and uniforms, that is seen as a base to build future generations.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Conclusions**

The socio-demographic characteristics of returnee domestic workers are diverse. Some are from large families, while others come from small-sized families. More than half of the returnee domestic workers have no higher education and some returnees cannot even read and write. Consequently, the returnee domestic workers could not find wage-based employment both in the informal and the formal sectors. Most of the returnees with dependents, and those who divorced from their husbands, face serious difficulties in leading their families, and hence are in a dire need of assistance from governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Ethiopian domestic workers migrate abroad without having relevant and proper training related to the work they are expected to perform.

The findings of the study clearly depicted that the lack of training has overarching effects on the life of the domestic workers. As they do not possess the required skills, they could not deliver what the host family expects. This in turn leads to disagreements and consequently to abuses. When the abuses are frequent and severe, the workers runaway and fall on the hands of the police and then detained. Thus, the lack of training has a cyclic effect on the life of migrant domestic workers.

The information obtained from the interviews with returnee domestic workers and the focus group discussants clearly depicts that the Ethiopian migrant domestic workers who used to work in Lebanon had to survive through harsh working conditions and stressful living situation. Over their stay in Lebanon, the returnee migrant domestic workers used to face physical and emotional abuses, as well as cultural isolation, discrimination and inhuman treatments inflicted by their employers, mainly by female employers/madams.

The majority of the domestic workers sacrificed their health, were abused and treated inhumanly and returned home without having changed their life and that of their family. The overwhelming majority of the domestic workers were not allowed to communicate with their relatives and even their friends living in their vicinity, and their movements were limited to the premises of the host family.

The reasons behind their choice to migrate to Lebanon are manifold. Many of them could refer to a network of migrants who are either working or living in Lebanon, while some migrants were deceived by individual illegal brokers, who also have networks with employment agencies in the destination countries. This indicates that the migration process begins irregularly here, in the country of origin, and is twisted into a formal pathway in the destination countries.

Economic factors, and issues related to lack of employment opportunities for decently paid jobs in Ethiopia, are among the major reasons for migration of Ethiopians domestic workers to Lebanon. The majority of the returnee migrant domestic workers come from large, economically poor families, and are uneducated and unemployed.

The findings of the study recognize that migrant domestic workers who run away from their employers suffer all types of abuses when they are found on the street, as they have no identity card or passport. They are arrested and abused in the detention centers, until they are repatriated to Ethiopia. As it holds true in Ethiopia, the Lebanon labor law does not give recognition to



migrant domestic workers working in Lebanon. The kafala system, which is a customary law that governs the employment relation of the domestic workers, gives full rights to the employer over the worker, with no room for the worker to exercise his/her human rights.

A review of the policy framework and consultations with relevant government and international organizations revealed that, although Ethiopia is committed to many of the international values to handle issues of migration, it still lacks a comprehensive policy on migration and reintegration.

The new proclamation on overseas employment has important provisions that protect the rights of the migrant domestic workers, both during the migration process and the duration of their employment in destination country. The regulation, however, can only be enforced in the destination countries by a memorandum of understanding between the Ethiopian government and the receiving countries which is still to be signed.

A large majority of the returnees is not yet economically reintegrated into the community. Many of them are not in a position to exploit the few opportunities that exist in their community. The assessment revealed that most of the returnee domestic workers have no interest in contacting micro-finance institutions and benefit from their programs, though accessing saving and credit institutions by itself needs skill and determination to get organized and run the intended business in a beneficial manner. Accessing micro-finance programs is not enough; at this moment, the returnee domestic workers still lack the proper training in business planning and management that is needed to design a successful project.

The majority of returnee migrant domestic workers experienced frequent abuses and rights violation over their stay in Lebanon. However, in spite of the difficulties they survived through, most of the returnee migrant domestic workers have the desire to migrate again to work overseas, as they could not find a job in their country. In Ethiopia, finding decent jobs is not easy, even for those who graduated from different universities and colleges, let alone for returnee domestic workers who have a low education level.

