

Refugee and migrant youth in Ethiopia - access to income, protection risks and assistance needs

35% of the recorded refugee and asylum seeker population in Ethiopia are adolescents and youth (aged 12-24 years),¹ around 280,000 people, and this does not include those with irregular status. Information on the specific profiles, conditions and needs of youth is however scarce. This snapshot, produced in partnership with Save the Children's East African Migration Routes program, sheds light on the profiles of young refugees and migrants aged 18-24 in Ethiopia, their access to income-generating activities in the country, the main protection risks they perceive and their assistance needs.

Key findings

- Respondents perceived different protection risks for young women and men in Ethiopia, with young women considered to be mostly facing the risks of verbal abuse, sexual violence and physical violence, while young men more often face risks of physical violence, detention and extortion.
- The majority of respondents who perceived detention as a risk for young men (27 out of 39) and women (25 out of 32) had an irregular migration status at the time of the interview.
- Close to half (47%) of interviewed youth do not have a source of income in Ethiopia, the majority because they are not able to find a job.
- The majority of respondents (79%) said they need assistance and many reported multiple needs. The most common forms of assistance identified were access to work, cash and shelter.
- Social networks within Ethiopia seem quite strong: in an emergency, the majority of respondents would reach out to family and relatives living in the current location (53%) or neighbors (44%).

Data and profiles

This snapshot draws on 169 4Mi surveys conducted with refugees and migrants aged 18–24 years in Ethiopia in December 2022. Respondents were interviewed in Addis Ababa (78%) and Mega-megado in Southern Ethiopia (22%). All respondents had arrived in Ethiopia less than two years prior to the interview, and 13% had started their journey as minors.

The sample is composed of 61% men and 39% women. The largest nationality group is Eritreans (58%), followed by Kenyans (22%), South Sudanese (14%), Sudanese (4%), Yemenis (1%) and Somalis (1%). The majority (61%) of respondents stated they had not reached the end of their journey – all Kenyan respondents had completed their journey. Preferred destinations were Canada (46%), Europe (29%) and the United States of America (16%). Almost half (49%) had completed primary school education while 28% had finished secondary education. A smaller proportion (6%) had received vocational or university education while 17% had not obtained any form of education.

Sexual exploitation and abuse are key risks for young women, in addition to physical violence and verbal abuse for all youth

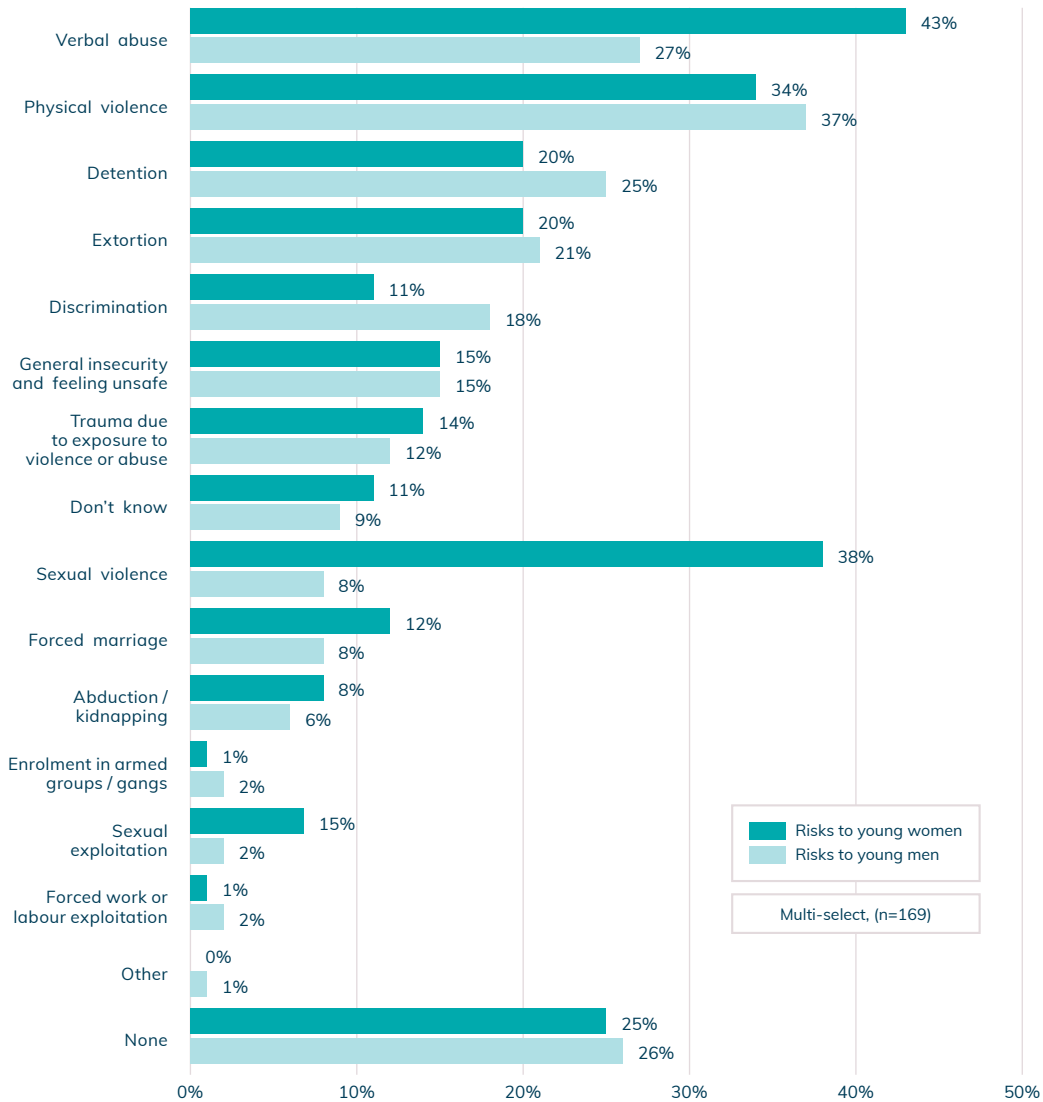
Protection risks in Ethiopia were perceived as higher for young women than for young men. Young women are perceived to be most exposed to verbal abuse (43%) and sexual violence (38%), as compared to young men or other incidents.² Respondents considered that young men most often faced physical violence in Ethiopia (37%), followed by verbal abuse (27%), detention (25%) and extortion (21%). A quarter of respondents did not report any perceived risks for young refugees or migrants (Figure 1).

