Final Evaluation of the Ethiopia Migration Programme (EMP): Short Report
by EDI Global

On behalf of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

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Executive Summary

The Ethiopia Migration Programme is a four-year initiative funded by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) from 2019 to 2023. Its main goal is to enhance the protection and support systems for various migrants in Ethiopia, including potential Ethiopian migrants, returnees, and Eritrean refugees, especially those aged 14 to 29. The EMP operates in the Addis Ababa, Tigray, and Amhara regions and is implemented in a consortium led by the Danish Refugee Council alongside key implementing partners: Save the Children International, BBC Media Action, Altai Consulting, and the Mixed Migration Centre.

EDI Global conducted the Final Evaluation of the EMP, utilising a mixed-methods approach that included quantitative and qualitative data collection from primary and secondary sources. Data was gathered through phone surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, workshops, and case studies. The evaluation applied OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria and FCDO's Value for Money (VfM) assessment framework.

Key Findings

Relevance
EMP's activities were relevant to the needs and challenges of the target beneficiaries, with a focus on equity considerations. However, ensuring accessibility to all target groups remained a challenge, particularly for vulnerable individuals.

Coherence
The EMP aligned well with national migration agendas and collaborated effectively with other interventions and programmes. Internal coordination among implementing partners could have been improved.

Efficiency
Despite external challenges like UK ODA spending reductions and the COVID-19 pandemic, EMP maintained efficiency by pivoting its activities, leveraging partnerships, and reducing costs where possible.

Effectiveness
The EMP's information and communication services, mentorship, and pre-departure training had a positive impact on awareness and migration decision-making among beneficiaries.

Impact
The programme influenced beneficiaries to consider legal migration pathways, but evidence for longer-term impact is mixed, with an indecisive nature surrounding some aspects.

Sustainability
While some aspects of the EMP showed potential for sustainability, particularly the transition of Info Hub and Youth Recreation Centre to partners, integrating exit mechanisms earlier in the program could have enhanced sustainability.

Learning & Adaptation
- The EMP was highly adaptive to the disruptions and changes in external context by identifying complementary activities and partnerships in migration responses.
- Through the Info Hub group information services, the EMP was able to bring together multiple players operating as part of migrant responses and address the information gap in the urban refugee situation.
- The EMP responded well to the mixed migration environment by enabling the functioning of coordination structures and being an active participant in multiple government coordination mechanisms, responding to the prioritised needs of government and target groups.

Recommendations

The findings above provide a basis for overall recommendations for future migration programme design. At a broad level, these include the following:

Establish strong collaboration and partnerships with governments (national and sub-national levels), international organisations, civil society, and the private sector. Design and implement joint interventions in collaboration with stakeholders, mainly on job creation or skill development activities, to leverage resources, expertise, and networks. The programme should also leverage the collaboration platforms to facilitate access to basic services and resources and to focus on long-term capacity building, applying a timely exit strategy to lay the foundations for continuous impact after the life of the programme.

Alignment with government policies: Programme design should commence with a thorough assessment of existing government policies, and programme impact should be linked with these policies and programmes. Local focal points with a deep understanding of the local context should be involved in needs assessments to facilitate effective communication with government stakeholders.

Flexibility and complementarity: Flexibility during implementation is crucial to identify complementarities with other organisations and programmes operating in the same space. Building partnerships and engaging with various stakeholders can help avoid duplication, support adaptation, and maintain programme relevance.

Coordination and communication: Effective coordination and communication mechanisms are essential to prevent duplication, ensure complementarity among different activities, and hear from other implementing partners. Working groups and platforms led by relevant organisations can improve coordination.

Ensure accessibility and adequacy of the programme support: Some programme activities were not accessible to all beneficiaries, particularly to those who were vulnerable and people with disabilities. The cash support was not adequate to cover the beneficiaries' needs. Future programme design needs to ensure inclusivity and adequacy of support, as well as long-term solutions such as employment opportunities and income-generating activities.

Response framework: In complex contexts like migration, a response framework is needed to integrate various programme mechanisms effectively. Programmes may need to blend development and humanitarian approaches, responding to route-based migration needs across different migrant groups.

Adaptability and integration: A one-team approach through a Project Management Unit (PMU) can enhance adaptability to rapid changes. Integrating research partners into the programme design can support operational research and reactive studies, although influencing evidence-based decision-making regionally and nationally may require additional efforts.

Disclaimer. The views in this report are of the Independent Evaluator, EDI Global, and not necessarily those of the Danish Refugee Council or FCDO.

Introduction

Background

The Ethiopia Migration Programme (EMP) is a four-year initiative funded by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) from 2019 to 2023. Its main goal is to enhance the protection and support systems for various migrants in Ethiopia, including potential Ethiopian migrants, returnees, and Eritrean refugees, especially those aged 14 to 29. The EMP operates in the Addis Ababa, Tigray, and Amhara regions and is implemented in a consortium led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) alongside key implementing partners: Save the Children International, BBC Media Action, Altai Consulting, and the Mixed Migration Centre.

Core Programme Activities

Programmatic research: This involves conducting research to inform evidence-based programming and contribute to Ethiopia's knowledge base on migration.

Information and communications: The EMP includes activities aimed at reducing risks during migration journeys and helping individuals make informed decisions.

Emergency programming: There are provisions for addressing the immediate needs of Ethiopian migrants forcibly returned from the Middle East.

Resilience and integration programming: The EMP also focuses on supporting potential migrants and Eritrean refugees in mitigating protection risks associated with migration through resilience-building and integration efforts

External Factors

- COVID-19 pandemic
- Civil conflict
- UK ODA spending reductions

Programmatic Change

- **The geographic scope** was adapted to focus on urban response in Addis Ababa and scale of programming was reduced.
- **Targeted groups** became Eritrean refugees including newly displaced by conflict from Tigray to Addis Ababa, and groups of Ethiopian migrants forcibly returned from Saudi Arabia.

End of Programme Evaluation

EDI Global was contracted by DRC to conduct the final evaluation of the EMP from **June to September 2023**. The evaluation's objective is to assess whether the EMP successfully achieved its objective of enhancing the protection and safety of migrants in Ethiopia, and centers on "learning and sustainability" to inform the design of future migration programs.

The evaluation objectives are:
- To evaluate the programme in terms of its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, equity and Value for Money (VfM), with a priority on assessing the programme's expected results, objectives and overall goal.
- To identify and document key achievements, challenges, lessons learned and best practices for learning.
- To provide recommendations on priority interventions and actions for FCDO that will inform future refugee and migration programming.

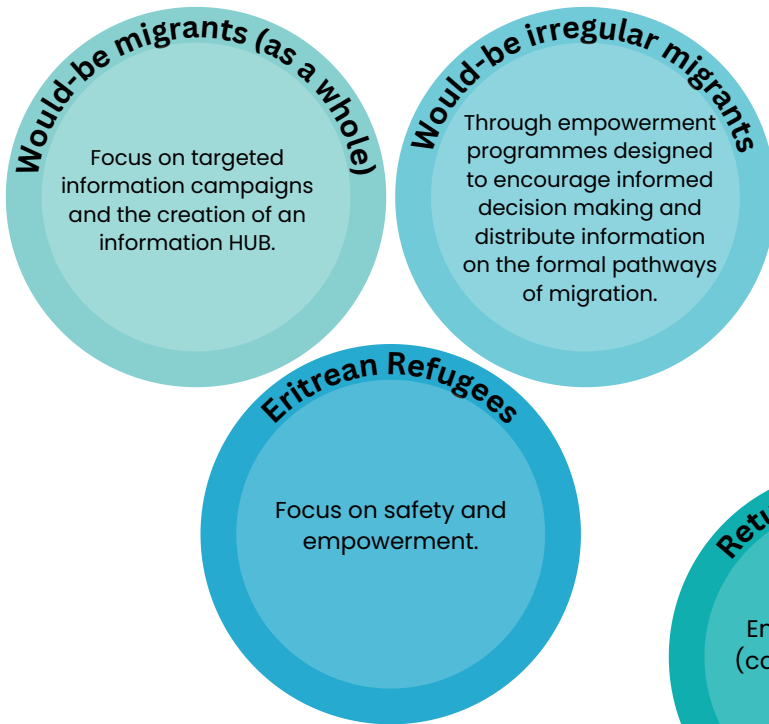| Independent Evaluator	Implementing Partners
EDI Global — A Mathematica Company	Mixed Migration Centre · Save the Children · BBC Media Action · Danish Refugee Council · altai consulting

Situational and Context Analysis

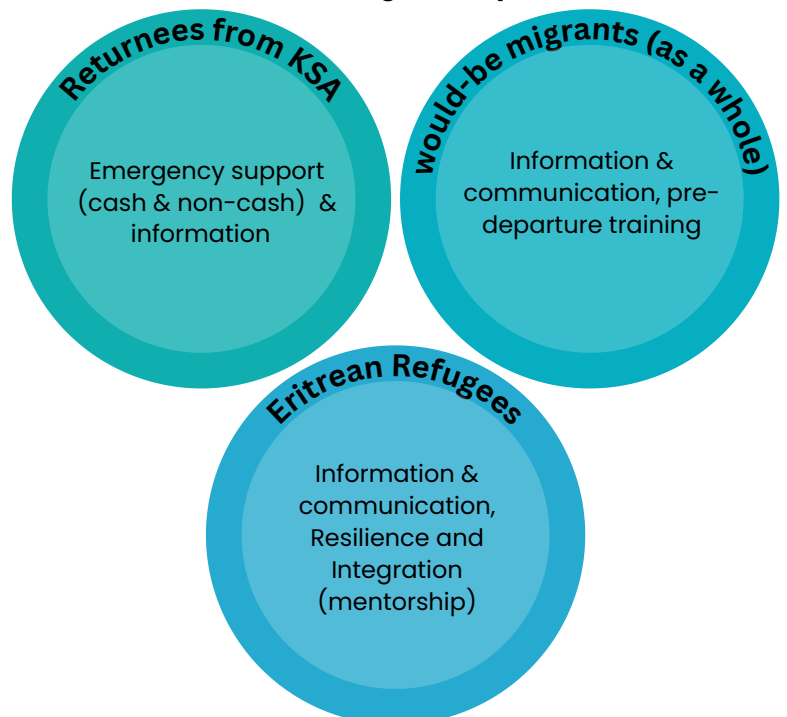**Political Landscape on Migration in Ethiopia**

In the past years, Ethiopia has experienced significant political developments and events that influenced the political landscape of migration. The country underwent a political reform that aimed to open up the political space, promote human rights, and foster peace and stability. The government made various efforts to address challenges and to enhance migration management in the past years. Some of the efforts included the development of a comprehensive National Migration Policy Framework and endorsement of the new Refugee Proclamation (number 1110/2019). In addition, the government continued to actively engage in regional collaborations to enhance cooperation on migration governance, border management, and addressing trafficking and smuggling.