In Ethiopia, there are many legally registered and licensed overseas employment agencies. However, the migration process of the overwhelming majority (93.67%) of the returnee migrant domestic workers covered by the study was facilitated by illegal brokers, starting from the source up to the destination. It is not yet possible to stop the brokers, as they have networks not only with employment agencies abroad, but also within the government structures; this makes it difficult for the government to put an end to this practice.

Remittances sent back home from Lebanon to Ethiopia have almost been consumed by the family and the senders had no chance to use it up on their return, for different reasons: firstly, most families depend on the remittance and use it for household consumption; secondly, the migrants had no account here in Ethiopia in their name before their departure.

Remittances have a paramount importance when they are invested in more structural and sustainable ways, that may guarantee the family a reliable income and allow them to lead a dignified life.

The consultant believes that the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations forwarded by the study would be of paramount importance for the stakeholders working in the area of migration and reintegration of returnees, as they endeavor to improve the economic and social lives of potential domestic workers and returnees.

## 6.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the major research questions examined in the report, the suggestions made by returnees and their families, the opinion of in-depth interviews with key participants from the relevant institutions and focus group discussants, as well as on the views of potential migrants covered by the study, recommendations are forwarded on different issues, to be implemented by relevant institutions, as follows:

### Public Institutions

Ethiopia is committed to international values in managing migration issues. However, a comprehensive policy on migration and reintegration has not yet been developed. Hence, responsible government institutions like MOLSA & MOFA are duty bound to put in place migration policy to re-enforce the implementation of legal instruments, including the new regulation of overseas employment.

- a) Ethiopia needs to ratify or accede to the ILO conventions No. 189 (2011) that protects the rights and dignity of migrant domestic workers.
- b) The loan policy of the national bank of Ethiopia and other financial institutions makes no exception for returnee migrant domestic workers; hence, MOLSA and relevant UN agencies need to create dialogue forums and lobby the National Bank of Ethiopia to make the marginalized section of the society, like the returnees, access the service without requiring collaterals, that cannot be presented by many of the returnee migrant domestic workers.
- c) The bank has to create necessary financial instruments that could enable the migrant workers to save their salary in destination countries and also to send remittances to their country through a formal channel that benefits the country at large. Addressing issues related to the identification of irregular migrant workers and arranging remittance payout locations in rural areas should be given priority attention by the commercial bank and other financial institutions.
- d) In order to protect the rights of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers over their stay in destination countries there is a need to negotiate with the labor ministry in Lebanon to organize association of Ethiopian domestic workers that helps them to negotiate about their rights and freedom with relevant organizations..
- e) The findings of the study reveal that irregular migration is predominant in Ethiopia. Therefore, concerned government institutions like MOLSA, BOLSA and their structures down to the grassroot level need to put in place a mechanism that would enable them to oppose illegal brokers, who are the major actors of irregular migration and trafficking of young women from rural to urban areas.
- f) The provision in the new overseas employment regulation related to the education level of the potential migrants needs to be reconsidered, in a way it could take into account past experiences and the acquired skills of returnee migrant domestic workers who are under grade 8 and used to work abroad and want to re-migrate.
- g) Signing bilateral agreement with Lebanon plays a significant role to enforce the new overseas employment proclamation and would protect the rights of the migrant domestic workers currently in Lebanon, as well as the potential emigrants to the same destination.
- h) The current short-term training given to potential migrants has to incorporate appropriate subjects that could enable potential migrants to acquire the skills that the host family

expects. The skill training needs to include food preparation and machine operation, as well as caring for elderly and sick persons in the family. It has to incorporate detailed training in Arabic language, as well as Amharic language for those who may not understand it. In this regard, the time span of the training, which is currently 3 weeks, has to be increased at least to 3 months and the current curriculum also needs to be revised to be more inclusive.

- i) The majority of the returnee migrant domestic workers and the public at large had no adequate information about the pros and cons of regular and irregular migration. Therefore, there is a need to promote evidence-based activities to raise their awareness on safe and fair migration and its importance in protecting their rights and dignity.
- j) Awareness on the legal framework has a paramount importance in combating irregular migration. Therefore, government structures, non-governmental institutions and the communities should be well informed about the legal and institutional frameworks put in place to manage the migration process, in order to contrast the clandestine activities of the brokers' network at the source, and promote safe and fair migration.