1 UNHCR (2023) UNHCR Ethiopia. [UNHCR Ethiopia – Operational update – January 2023](#).

2 Stigma around sexual violence, especially towards men, may mean that this is underreported.

Zooming in on detention risks, detention is perceived to be higher in Addis Ababa than in Mega Town and is perceived particularly among Eritrean nationals. Among the 39 respondents in Addis Ababa who cited detention as a risk for young men, 35 were Eritrean nationals, while among the 32 respondents who perceived detention as a risk for young women, 31 were also Eritrean nationals. Additionally, the majority of respondents who mentioned detention as a risk for both young men (27 out of 39) and women (25 out of 32) had an irregular migration status at the time of the interview.

Figure 1. What risks do young men/women migrants face in your current location?

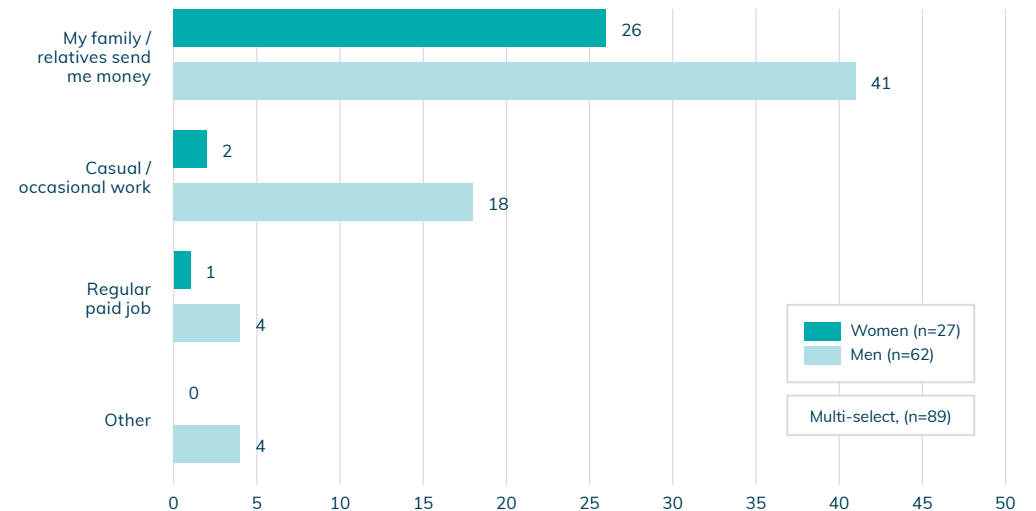


Half of surveyed youth had a source of income in Ethiopia, mainly from family and relatives

53% of young people surveyed reported they had a source of income, among whom 67 (out of 89) received money from family/relatives, while 20/89 engaged in casual or occasional work. More men (60%) than women (41%) had a source of income, and nearly all women (24/27) depended exclusively on money from family/relatives.