Despite the existing challenges and the political situation, Ethiopia continued to be a major host country for refugees. The country hosted large number of refugees who migrated to Ethiopia because of the ongoing conflicts and/or political instability in neighboring countries, mainly from Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan and Somalia. The cross-border movements of refugees and migrants into Ethiopia had significant implications on the overall migration dynamics in the country as well as in the region.

Original Target Groups

Would-be migrants (as a whole)
Focus on targeted information campaigns and the creation of an information HUB.

Would-be irregular migrants
Through empowerment programmes designed to encourage informed decision making and distribute information on the formal pathways of migration.

Eritrean Refugees
Focus on safety and empowerment.

New Target Groups

Returnees from KSA
Emergency support (cash & non-cash) & information

would-be migrants (as a whole)
Information & communication, pre-departure training

Eritrean Refugees
Information & communication, Resilience and Integration (mentorship)

Roadmap of Year-on-Year External Factors and Programme Changes

The programme began its inception period in 2019 and was completed in April of 2023. This included one year of inception and planning followed by three years of full programming.

Year 1: 2019-Q1 2020 (inception period)

The EMP conducted a baseline survey to assess migration knowledge of target groups. Results from the baseline informed EMP's focus on increasing knowledge of formal channels of migration. Additionally, they were able to further define the target population of would-be migrants during this inception period. The inception period allowed for an initial surge of high-quality research outputs from the EMP.
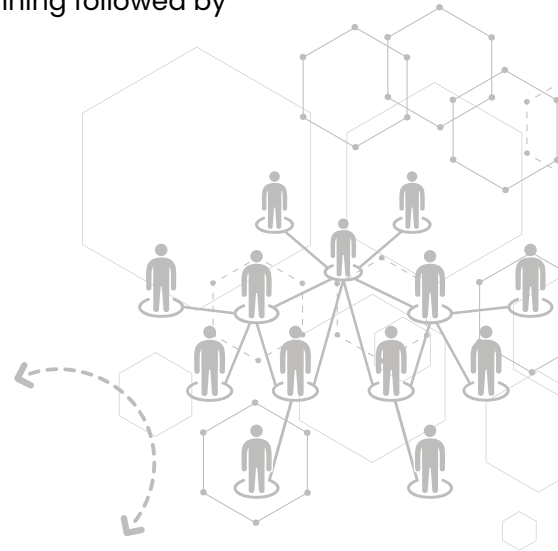
Year 2: Q2 2020 –Q1 2021

- COVID-19 pandemic and an increasingly violent conflict in the Tigray region limited access to a key portion of the EMP's target refugee population.
- The EMP redirected and shifted programming to primarily focus in Addis Ababa on would-be migrants, refugees fleeing from the conflict in Tigray, and forced returnees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) due to the pandemic.
- The first Information Hub opened in Addis Ababa in November of 2020.
- Agreements with IOM and the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) to facilitate emergency supports.
- The EMP partnered with local organisations and utilised three existing locations for their Info Hubs future Information Hubs, saving both time and money.

Year 3: Q2 2021-Q1 2022

- Further budget cuts and strategic review led to redesign of the EMP and terminating engagement of Save the Children and BBC Media Action.
- Information Hub 1 expanded and began monthly group information sessions, ad-hoc one-to-one help desk consultations and information, education and communication (IEC) materials. It also piloted a mentorship programme for adolescent Eritreans.
- EMP established a partnership with Yegna/Girl Effect for a communication programme.
- Good relationship with EDRMC enabled the EMP to fill critical gaps in the provision of emergency support to KSA returnees.

Year 4: Q2 2022-Q1 2023

- Continued conflicts, natural disasters, and reduced Y4 approved funding level significantly delayed the planning and implementation of programme activities in the first quarter of year 4.
- New activity in year 4 included the distribution of 3,000 hygiene kits to KSA returnees at government shelters, after recognising WASH gaps in emergency response by other partners. The youth mentorship programme continued and was proven extremely helpful, especially in the psychological support.

Scope and Methodology

Evaluation Scope

The evaluation initially aimed to cover three areas: Addis Ababa, Tigray, and Amhara. However, due to the programme's expansive scale coupled with implementation changes, the focus shifted to Addis Ababa for data collection, with activities in Tigray and Amhara addressed through Key Informant Interviews and document reviews during the second year of implementation.

Methodology

The evaluation involves two frameworks: **OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria and FCDO's 4E VfM approach** (Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Equity). The evaluation assesses the EMP using eight criteria: Relevance, Coherence, Impact, Sustainability, Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Equity. There is a particular emphasis on effectiveness (outcomes), learning and sustainability within both frameworks.

The overall evaluation approach is a **theory-based evaluation**, in which the Theory of Change (ToC) plays a central role in assessing whether the programme has achieved what it set out to achieve and the extent to which the causal linkages between the programme activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts remain valid.

The evaluation methodology is a **mixed method approach**, with the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources. The quantitative phone survey is used to assess the contributions of the interventions to the changes in beneficiary lives and livelihood. The qualitative methods (IDIs, FGDs, KIIs, and facilitated group discussions with key stakeholders) give more in-depth contextual information around programme delivery, effectiveness of the interventions, equity, and lessons learned.

Assessing the strength of evidence and triangulation

For the purposes of the EMP evaluation, an analytical framework is proposed that combined contribution analysis and process tracing, to convey the Evaluation Team's confidence in the evidence that supports or negates (or does neither) the intervention's claim of contributing to observed results.

The method seeks to divide evidence into **four different categories** based on their certainty, with the aim to demonstrate the degree to which evidence supports or negates contribution claims, whether evidence can absolutely confirm or deny a causal claim ('causal' or 'negative'), whether evidence partially confirms a claim but not absolutely ('positive'), and whether evidence neither confirms nor denies a claim, requiring further evidence to establish a credible conclusion ('indecisive').

Negative: categorises evidence that undermines a causal claim, showing the causality to be unfounded and untrue. The ToC assumptions, in this case, are shown not to hold up in reality, and the characteristics of the evidence in this category is disconfirmatory insofar as it is confidently able to disprove a causal claim.

Indecisive: categorises evidence that is not clear in either confirming or denying a causal claim. This category is ambivalent insofar as the ToC assumptions are neither shown to be true nor false, and the evidence is neither confirmatory (affirms a hypothesis, but cannot categorically confirm it) nor disconfirmatory (if the evidence is not observed, its absence is not sufficient to deny the hypothesis).

Positive: evidence in this category is able to provide expected evidence for a hypothesis to hold (positive and affirming), but it cannot absolutely or categorically confirm the hypothesis (as the evidence is not sufficient).

Casual: provides the most emphatic premise for contribution claims. Evidence has confirmatory power and it is able to prove a claim beyond reasonable doubt. Such evidence is rare and hard to find, as much evidence can overlap with multiple causal or contributory explanations.

Sampling

The sampling methodology considered language/ethnicity, gender and age balance.

Table 1: Quantitative target and achieved sample

Respondent category	Target sample	(% of target)	Male	Female
Eritean refugee	340	336 (99%)	165	171
Returnee	113	111 (98%)	78	33
Total	453	447 (98.6%)	243	204

Table 2: Qualitative target and achieved sample

Qualitative method	Participant(s)	Planned	Conducted
In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)	Programme beneficiaries (Eritrean refugees, returnees/stranded returnees, metors)	14 IDIs	14 IDIs
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Category 1: mentorship participants (4 FGDs) Category 2: information session participants (3 FGDs)	7 FGDs	7 FGDs
Facilitated learning workshops	Programme stakeholders (implementing partners [IPs], government and the EMP staff)	4-5 groups	4 groups
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	Programme stakeholders (Donor, IPs, government and EMP staff)	6-8 KIIs	26 KIIs
Brief case stories	Case stories were developed based on In-Depth Interviews	3	5

Limitations & Mitigations

Limitation 1: Sample size of the quantitative component –The sample size calculated for the evaluation was low compared to the baseline survey. This might affect the accuracy and certainty of our estimation of effect size, and limited comparison of the findings between the baseline and our sample. **Mitigation:** We used power-based sample size calculation and relevant assumptions to ensure an optimal level of precision (95% confidence interval, 5% standard error, and 80% power). A mixed evaluation approach was used (quantitative and qualitative data as well as secondary data and document reviews) to triangulate findings, which provided a much more holistic approach to assess whether the EMP has achieved what it was set out to achieve. Thus, we believe that the sample size of the quantitative data had limited impact on the evaluation findings.