### **Private Employment Services Involvement**

- a) Potential migrants and returnees should be provided with entrepreneurship and tailor-made skill training that would enable them to work and get a life-changing income here in the country. All relevant actors in the area are duty bound to equip returnees and potential migrants with marketable skill, that would help them to find decent and wage-based jobs.
- b) The majority of the parents of domestic workers are unskilled and uneducated; hence, PESs are duty bound to train them on how to use the remitted money for structural and sustainable investments that could generate a regular income for the household.
- c) Before the migration process is commenced, the private employment agencies should bear the responsibility to inform potential migrants about the whole situation in the destination countries, as well as on the duties and responsibilities expected of them; they should also closely follow-up on the working and living conditions of the domestic workers over their stay in the destination country.
- d) Foreign employment agencies should negotiate with the hosting family the domestic workers' right to attend religious ceremonies and meet their friends once a month and have a cell-phone to contact their family, as deemed necessary, out of the working hours.
- e) Action-oriented researches in the areas of reintegration challenges, coordination among local and international organizations engaged in reintegration efforts and follow-up on the needs of returnees have to be commissioned and carried out.

### **Community empowerment**

- a) Community participation has a paramount importance in addressing the problems caused by irregular migration, which is currently highly prevalent in the country. In this regard, community leaders and religious fathers have a primary role to play in making young women aware of the negative consequences of irregular migration through community conversation.

- b) The families of the potential domestic workers should not let their young women to contact illegal brokers and put the lives of their daughters at risk. If migration is the only option to respond to their problem, they should contact registered and licensed agencies that give guarantee for the emigrants.
- c) Local structures, both governmental and non-governmental, should empower families of the migrant domestic workers to invest the remitted money not only on household consumption, but on structural and sustainable activities that guarantee a regular income for the family in the future.
- d) Local structures and non-governmental organizations like CVM, Catholic Church Projects and others institutions who are currently implementing reintegration programs should closely work with grassroot communities; the Domestic Workers Associations should be strengthened, as an instrument to achieve a successful reintegration of the returnees into their communities.

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## 8. Annexes

### Annex A. Opinion of the Focus Group discussants on overall conditions of Ethiopian returnee migrant domestic workers from Lebanon

**Profile of the participants:** The focus group discussion was conducted with 9 returnee migrant domestic workers from Lebanon while they were in the shelter of CVM Ethiopia before they reintegrated into their family. Education level of all the participants of the group discussion was under grade 8 and their age ranged from 19 to 27 years. In terms of their original place, they were from three regions, namely Oromiya, Amhara, and Southern region. More than half of the participants of the group discussion came from the southern region of the country. All the nine discussants migrated to Lebanon through brokers and some of them even did not have a proper visa. They went there on a tourist visa for three months and remained there to work, though they could not stay longer.

**Reasons for early return:** CVM Ethiopia provides shelter services for those Ethiopian migrant domestic workers who are forced to return to Ethiopia from Lebanon before the expiration of their employment contract due to disagreements between the domestic workers and the host family. The reasons for their early return include the workload, the behavior of the madam and inability of the domestic workers to perform some activities in a proper manner. All of the participants of the group discussion were deported as they ran away from their employers because they could not tolerate the workload and the abuses they faced every day. After they left the host family most of them fell in the hands of the police, who took them to the Ethiopian Embassy in Beirut to repatriate them. The runaway could not contact the employment agencies in Beirut as they did not know their addresses; they also complained that the Ethiopian brokers in Beirut did not want to help them; indeed, they'd rather ask them money to even tell the address of the agency. The participants noted that Arabs are more human than the Ethiopian brokers in Beirut.