Disaggregation by nationality revealed that the majority of Eritrean (51/57) and South Sudanese respondents (13/16) relied on money from family and relatives, while all Kenyan respondents with a source of income (12) relied on casual or occasional work.

Figure 2. How do you get money? (Among respondents with a source of money)



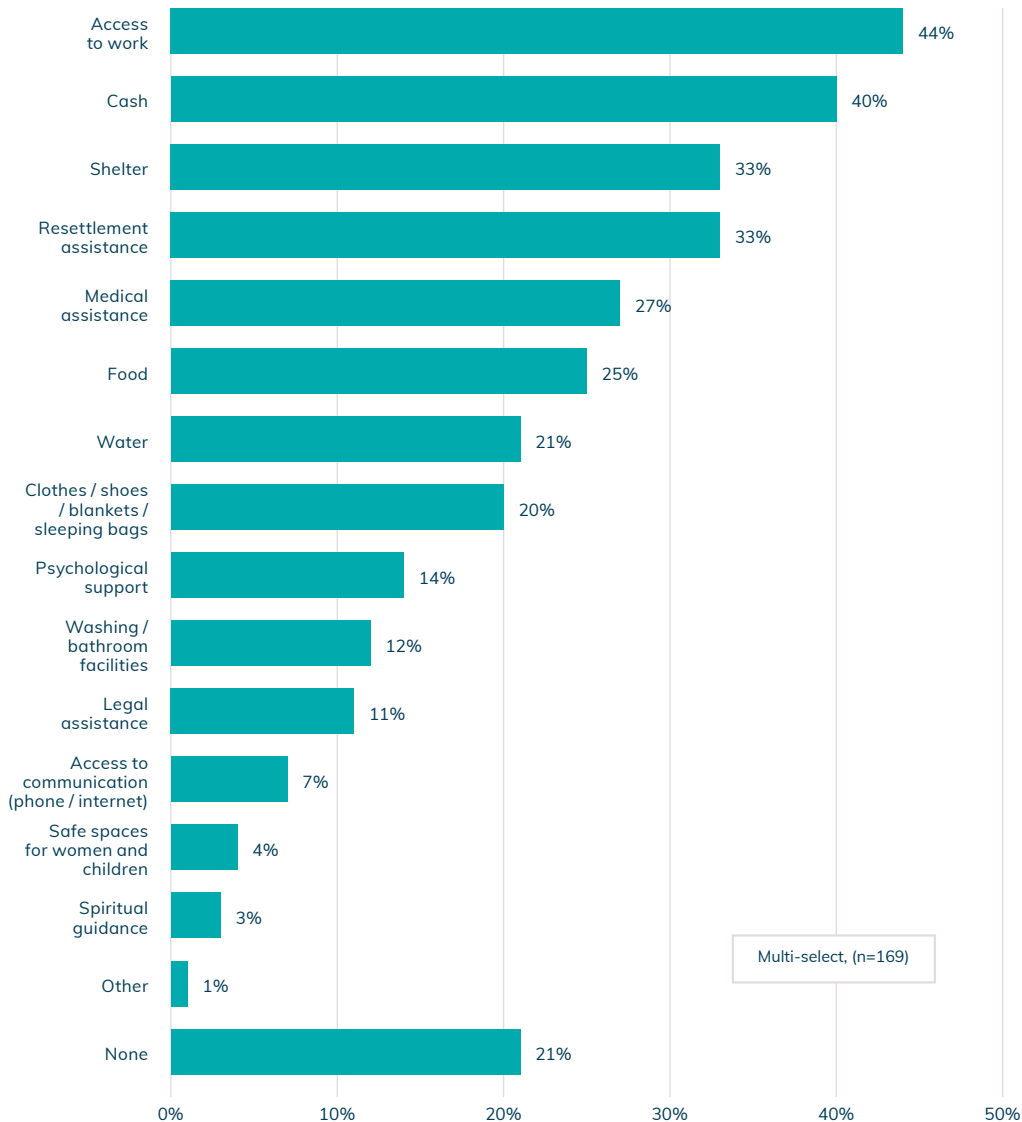
For the 47% of respondents without a source of income, the majority reported not being able to find a job (62/80), while 8/80 said they were students.