Limitation 2: Selection bias – It was not possible to include would-be migrants and some of the returnees who were only passing through. **Mitigation:** We used qualitative approach and secondary data and document reviews. We engaged with some would-be migrants in the qualitative interviews and developed a case story based on their journey. Moreover, we reviewed programme documents and conducted interviews with consortium partners that were involved in the implementation of programme activities, specifically targeting would-be migrants.

Limitation 3: Social Desirability bias - Due to fear of negative consequences or mistrust of outsiders, respondents of both quantitative and qualitative data collection might have responded to survey questions in a way that they believed would be viewed as 'correct', rather than providing honest or accurate answers. **Mitigation:** the data collection tools were carefully designed to capture spontaneous responses, rather than respondents choosing from a fixed set of options. We recruited enumerators from the list provided by DRC as part of our data collection team who already established rapport with the beneficiaries in the previous evaluation and data collection exercises.

Key Findings

This section reports the key findings of the evaluation. The results are triangulated from desk reviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with beneficiaries, and quantitative data from the phone survey with returnees and Eritrean refugees.

Quantitative phone survey provides trends and broad pictures around effectiveness and impact questions, whilst desk reviews and qualitative data are used to address all the evaluation questions and sub-questions.

The findings from the desk reviews and secondary data situate the findings within the programmatic context. The following chapters present results for each evaluation criteria and further delve into evaluation questions within the criteria.

Information & Communication

Resilience and Integration

Emergency and Capacity building

Research

The EMP Youth Recreational Center at Gofa Condominium.

Donations of non-cash items for EMP programme

RELEVANCE

Positive

The gathered evidence revealed that the programme activities were relevant to the challenges and opportunities of the target beneficiaries. The program prioritised equity by focusing on women, girls, youth, and children and offered psychosocial support for abuse survivors and individuals with mental health issues

EQ - Was the EMP's design relevant to the challenges and opportunities of the target beneficiaries (would-be migrants, returnees and refugees)?

The EMP's activities were relevant to the needs of the target groups and change in socio-political context. The EMP revised it's activities' to address the prioritised needs of the target groups.

Information & Communication

- Lack of accurate and reliable information about migration options
- Security issues and imprisonment due to a lack of registration and documentation
- Difficulty in accessing different basic services including education, health, and livelihood support

Emergency and Capacity building

- Ethiopian returnees faced imprisonment, torture, and forceful deportation; had limited cash to pay their transportation costs,,
- COVID and KSA deportations caused high influx of returnees, which was beyond the capacity of government returnee response

Resilience and Integration

- All the participant groups explained that illegal migrants face the risk of death, starvation, imprisonment, torture, sexual violence, exploitation, violence, and kidnapping
- Would-be migrants shared excessive expenditure to pay traffickers at transition points and lack of knowledge of destination countries are the main challenges

Research

- The EMP design is based on the needs of the target groups and socio-political context
- Policy and programme environment in Ethiopia to be evidence-based and adaptive

Info Hub and Help desks provided information and referrals to beneficiaries with migration-related needs. The referral services provided guidance to access different services including registration, documentation, renewal of refugee status identification cards, health, and education.
Information sessions sessions were conducted based on information gap assessment (help desk requests)
Mass media and IEC – Television episode 'Yegna', Telegram channel, PSAs were employed for dissemination. Telegram channel was helpful as an outreach channel for dispersed target groups

Cash support was provided to enable onward transportation and helped returnees to reach their destination.
Non-food items and supplementary food items were provided to pregnant and lactating women
Psycho-social support was provided to individuals faced with sexual and gender based violence
Capacity building on child safeguarding, case management; child friendly spaces, community sessions for long stays in shelters
Active engagement with EDRMC and coordination with response platforms were critical in addressing the prioritised needs

Mentorship training for adult and adolescents Eritrean refugees provided peer-to-peer information on basic services available to young Eritreans and information to facilitate safe outward migration. Further modules tailored to urban refugees included training on soft skills
Pre-departure training for would-be migrants was reported to be useful in providing relevant information about migration-related risks and making informed migration decisions
Community based initiatives i.e., equipping a public library and youth-friendly centre for Eritrean refugees in Gofa Mebrat Hail condominium helped refugees and host community access services, and was useful in strengthening social cohesion

Programmatic research including formative research, political economy analysis, rapid research were generated through out the programme and supported in informing programmatic decisions such as training needs, engagement model, gaps in service provision, location of Info Hubs etc
Long form research included returnee tracer studies, impact of COVID-19 on refugees across different routes, gendered analysis, exacerbated protection risks. Both programmatic and long form research approached key inquiries to support EMP's design and adaptation.

EQ - Equity considerations are built into programme design i.e.,the EMP's programme strategies and policies

The programme activities incorporated the needs of vulnerable groups including women and girls, youth, and children. The EMP incorporated equity considerations towards minority Kunama community through translation of communication content, incorporation of trained Kunama mentors , and choosing Info Hub location in proximity of community settlement. The programme also provided separate mentorship for adolescents, additional emergency cash assistance to returnees with children, psychosocial support to those who have been victims of SGBV.

COHERENCE

Positive

Implementation and delivery of the EMP's activities were compatible with national migration agenda, and took into consideration national and local government policy priorities in its programme design. The EMP's activities were compatible with other existing interventions and programmes and leveraged cross-programme linkages, collaborated well with partners outside of the EMP.

EQ - Were the EMP activities compatible with international migration agenda, national, regional and local government policy priorities?

The programme was designed to target the needs of different migrant groups in line with policy framework and findings from formative research. The EMP focused on improving the protective environment for migrants in Ethiopia, generating safer migration journeys. Stakeholder consultations with government organisations including EDRMC, EPHI revealed that the EMP adapted to emerging priorities of national response mechanism especially towards returnees. The emergency assistance activity component was seen to have had immense contributions in addressing the needs of Ethiopian returnees from KSA.

Information and communication activities regarding risks of unsafe irregular migration, mitigation measures, information regarding services availability and access points was in line with national response mechanism. Information sessions through UNNHCR, RRS are examples of programmatic coherence. Improvements in service delivery through emergency assistance targeting immediate protection were fully in line with government policy goal of preventing illegal migration. Targeting would-be migrants irrespective of the migration journey (regular or irregular) was not completely in alignment with government priorities; however aligned with broader migration agenda in Ethiopia

EQ - Were the EMP's activities compatible with other existing interventions/programmes?

The EMP's activities were compatible with existing programmes and implemented in collaboration with other organisations. Efforts were made to avoid resource duplication through integration and distribution of tasks among different organisations. The information and communication component of the programme involved engagement and collaboration with government stakeholders and implementation partners. The Info Hub served as common platform that facilitated information delivery and service provision by the EMP and other partners (collaborators).

EQ - Has EMP leveraged cross-programme linkages?

The EMP made efforts to leverage cross-programme linkages and to use the capacity of existing institutions, including their human resource/expertise. The respondents emphasised that collaboration among stakeholders and cross-programme linkages enhanced efficiency and minimised duplication of efforts.

Information & Communication

UNHCR, RRS, DICAC, JRS, Nifas Silk subcity Woreda
Information on services provided by partners on refugees registration, obtaining legal documentation, education opportunities, psychosocial services

Emergency and Capacity building

IOM, EPHI, EDRMC, ERCS, OICE
Cash and non-cash support to complement partners, capacity building to improve existing service delivery

Resilience and Integration

GMCMC, MSF
Equipment of library, youth recreation centre refugees and local community, provision of psycho social support for victims of SGBV
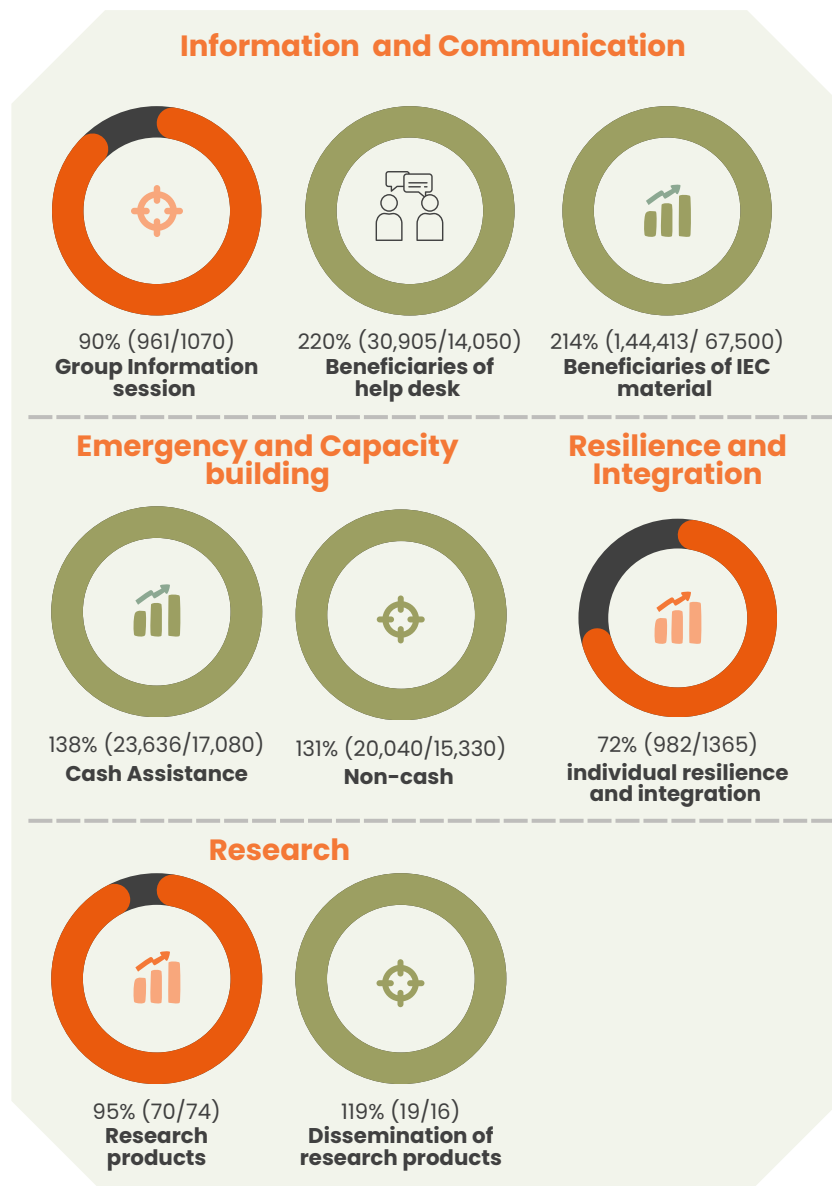
EFFICIENCY