**Living memory of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers from Lebanon:** Responses of the discussants of the group are resonant with that of the 60 interviewees on the working and living condition in Lebanon. The overwhelming majority of the discussants asserted that the work that one is supposed to perform in a day is unmanageable. They stated that they had no rest from dawn till dusk without having enough food. They were forced to work in the house of others than the host family. Some of the participants reported that their employers did not allow them to go out of the compound and they experienced a prison-like life. A few employers even locked them in a room and left for their own business; the room was unlocked only when they came back home. The majority of the discussants stressed that they could not get medical treatment when they feel sick and were forced to work under such pressing situation, despite the pain they were feeling.

**Accessibility to essential services:** The overwhelming majority of the discussants asserted that their passport and all other immigration documents had been snatched by the police and handed over to the host family right up on their arrival at the airport and they had no access to them up until they returned back home.

The discussants reported that their employers were not willing to let them have an identity card and or a residential permit. This forced the workers to perform whatever the

employers told them to do beyond the terms of the contract agreement, as it is dangerous to leave the house without passport or personal identification documents. Moreover, in the absence of an identity card, they were not allowed to save their salary in a bank in their name. Their monthly salary was also sent to their family by their employers, and not by themselves. This is also in agreement with responses of the individual interviews made with the returnee migrant domestic workers. It is only when they could not tolerate the extreme coercion and abuse that they decide to runaway to face any possible risks that may put their life in jeopardy.

The majority of the participants in the group discussion sadly expressed that they were not allowed to attend religious ceremonies and meet their friends and could not possess a cellphone to contact their families. However, a few discussants who said that they had a cellphone right from the time they joined the host family and often used it to contact their family. This clearly indicates that having a cellphone to communicate with the family depends on the good will of the host family. It is not legally forbidden to possess a cellphone and communicate with their family once in a while.

**Life after running away from the host family:** Almost all of the discussants confirmed that they were either caught by the police or found by some Arab persons on the street and taken to the Ethiopian Embassy in Beirut. Discussants noted that Ethiopian embassy has a shelter where runaway migrant domestic workers stay for sometimes until immigration documents are prepared to send them to Ethiopia. Participants of the group reported that normally the Embassy contacts the host family and discusses with them why and how the incident happened, and requests them to provide any unpaid salary to the workers; the Embassy would also make an attempt to convince them to cover the transport expenses to send the domestics workers back home. The Embassy does this activity with the assistance of charity organizations that provide the runaway workers with necessary basic supplies like food and cloth. It was noted that the domestic workers run away bare-handed, without taking any property of their own, including their salary; hence, they are in dire need of need clothes. Charity organizations help the runaway with all necessary supplies and shelter them until the conditions for their return to Ethiopia are satisfied.

It was noted by the discussants that the police arrests runaway workers who have more than USD 600 with themselves, while those who are empty-pocket do not attract the attention of the police. The police, thus, take those who are bare-handed to the Embassy because they do not want to incur expenses. The participants stated that police arrests those who have USD 600 or more to use the money for transport expenses for repatriation of the migrant domestic workers.

**Supports that the returnee migrant domestic workers need to improve their life:** All the participants in the discussion expressed their intention to work and improve their life here in the country. No one of the participants showed any interest in re-migration. However, even if they had interest to migrate again, they would not be eligible as they cannot fulfill the requirements listed in the new overseas employment proclamation regarding the education level of the potential migrants for domestic work. With regard to their areas of interest, all of the participants unanimously expressed their interest to engage in hairdressing and food preparation, areas which are extremely crowded these days.



**Annex B. Data collection tools**

Tool 1. Questionnaire developed to collect data from returnees

a/ Name.....

b/ Date and time of interview.....

Back ground characteristics of respondents

Variables	Responses
1.Residence address :	Region-----town----- kebele-----
2.Age:	15—20,21—25, 26—30, 30+
3. Education:	a/illiterate b/read &write, c/ grade 6, d/ grade 8, &+
4.Marital status	Single, married, divorced , widow
5. No. of sisters and brothers	Sisters :1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Brothers : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
6. No. of son and daughter:	Son : 1, 2, 3,, 4, 5, Daughter: 1, 2, 3, 4 ,5.
7.Religion	Orthodox, Muslim protestant, catholic, other.
8. Occupation Informal work:	Formal , informal- daily laborer, waitress, shop keeper,