Positive

The EMP weathered multiple changes and external shocks, while maintaining efficiency, value for money, and agility. The planned activities were pivoted, partners were dropped, and the focus of the overall programme shifted from longer term to short-term rapid responses. Given the external challenges of budget cut, COVID-19, and political instability, the triangulated evidence support achievement of the EMP programme in terms of efficiency.

EQ -Have the planned activities and outputs been implemented in line to achieve the defined outcomes

The programme design and output targets underwent significant revisions in line with external shocks and budget considerations.

The EMP was able to achieve its output targets in emergency and capacity building and research. While information and communication overall showed achievement of intended outputs, group information sessions were below the target. As part of resilience and integration activities, although the achieved output was below target, it was primarily driven by significant shift in programme design from resilience for would-be migrants to refugees. Information hubs and associated communication activities have shown high recall among beneficiaries and cost effective solutions in urban migration context, leading to intended outcomes.

Cost-effectiveness was achieved through practices employed as part of Emergency response such as strategic partnerships, focused on vulnerable groups through low resource practices such as child friendly space and community engagement.

Information and Communication

90% (961/1070)
Group Information session

220% (30,905/14,050)
Beneficiaries of help desk

214% (1,44,413/ 67,500)
Beneficiaries of IEC material

Emergency and Capacity building

138% (23,636/17,080)
Cash Assistance

131% (20,040/15,330)
Non-cash

Resilience and Integration

72% (982/1365)
individual resilience and integration

Research

95% (70/74)
Research products

119% (19/16)
Dissemination of research products

EQ -Has the delivery of programme outputs allowed for reasonable exceptions like changes in deliverables agreed in advance with FCDO, or changes due to adaptive programming

Triangulated evidence from monitoring data, secondary documents review, qualitative interviews and VfM analysis points to a positive achievement of the EMP in terms of efficiency. The delivery of the outputs allowed for multiple internal and external changes. Adaptive programming was well embedded in the design of the EMP, allowing programme pivot while maintaining reasonable level of efficiency. Monitoring systems, coordination plan, and knowledge sharing platform were also in place to help the EMP manage, track progress, learn and adapt.

EQ -Could a different approach to the programme delivery have produced better results?

Changes in external context, unpredictability of programme continuity led to short term focus of the EMP's activities. Identification of strategies that support longer-term solutioning such as collaboration at business case level could have produced better results. From the beneficiary's perspective, longer duration of mentorship training, increased cash assistance for returnees was needed.

EFFECTIVENESS

Positive

The EMP's communication activities significantly contributed to increased awareness. The mentorship programme for refugees and pre-departure training for would be migrants effectively improved awareness and decision making towards safe/regular migration. Further, information and communication activities helped refugees navigate their new environment and guided them to identify and use available services provided by other stakeholders.

EQ - What strategies and interventions has EMP explicitly implemented to reach target groups?

The EMP utilised various strategies for its four main intervention areas: research for evidence-based programming, communication for risk mitigation and informed decisions, emergency support for returnee migrants, and resilience programs for would-be migrants and Eritrean refugees to address protection risks induced by migration.

EQ - To what extent has the EMP contributed to the evidence base for policy and programme environment relating to unsafe migration in Ethiopia?

The EMP was able to produce research outputs that contributed to a comprehensive understanding of mixed migration and informed programming efforts within the implementing partners, donor and the EMP. Findings and recommendations of the

studies were effective in informing the EMP's learning and adaptation. However, the influence on governments' policies is not explicitly mentioned by any of the participants interviewed, including the government stakeholders.

EQ - To what extent are migrants more informed about the risks of unsafe irregular migration and how to mitigate them?

Evidence from quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that migrants are informed about the risks of unsafe irregular migration and how to mitigate them. The communication activities and training (mentorship and pre-departure training) proved to be effective in providing relevant information about migration and protection. Beneficiaries were able to identify several key risks and challenges of illegal migration. Risk mitigation awareness was seen to be improved in areas related to individual planning of migration.

Change in awareness of risk mitigation during migration among refugees
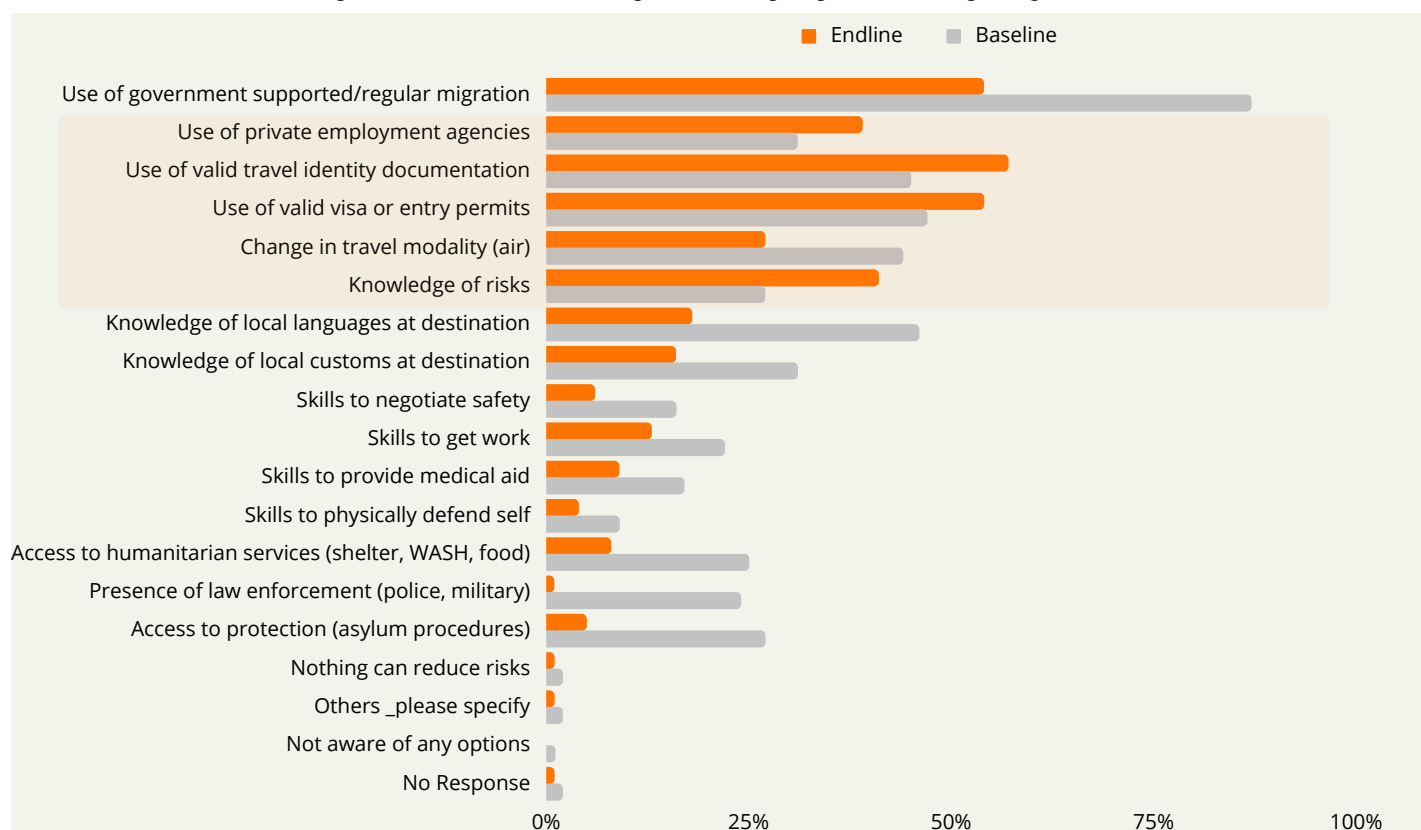
EFFECTIVENESS

EQ - To what extent has the protective environment and resilience for migrants improved as a result of the EMP activities?

The evaluation evidence gathered suggests that the EMP was effective in providing short-term emergency response (cash and non-cash) and delivering necessary services to meet the immediate needs of refuges and returnees. However, the participants highlighted inadequacy of the transport/cash support, mainly for those who had to travel longer distance.