I .Migration process to Lebanon

1. Would you please, explain the reason why you chose to go to Lebanon? Instead of other Middle East countries?-----
2. What were your expectations? (Better salary, better living conditions, better dresses and the like, more independence, other)-----
3. Have you had any information on the situation of migrants in Lebanon before you headed there? If yes, was the information different with actual reality you faced?-----
4. Did you migrate if you have had correct information on migrant’s situation in Lebanon?--
5. Who arranged your travel to Lebanon? Agency, Brokers, friends/relatives? Have you been satisfied with their services? What do you like to improve in their services?-----
6. Did the process cost you money? How much? What was the source of the money? (Loan, selling personal/house property? other)-----
7. Before migrated to Lebanon, did you migrate from rural to urban location in Ethiopia? For how long did you stay in urban location? What was your work during your stay? And your salary?-----

II. Reasons for returning Back from Lebanon

1. How were your living and working conditions in Lebanon?-----

2. For how many years did you work in Lebanon?-----
3. Why did you come back?-----  
-----
4. Was your immigration regular or irregular?-----
5. Would you please explain how your return back journey from Lebanon to Ethiopia was? Was it programmed or unexpected?-----  
-----
6. Who covered the travel cost from Lebanon to Ethiopia?-----
7. How long has it been since you returned back to Ethiopia?-----

### III. Working and Social Conditions of returnees in Ethiopia.

1. From whom did you get any source of assistance when you returned back to Ethiopia? What type of assistance?-----  
-----
2. Have you got psychosocial support when you arrived in Ethiopia from Lebanon? If yes, would you mention the name of the institution?-----  
-----
3. Who did you get when you arrived at Bole Air Port? Government persons, family members, friends, relatives etc. -----
4. Where did you stay after you arrived in Ethiopia? For how long? Did you prefer to return to your family in the village? Or in another location? Which one and why?-----  
-----
5. What do you work currently? For how long did you stay without work? why?-----  
-----
6. Do you have permanent work? , If yes, what type of work? If no, why not? How much do you earn from the work? Is it public or self-employment?-----  
-----
7. Have you had access to saving and credit schemes? If not why?-----  
-----
8. What is your plan for the future?-----

### IV. Family Condition

1. How was the economy of your family before you left to Lebanon? Explain!-----  
-----
2. How do you describe your family`s economic status this time? Have you contributed substantially to better your family wellbeing? Is migration a better choice to improve life in short time? What alternatives do you have?-----  
-----
3. How do you describe your relation in your family before you left to Lebanon and after return?-----
4. Have you acquired a more important role? Are you more independent? If not, why? Explain! -----

5. To what extent do you participate in the family affairs? Compare before and now?-----  
-----
6. To what extent are you comfortable in your relationship with family members? Friends/relatives? Community? If not comfortable, explain!-----  
-----
7. Did you get necessary help from your family when you returned back? If no, why? -----  
-----

V. Remittance

1. What was your plan to send money home before leaving to Lebanon? Has it changed when staying in Lebanon?-----  
-----
2. Did you send your monthly earnings to your family? Particularly to whom did you send? How often?-----  
-----
3. Did you send the whole salary or partial (could you indicate in %)? Did you send it through formal channel or through friends and other informal means? Why? Have you changed channels during your stay in Lebanon? Why?-----  
-----
4. Did the money you send used to be deposited in the bank by your name? Or you just send it to family? Which bank have you used? What financial services did you enjoy?-----  
-----
5. Did you utilize the money since you come back to Ethiopia? On which kind of expenses/investments? If no, please explain!-----  
-----
6. Did you turn back in Ethiopia with any savings? Have your savings in Ethiopia increased or not? Why?-----  
-----

VI. Skill training

1. Have you ever got skill training when returning in Ethiopia (and in Lebanon)? If yes, what type? Provided by whom? Did it help you to get job? If not why not? -----  
-----
2. What is your preference if you are given opportunity to engage in skill training? Why?----  
-----
3. Did your work experience in Lebanon help you to get employment opportunity here? How?-----  
-----