The mentorship programme and pre-departure training were effective at creating a protective environment and building resilience among refuges and prospective migrants. However, respondents described the limited effectiveness of these activities in addressing the underlying causes of illegal migration, and highlighted the need for comprehensive interventions to provide financial support (e.g., capital for starting businesses) and to create job opportunities, in addition to training and information.

EQ - What are the major factors (internal and external) that influence the achievement or non-achievement of the programme's objectives?

The EMP encountered significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UK-ODA spending reductions, and the conflict in Northern Ethiopia. The programme adapted to changing circumstances and played a crucial role in emergency response. There were also internal challenges that could be improved for future programming. Short training duration, and delivery of the mentorship training though phone call during COVID-19 restriction the key challenges and bottlenecks that affected the mentorship programme. As part of

Change in protection services for returnees
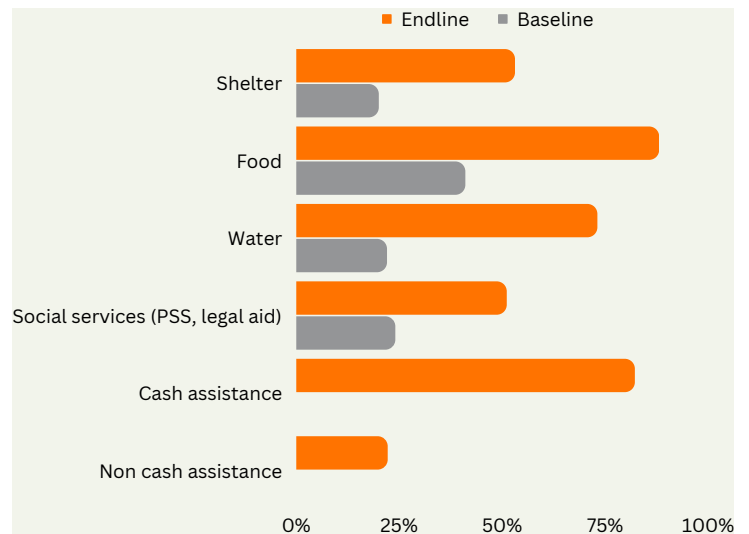
The training was about how to develop your understanding (self-development), how to communicate with people, and how to manage things timely and how to protect ourselves from stress and depression, and it has detailed and step by step strategies and tactics. I benefited from the training. (Male Eritrean Refugee, FGD)

Without the help of non-governmental partners, the government alone couldn`t handle it [influx of returnees]. For example, DRC pays cash [transport]. It also covered the medical expense for victims of sexual abuse, which was not covered by our organisation, if DRC did not help, the government alone could not cover the cost of everything. (Government participant)

information and communication the quality of service delivery impacted the effectiveness of resolving help desk referrals such as obtaining legal aid, documentation etc.

EQ - Have there been any unintended positive or negative consequences due to the programme?

The establishment of youth centre, which was initially aimed to serve the refuges, significantly contributed in bringing social cohesion between refuges and the host community. Similarly Telegram channel served as a key platform to retain connections among refuges.

IMPACT

Indecisive

The EMP appeared to have had a positive impact, particularly in shifting focus toward regular and legal migration pathways. The mentorship and pre-departure training was mentioned to be helpful in influencing migration decisions. There is limited evidence on the impact of the pre-departure training in equipping would-be migrants with relevant skills to improve their resilience. The Info Hub also seemed to have positive impact in improving access to relevant information and services. The emergency and capacity building efforts addressed immediate needs rather than long-term systemic issues.

EQ - Have any changes been achieved in relation to improved protection, access to support services, and informed decision-making for migrants?

The EMP's information and communication services (mainly the Info Hub) has had positive impact in improving access to relevant information and other services. The EMP has had a positive impact on refugees and migrants, particularly in shifting their focus toward regular and legal migration pathways. These pathways include options such as scholarship opportunities, family reunification, and internal economic integration. The mentorship and pre-departure training provided by the EMP has been significantly helpful in influencing migration decisions by helping trainees understand the risks associated with unsafe illegal migration. Moreover, the impact of mentorship goes beyond the programme's scope and have established a social support system among the Eritrean refugees.
The access to information has increased among refugees especially regarding outward migration, conditions at destination, experiences of return. In contrast, the access to information among returnees has reduced. This could be attributed to the nature of target group that has been forced to return; further the information and communication activities were primarily targeted towards refugees.

Change in target groups accessing information about migration

The study found that the EMP's information sources, were highly valued by users. Specifically, 98% of refugees and 85% of returnees reported improved knowledge of regular migration, and 99% of refugees and 85% of returnees found the information helpful for planning their migration. The evaluation also found that 'Helpfulness of mentorship to acquire knowledge regarding safe migration' improved with increase in the 'number of cycles of mentorship' with a p-value of 0.003, while accounting for age, gender and education. The impact of the EMP's research activities on evidence-based migration policy and government stakeholder utilisation seemed limited. However, research outputs proved valuable in enhancing the understanding of mixed migration and guided EMP's learning and adaptation process to ensure relevance in a changing context.

EQ - Have the governance and capacities of government (federal and local), local organisations improved as a result of the programme?

The EMP's technical support and capacity training improved government staff's technical abilities but primarily focused on immediate needs rather than addressing long-term systemic capacity changes. Child safeguarding training was reported to be useful by government stakeholders while Info Hubs were reported to be useful in amplifying the impact of available services.

SUSTAINABILITY

Indecisive

The EMP has focused on short-term activities due to the redesign of programme in line with external shocks and are likely to have limited long-term impact among beneficiaries. Beneficiaries recalled the key concepts of resilience training two years after training and influence on migration decision making demonstrating the sustainability of mentorship and pre-departure training. In addition, the structured exit plan and transition of Info Hub to partners is likely to continue the services for Eritrean refugees albeit being localised impact.

EQ - What is the likelihood that the benefits of the programme continue after donor funding ceased?

The recall of knowledge from resilience and information activities, appropriate exit strategy are good indications of the likelihood that the benefits will continue in the longer run. However, due to the lack of verifiable evidence for the uptake of the research products among government stakeholders and the short-term focus on emergency responses, overall we cannot say with confidence that the impact of the programme will be long-lasting.

Information and communication provided to Eritrean refugees regarding safe migration options and available services has been useful to obtain legal and documentation services that have a long term effect. Programme has transitioned to JRS, which is also funded by UNHCR and it is likely that trustworthy information sources, referral mechanism and outreach network will continue after the exit.

Emergency and capacity building programming were temporary and unlikely to have long-lasting impacts. The capacity building on counselling, safe guarding to government staff had an individual level impact, however institutional capacity building could have long-term effect.

Resilience and Integration: Adolescent refugees recalled the practical knowledge gained through mentorship including financial literacy, challenges and risks faced through different migration routes. Adult refugees including Kunama participants shared that the training and knowledge gained was shared with family members, and influenced decision to wait for migration until legal process was completed. The localised impact created through social cohesion activities i.e., renovation and furnishing of the youth centre and the provision of library (provision of computer, Wi-Fi and books) would likely continue to impact the youth in the area with the condominium committee's continued ownership of the centre.

> *Once they have informed you of where to go, it renders no difference .because they are only providing you with information. Although its presence is favourable to us, the real problem is rather that the agencies or organisations to whom we are referred fail to address the problem we're having. (Refugee respondent from Kunama community)*

> *.....how to communicate and respect returnees, I have understood how to treat individuals regardless of their age. .... If there is an individual with mental disordered, I know how to screen him, I have learned these issues from DRC. (Government participant)*
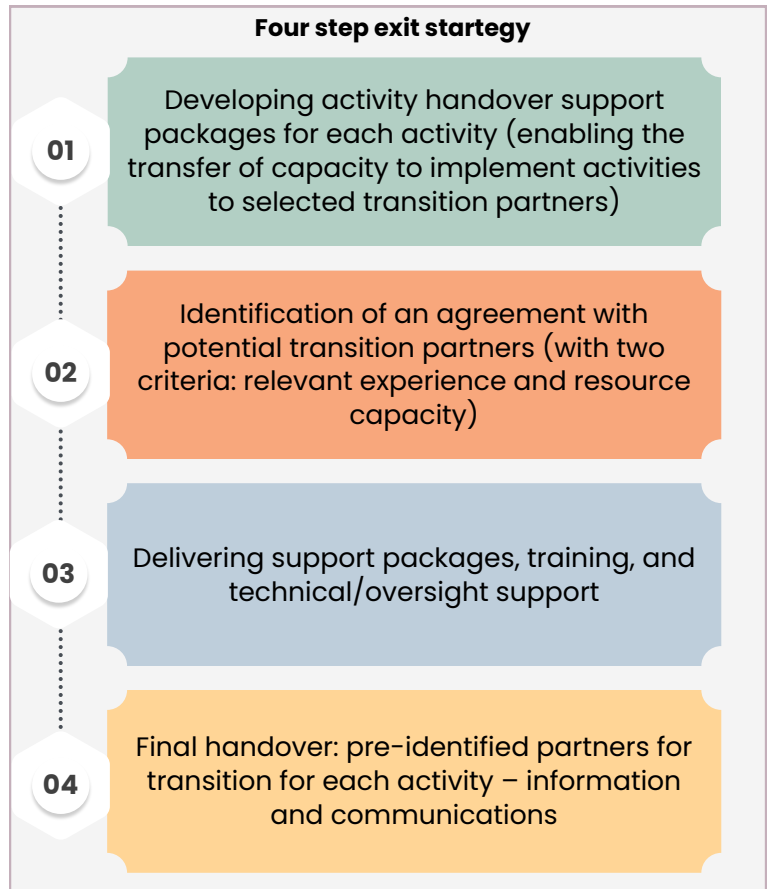
> *I have benefited and learned a lot of lessons from the pre-departure training, it has significantly changed my attitude towards migration. I have completely stopped thinking to follow the illegal migration route if I need to migrate, it was helpful to completely erase the notion of illegal migration from my mind. (Male Would-be migrant, IDI)*

Research products produced through the EMP were primarily used for learning and adaptation of activities and operational decision making. The long form research including returnee longitudinal tracer study provide valuable insights on sub-groups based on gender, origin and destination countries. A learning and dissemination event was organised with key migration stakeholders in Ethiopia on study learnings, however the recall among government stakeholders was low.