VII. Government assistance

1. Have you ever got assistance from government institutions in Lebanon (Embassy/Consulate) and in Ethiopia? If yes, what type? -----  
-----
2. Have you been involved in civil associations in Lebanon? What do you expect from government and non- governmental organizations to improve your current working and living conditions? Are you engaged in civil society organizations in Ethiopia? On which activities? Are

you interested in participating in domestic workers associations for decent work?-----  
-----

3. What do you want to tell them about migrant domestic workers and returnees?-----  
-----

### VIII. Future plan

1. Do you have any intention to go back to Lebanon or elsewhere? Why?-----

2. Do you think you will do better this time than before? Why you think so?-----  
-----

3. Are you committed to work and improve your living condition in Ethiopia or otherwise? why?-----

4. Are you interested to work in industries? Other kind of work? In towns or in rural villages?-----

### Tool 2. Questionnaire developed to collect data from potential migrants

a/ Name.....

b/ Date and time of interview.....

#### Back ground characteristics of respondents

Variables	Responses
1.pre-migration Residence address:	Region-----town----- kebele-----
2.Age:	15—20,21—25, 26—30, 30+
3. Education:	a/illiterate b/read write, c/<4, d/<6, <e/ 8+
4.Marrital status	Single, married, divorce , widow
5.No. of sisters &brothers:	Sister: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Brother: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
6. No. of son & daughter:	Son: 1, 2, 3, 4, Daughter: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7.Religion	Christian, Muslim protestant, catholic,
8.Occupation: waitress, trading, other:	formal, informal- daily laborer, shop

#### I. Reason for migration to urban areas

1. Why you came to this place? From where? What was your occupation and salary before? With whom did you come here? Looking for what (better salary, better living conditions, better dresses and the like, more independence, ...other) Have you improved your life in any way?-----  
-----

2. For how long did you stay here? With whom did you stay? What kind of work are you doing? Formal or informal? What kind of jobs have you done so far? What is your salary now? Are you skilled in the work you do?-----  
-----

3. Are both your parents alive?-----  
 I. Reason to emigrate, information, expectations, services, costs-----  
 -----
1. Are you interested/deciding to go abroad as domestic worker? Why? What are your expectations? Only for money or also other need/aspects? Which country you prefer to go? Why?-----
  2. Is the decision your own or in agreement with your parents?-----
  3. Do you have references/connections or relatives abroad? Are you confident on them?-----  
 -----
  4. How much do you expect to earn abroad per month?-----
  5. Do you want to send the salary you would earn to your family? How often? How much of it.(%)? Particularly to whom?-----
  6. Is your intention of sending the money to be kept in the Bank or to be used by the parents? Why?-----
  7. For how long do you like to stay abroad?-----
  8. Who will help you to emigrate? What services do you need? How much will it cost to emigrate?-----
  9. Do you have information on Lebanon or other countries you would like to go? From whom you received information? Are you confident about that information? Who do you like having information from?-----  
 -----
  10. Do you have information on the new Ethiopia`s overseas employment proclamation for emigrate? Are you interested in services you could receive from TVET, Private Employment Agencies? If not why/?-----  
 -----

**Tool 3. Questionnaire developed to collect data from public and private sector organizations/offices**

- a/ Name.....
- b/ occupation /institution
- d/ Date and time of interview.....

I. Government sectors

1. Do you have any policy or institutional frame works that protect the rights of migrant domestic workers and especially those migrating abroad?
2. How do you view the implementation of the new proclamation on emigration?-----  
 -----

3. Do you think the existing legal frame work sufficiently addresses problems of migrant domestic workers? Please explain-----  
-----
4. What do you think as a gap? What needs of migrant domestic workers should be better addressed?-----  
-----
5. What is the role of your institution in addressing issues of migrant domestic workers?-----  
-----
6. Is there any intervention mechanism that targeted domestic workers? If yes, please explain! If not why not? -----
7. Are there any policy or strategy that is under development by your organization concerning migrant domestic workers?-----  
-----
8. How do you see the problems faced by migrant domestic workers in general and returnees in particular? -----
9. In what way does your institution assist potential domestic workers and returnees?-----  
-----
10. What do you suggest to solve the prevailing situation of returnee domestic workers and migrant domestic workers in general?-----  
-----