SUSTAINABILITY

EQ – What is an exit strategy of the programme?

The exit strategy was implemented as per the four step process defined by the EMP. The EMP worked closely with the Gofa Mebrathail Condominium Management Committee responsible for Info Hub 1's area, library and youth centre, and Jesuit Refugee Service, an INGO, to take over operations of the Info Hubs in May/June 2023. EMP provided training for JRS staff on Info Hub operations throughout the close out phase. As part of the MoU JRS is committed to funding and operating Info Hub 1 in Gofa Mebrathail Condominium for at least 12 months, until May 2024.

The EMP shared templates, guidelines and MoUs that were developed and utilised during the implementation phase with transition partners, including government stakeholders to enable the same quality and timely implementation

Four step exit startegy

01 Developing activity handover support packages for each activity (enabling the transfer of capacity to implement activities to selected transition partners)

02 Identification of an agreement with potential transition partners (with two criteria: relevant experience and resource capacity)

03 Delivering support packages, training, and technical/oversight support

04 Final handover: pre-identified partners for transition for each activity – information and communications

While the exit strategy was executed as per design, it was developed in December 2022 and approved in early 2023, focusing on the close out plan during the final months of the programme.

However, there was a need for the exit strategy to be incorporated into the programme design to ensure sustainability and defining the exit process in a collaborative approach with pre-existing partners and various levels of government institutions.

LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

● **Positive**

The programme was highly adaptive to the disruptions and changes in external context. In the process of adaptation, the programme shifted its focus from long-term to short-term activities. The EMP was able to adapt well by identifying complementary activities and partnerships in migration responses and addressed the information gap in urban refugee situation. The EMP responded well to the mixed migration environment by enabling the functioning of coordination structures and being an active participant in multiple government coordination mechanisms

EQ - What are the key achievements, challenges and lessons learned from the EMP?

Achievements
- The programme's adaptation to changing context by identifying the prioritised needs of the target groups and addressing the needs through cost-effective activities (info Hub) was one of the key achievements of the EMP
- As part of information and communication activities, Info Hub was highly effective in addressing the information gap of urban refugees. Further, incorporating short feedback cycles such as usage of help desk data to inform group information sessions addressed prioritised needs of the target groups.
- The EMP's emphasis on equity and inclusive programming was effective in meeting the unique needs of target groups. Adolescent mentorship, women, child friendly spaces, inclusivity to ethnic minorities and provision of psycho social services ensured impact among most vulnerable groups.

Challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, and UK-ODA spending reductions, impacted program operations. Internally, demarcation of roles and responsibilities, building a common working structure that was aligned within the core EMP team, as well as with individual organisation was seen as a challenge.

Lessons learned provide valuable insights for organisations and agencies working in urban refugee and migration contexts emphasising the importance of adaptability, and coordination.

They include:
- **Complementarities and nexus approach**: Identifying complementarities between multiple organisations and programmes working in the same space is essential. A nexus approach that coordinates and links various services is crucial, especially in addressing the complex needs of urban refugees.
- **Inclusive programming**: Inclusive programming that addresses the needs of vulnerable groups, such as adolescent mentorship and child-friendly spaces, is effective in identifying and addressing gaps in support.
- **Information delivery in urban contexts**: Information delivery in urban settings, where refugees are dispersed, requires coordinated efforts and mapping of services. The Info Hub model effectively addressed this challenge.
- **Commercial contracts**: Working within commercial contracts can pose challenges, and capacity-building efforts for NGO partners can help them understand opportunities and focus on desired outputs.
- **Livelihood opportunities**: Securing livelihood opportunities, including documentation, work permits, and life skills training, is critical for urban refugees' economic independence. These efforts often require collaboration among multiple agencies.

LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

EQ - How did the EMP respond in the complex mixed migration environment (which doesn't have the coordination, structures and clear set of stakeholders for refugee, returnees and would-be migrants-related issues)

The evaluation included discussions with government and external implementation partners which highlighted several insights that underscore the importance of tailored information delivery, coordination, livelihood support, and addressing legal barriers in urban refugee settings in Ethiopia. The importance of complementary efforts has been a key lessons from the urban refugee response. Unlike other migrant response structures, urban response has fewer organisations working in this space, and with limited scope. Incorporation of information sharing mechanisms played an important role in reaching refugee population. The need for including host communities and creating longer-term solutions for social integration for refugees from different countries was recognised to be vital for the programme.

Lessons from Urban refugee situation and response

Key characteristics of Urban migrants

- Protection risks including labour and physical exploitation, arrest or detention
- Lack of access to services, health, and education
- Lack of accurate and reliable information sources
- Lack of legal documentation and associated support services.
- Geographically dispersed population

Activities demonstrated by the EMP

- **Tailored communication** through employment of multiple complementary channels i.e., central info hub, outreach through IEC material, phone and in-person help desks, group information sessions.
- **Service mapping and referrals** of existing service providers, local NGOS and other programmes provided amplified reach. Working with existing local partners and government organisations provided access to information on available services, and ways to obtain them.
- **Resilience training** focusing on skill sets relevant for urban refugees i.e., soft skills, financial literacy, awareness on host community, negotiation and stress management skills
- **Community cohesion activities** i.e., working with woreda level adminstrative units in dense refugee population areas which help both host and refugee communities
- **Coordination mechanisms** that are functional and frequent between various government and non-governmental entities are crucial for the coordination of response mechanisms

EQ - What good practices did the programme introduce to achieve better results

Strong coordination mechanisms from different migrant responses and inclusion of all relevant partners in coordination has been a key lesson form the EMP. EMP demonstrated the effectiveness of migration programming when delivered in alignment with a national focal point (in EMP's case EDRMC). The evaluation recognies that the alignment of programme with the under-resourced needs of EDRMC during emergency response has been a huge factor in continued engagement and capacity building. Integrating rapid research and learning into programme informed the activity design and adaptation in view of situation and context.

Value for Money (VfM)

The Ethiopia Migration Programme (EMP) VfM analysis seeks to respond to the main evaluation question regarding to what extent EMP provides VfM for the resources invested. The VfM analysis for the evaluation covers four VfM dimensions: economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. The information collected and analysed in this report builds on the primary and secondary data collection and analysis covered over the period of July to August 2023. The assessment period covered is from March 2019 – March 2023

The overall value for money judgment for the programme is "**Good**".

- **Economy**, the programme performed well by keeping administrative costs below benchmarks, effectively managing resources, leveraging partnerships, and following good practices for managing fiduciary risk. While a direct comparison of staff costs with benchmarks was not feasible due to data limitations, the programme generally met the standards for economy.
- **Efficiency**, EMP demonstrated strong performance, meeting the "good" efficiency standards by consistently delivering outputs that exceed required quantities, even in the face of challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and budget cuts. The programme's adaptive management, risk mitigation strategies, and timely completion of core activities reflected its commitment to efficiency.
- **Effectiveness**, the program partially meets the standards for "good" effectiveness and is rated as 'adequate'. While it achieved substantial progress in some outcomes, it fell short in others. Nevertheless, EMP showcased unintended positive consequences, like acting as an integration platform and promoting social cohesion. Some elements of the program are likely to have lasting impact beyond its duration.
- **Equity**-wise, the program met the "good" equity standards by effectively targeting priority groups, employing explicit strategies, and demonstrating evidence of equity gains among these groups, although more could be done with people with disabilities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this summative evaluation of EMP have highlighted the agility and adaptive nature of the programme. EMP has performed well on most of the evaluation criteria, except for impact and sustainability where evidence for longer-term/long-lasting impacts is weak since the programme had to change its design and objectives. Due to external shocks including changes in the migration patterns (with the influx of returnees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), UK-ODA spending reduction and political instability within the country, the programme has pivoted to address more immediate needs. EMP was designed to be relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries and strongly embedded equity consideration, particularly women and children who are vulnerable.

EMP has proved to coordinate well with other partners and has established strong relationship with key government stakeholders.

The EMP has managed to leverage cross-programme linkages and played a leading role in coordinating different implementing partners in the same space to avoid duplications of effort. EMP has also been efficient in its operation by reducing cost and taking advantage of existing infrastructure and networks of implementing partners. EMP has adapted well to unexpected shocks, showing agility and resilience in its operation which provides a strong basis for future programme design. EMP has also demonstrated value for money, meeting 'good' performance for most of the judgment criteria except for Effectiveness, where there is weaker evidence for longer-term influence in migration policy (due to changes in research strategy) and lasting impact on migrants' livelihood (due to a shift in its focus towards short-term emergency needs of returnees). These results are well aligned with the evaluation results for impact and sustainability.

Operational

- **Information and communication -** Increase the engagement of referral mechanism, introduce tracking of referral cases' to drive resolutions in service delivery.
- **Resilience and Integration** – Increase duration of training, introduce formal tracking to lengthen mentor-mentee relationships and sustain the impact through refreshers if needed.
- Complement hard skills (from service providers) in training to enable efforts towards employment creation.

Programmatic

- **Needs assessment** before programme design with review of the national policy landscape, and involvement of migrant groups
- **Replication of Info Hub** on key routes considering the dearth of reliable information and service providers. Enabling access to existing providers can contribute towards reduced vulnerability.
- **National focal point**- Identify the right national partner and understand the importance and implications of selecting the relevant partner

Strategic

- **Regional research hub** that will incorporate the research needs specific to different migrant groups especially understudied urban migrants.
- **Regional approach and portfolio integration** - Enable regional programming approach from FCDO, by identifying grant/fund management approach to leverage partnerships. Incorporate cross linkage between FCDO portfolio partners to identify integration points where feasible.
- **Multi- stakeholder approach** through the National Policy Coalition (NPC) on Migration under the Ministry of Justice

Annex 1 - Evaluation Matrix

| Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	• Was EMP's design relevant to the challenges and opportunities of the target beneficiaries (would-be migrants, returnees and refugees)? • Were equity considerations built into programme design i.e. EMP's programme strategies and policies?
Coherence	• Were EMP activities compatible with international migration agenda, national, regional and local government policy priorities? • Were EMP's activities compatible with other existing interventions/programmes? • Has EMP leveraged cross-programme linkages?
Effectiveness	• What strategies and interventions has EMP explicitly implemented to reach target groups? • To what extent has EMP contributed to the evidence base for policy and programme environment relating to unsafe migration in Ethiopia? To what extent does the research helps facilitate programme adaptation? • To what extent are migrants more informed about the risks of unsafe irregular migration and how to mitigate them? • To what extent has the protective environment and resilience for migrants and refugees were improved as a result of the EMP activities? • What are the major factors (internal and external to the programme) that influence the achievement or non-achievement of the programme's objectives? • Have there been any unintended consequences positive or negative due to the programme interventions/activities?
Efficiency	• Have the planned activities and outputs been implemented in line to achieve the defined outcomes? • Has the delivery of programme outputs allowed for reasonable exceptions like changes in deliverables agreed in advance with FCDO, or changes due to adaptive programming? • Could a different approach to the programme delivery have produced better results?
Impact	• Have any changes been achieved in relation to improved protection, access to support services, and informed decision-making for migrants? • Have the governance and capacities of government (federal and local), local organisations improved as a result of the programme?

| Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Sustainability	• What is the likelihood that the benefits of the programme continue after donor funding ceased? • What is an exit strategy of the programme?
Learning	• What are the key achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the programme? • How did EMP respond in the complex mixed migration environment (which doesn't have the coordination, structures and clear set of stakeholders for refugee, returnees and would-be migrants-related issues)? • What were the lessons from EMP that are applicable to international and national migration programmes? (i.e., priorities, key support areas, influence of external environment) • How was the programme adaptive to changes and uncertainty internal and external to the programme? • What good practices did the programme introduce to achieve better results?

Demographic profile of the sample

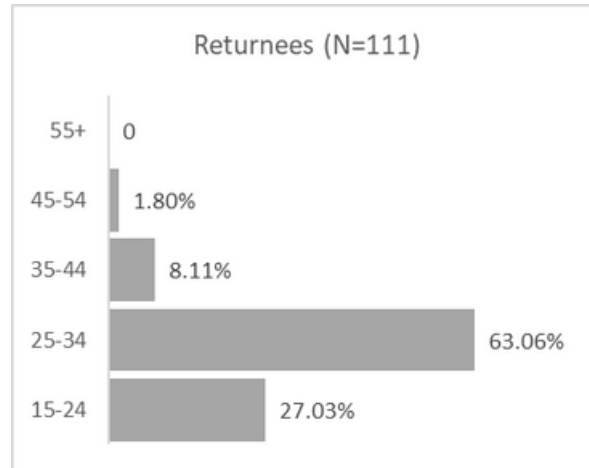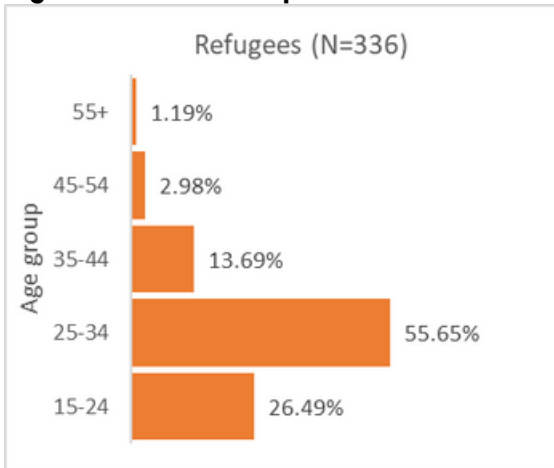**Distribution of sample**
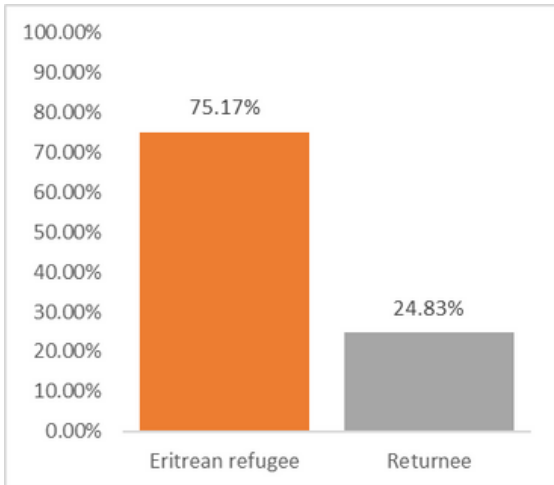
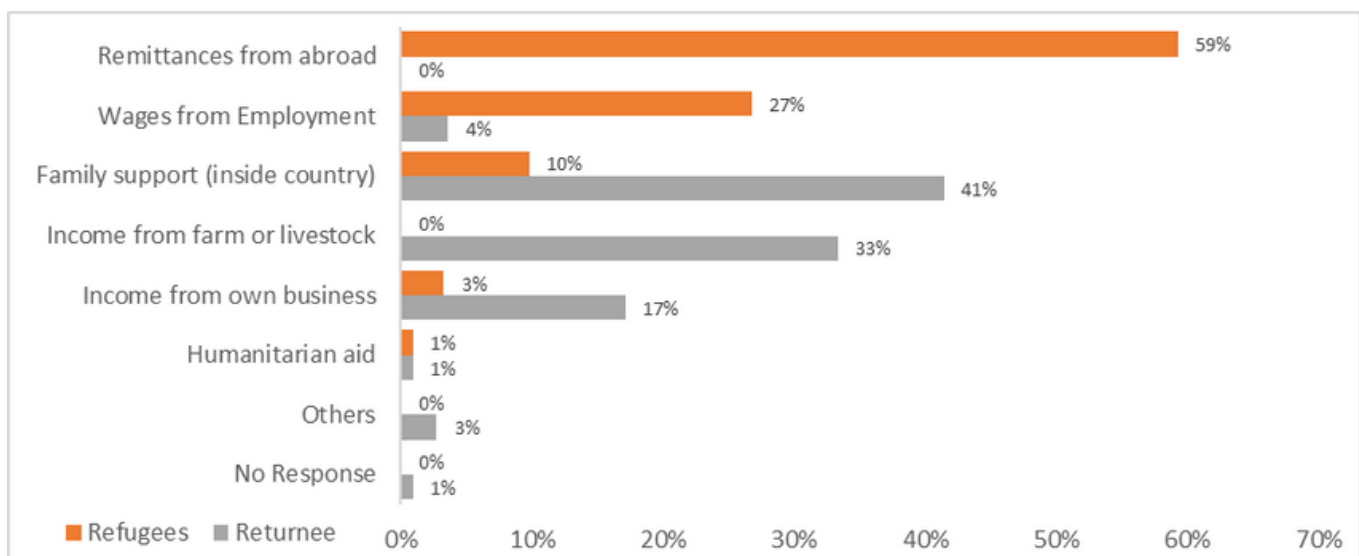**Gender distribution of respondents**
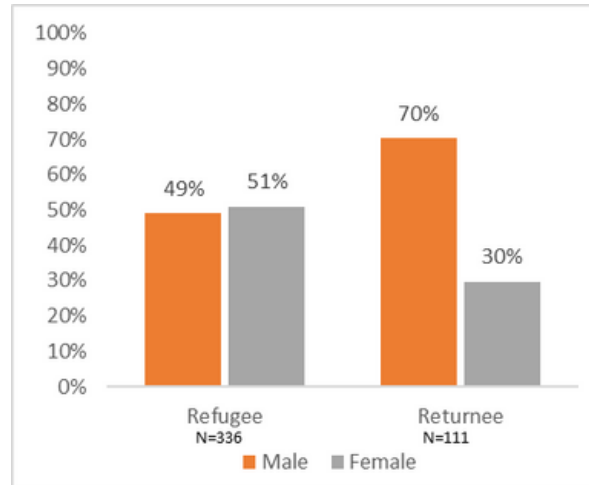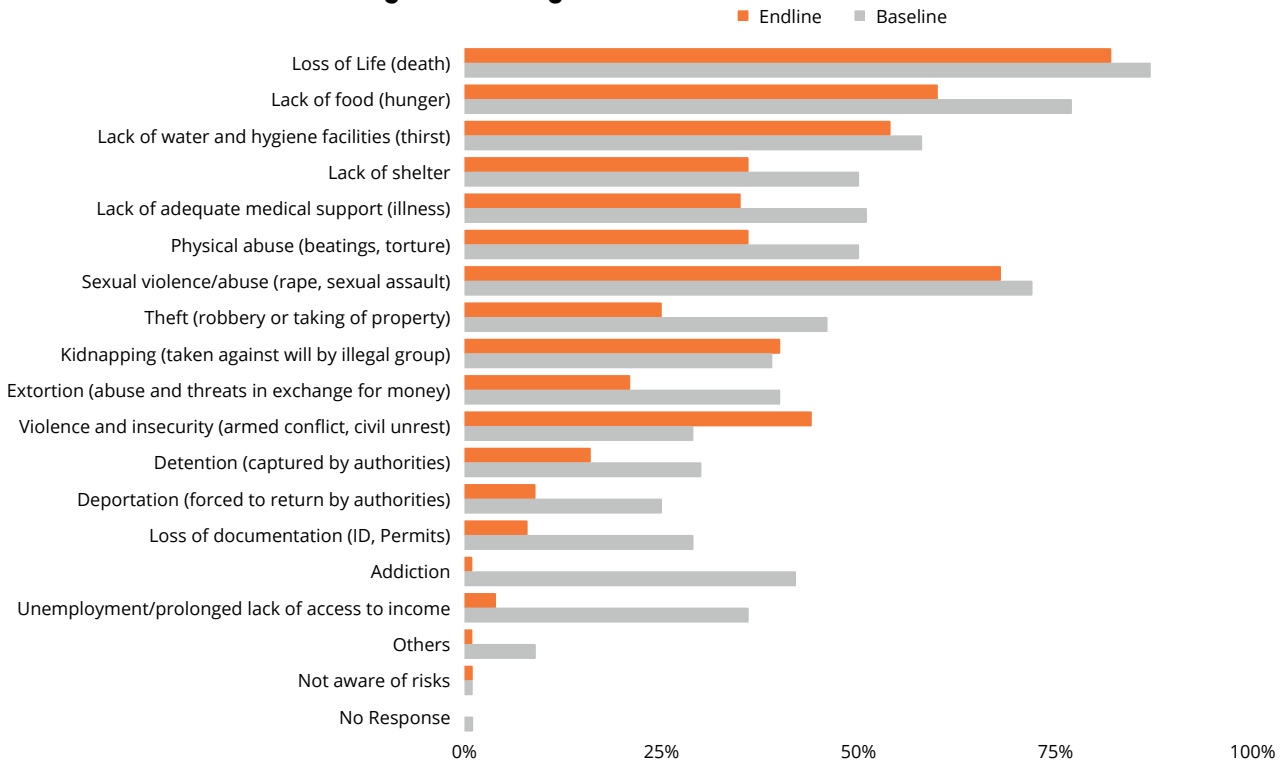