ii. Financial sectors

1. What is your loan policy?-----
2. Do you request collateral? What other requirements do you ask?-----  
-----
3. Do you have exceptional for returnee domestic workers as they have nothing to present for collateral? -----
4. Do you have any mechanism in place to assist domestic workers and or returnee domestic workers?-----
5. What does your institution assist in transferring of remittance? and savings while abroad?-----
6. What best way would you suggest to assist domestic workers/ returnee domestic workers?-----  
-----

iii. Civil Society Organizations

1. What intervention program do you have for emigrates, potential domestic workers and returnees? If no, why?-----
2. Do you have saving and credit schemes? If yes, does it accommodate domestic workers and returnees? If no, why not?-----  
-----

3. Have you ever given skill training for potential domestic workers/emigrate/ returnees? If yes, what type? If no, why not?-----
4. What best way would you suggest to assist emigrates, potential domestic workers/returnee domestic workers?-----

iv. Private Employment Agencies

1. What intervention program do you have for emigrants, potential domestic workers and returnees?-----
2. What sort of assistance do you give for returnee domestic workers?-----
3. Do you have support packages for those potential emigrate who wants to be supported here? And for the returnees? If yes, what kind?-----
4. What best way would you suggest to assist emigrates, potential domestic workers/returnee?-----

**Tool 4. Questionnaire prepared to collect information from families who have migrant domestic worker in Lebanon. It is to be answered by the mother .**

- a/ Name-----
- b/ occupation-----
- c/ Date and time of interview-----

Background characteristics of the family

Variables	Responses	Frequency
1. Residence address:	Region-----town----- kebele-----	
2. Age:	35—40, 45—50, 51—60, 60+	
3. Education:	a/illiterate b/read & write, c/grade 4 d/ grade 6, e/ grade 8, f/ 8+	
4. Marital status	Single, married, divorced, widow	
6. No. of son and daughter	Son : 1, 2, 3,, 4, 5 Daughter: 1, 2, 3, 4 ,5.	
7. Religion	Orthodox Christian, Muslim protestant, catholic, other.	
8. Occupation and skill	Informal work: daily laborer, waitress, shop keeper, trading, other: formal: employed in public, private, NGOs.	

Present location	Living with family, internally migrant	
------------------	--	--

I. Emigration process

1. When did your daughter go to Lebanon? -----year/s.
2. Why did you let her to go to Lebanon?
3. Who organized the emigration? Via brokers, friends, employment agencies?
4. How much have they paid? To whom? What properties have the family? If they have done debt to pay for the emigration how it was paid?
5. What were the reasons for her departure to Lebanon?
6. Was it her decision or families` decision? Why?
- 7.

II. Remittance and mechanisms used

8. Is she able to send money back home? If yes, through which means? Banks, Agencies, travelers, friends, other? In your own banking account or in her banking account?
9. Why she used this particular mechanism?
10. Does she know of the possibility to send money through the Ethiopian consulate in Beirut?
11. How often she sends? How much-----? How many times in a year? ----- How much remittances are important in the household budget (% monthly remittances on family budget)? What is the income of the family?
12. Do you save it for her in the Bank or you use it for family expenses? Why? What kind of expenses do you cover it with remittances? Did your daughter agree on those expenses or there were different ideas on how to spend remittances?
13. Does she send the money on her own initiative? And/or responding to your requests?
14. Does your daughter have Bank account here in Ethiopia? If no, why not?
15. Have you ever advised her how to use her salary when you talk with her over telephone?

**Check Lists for Focus Group Discussions**

1. Name-----Age-----Education level-----migration status-----
2. Reasons for migration
3. Working and living conditions in Lebanon
4. Perception about the destination country before departure
5. Process of migration, actors, facilitators e.t.c
6. Communication with friends, family , consulate
7. Challenges and problems faced , experiences acquired
8. Utilization of the salary, how often it is sent back home to the family
9. Expectations from the government and non-government actors
10. Future plan to pursue