Age distribution of respondents

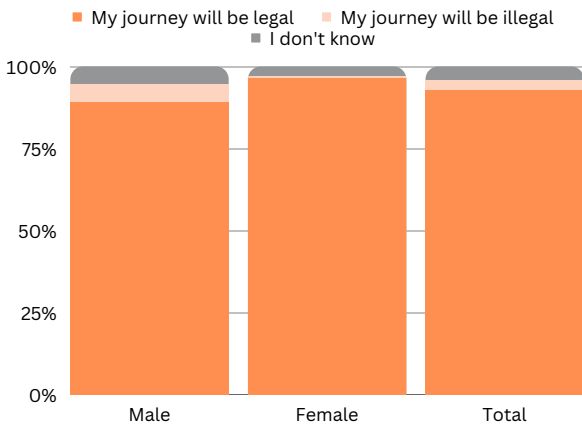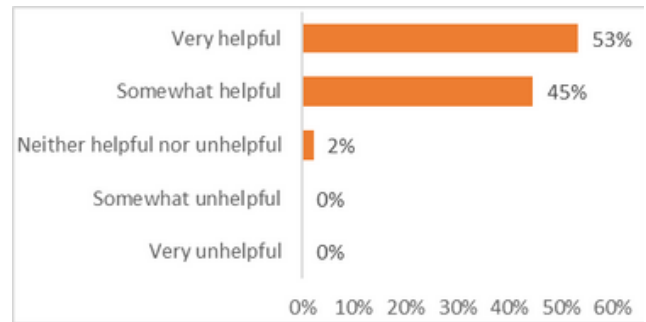**Income sources of refugee and returnee respondents**

Annex 2 - Graphs

Awareness of risks faced during outward migration

Legend: Endline, Baseline

- Loss of Life (death)
- Lack of food (hunger)
- Lack of water and hygiene facilities (thirst)
- Lack of shelter
- Lack of adequate medical support (illness)
- Physical abuse (beatings, torture)
- Sexual violence/abuse (rape, sexual assault)
- Theft (robbery or taking of property)
- Kidnapping (taken against will by illegal group)
- Extortion (abuse and threats in exchange for money)
- Violence and insecurity (armed conflict, civil unrest)
- Detention (captured by authorities)
- Deportation (forced to return by authorities)
- Loss of documentation (ID, Permits)
- Addiction
- Unemployment/prolonged lack of access to income
- Others
- Not aware of risks
- No Response

(Axis: 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)

Respondent expectations about migration journey

Legend: My journey will be legal, My journey will be illegal, I don't know

Categories: Male, Female, Total
(Axis: 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%)

Perceived usefulness of cash and non-cash assistance among returnees

- Very helpful — 53%
- Somewhat helpful — 45%
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful — 2%
- Somewhat unhelpful — 0%
- Very unhelpful — 0%

(Axis: 0%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%)

Perceived change in knowledge regarding migration

Legend: Refugee, Returnee

- Very improved — 41.43% / 30.61%
- Somewhat improved — 57.37% / 55.10%
- Not improved — 1.20% / 10.20%
- Somewhat reduced — 0.00% / 2.04%
- Very reduced — 0.00% / 2.04%

(Axis: 0.00%, 20.00%, 40.00%, 60.00%)
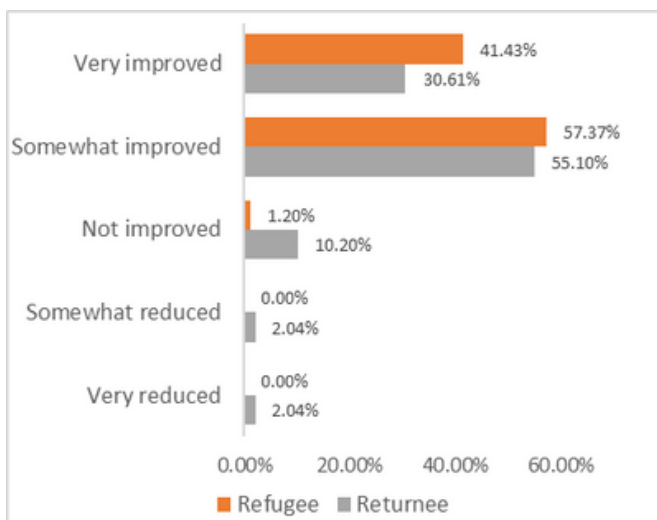
Perceived usefulness of accessed information to plan migration

Legend: Refugee, Returnee

- Very helpful — 44.4% / 32.7%
- Somewhat helpful — 54.8% / 53.1%
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful — 0.4% / 14.3%
- Somewhat unhelpful — 0.0% / 0.0%
- Very unhelpful — 0.4% / 0.0%

(Axis: 0.0%, 20.0%, 40.0%, 60.0%)
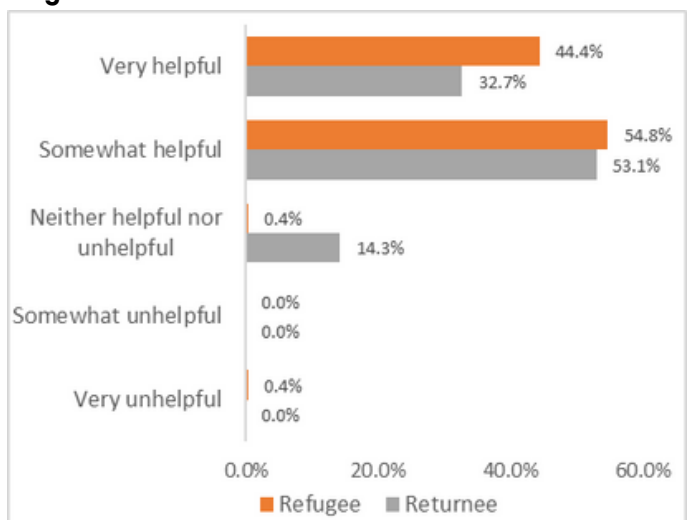
Annex 3 – List of stakeholders consulted

Donor and Programme team	Implementation Partners	Implementation partners outside EMP	Government Stakeholders
• **FCDO** • **EMP** • **DRC**	• Altai • MMC • STC • BBC Media Action • Girl effect	• UNHCR • JRS • Development of Inter-church Aid Commission (DICAC) • Gofa Mebrat Hail Condominium Management Committee (GMCMC) • Refugees and returnees Service (RRS)	• EPHI • EDRMC • Nifas silk sub-city Woreda 6 Administration • Ethiopian Red Cross Society • OICE