Most respondents need assistance, mainly to access work, cash, shelter and resettlement

The majority of respondents (79%) mentioned needing assistance at the time of interview and many reported multiple needs. A majority sought access to work (44%) and cash (40%), aligning with almost half reporting no source of income. Other notable assistance

needs include shelter (33%), resettlement³ (33%), medical assistance (27%) and food (25%). These other forms of assistance, with the exception of resettlement, suggest an unmet demand for basic relief or emergency programming for this segment of the sample.

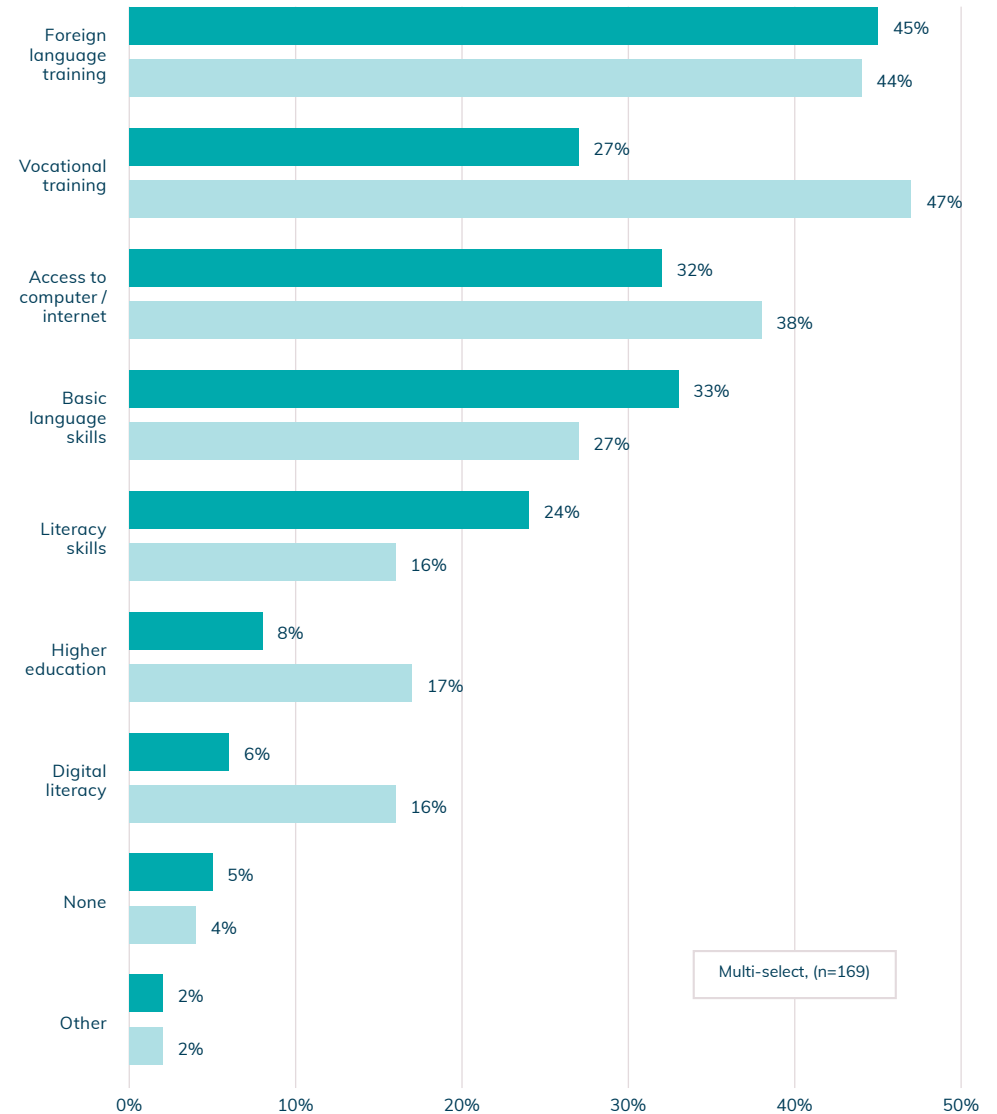
Figure 3. Do you need additional assistance now? If yes, what kind of assistance do you need?



3 While resettlement is a durable solution for refugees, surveyed refugees and migrants perceived resettlement as a form of assistance. It was cited more as a desire to be assisted to move to a third country, rather than an indicator of those engaged in any formal resettlement processes.

While medical assistance does not rank highest among respondents' needs, specific enquiry about medical needs reveals general health services (78%) and mental health/ psychosocial support (24%) as most common. For education, respondents expressed a desire for foreign language training (44%), vocational training (29%), access to a computer/internet (36%) and basic language skills (30%).

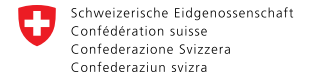
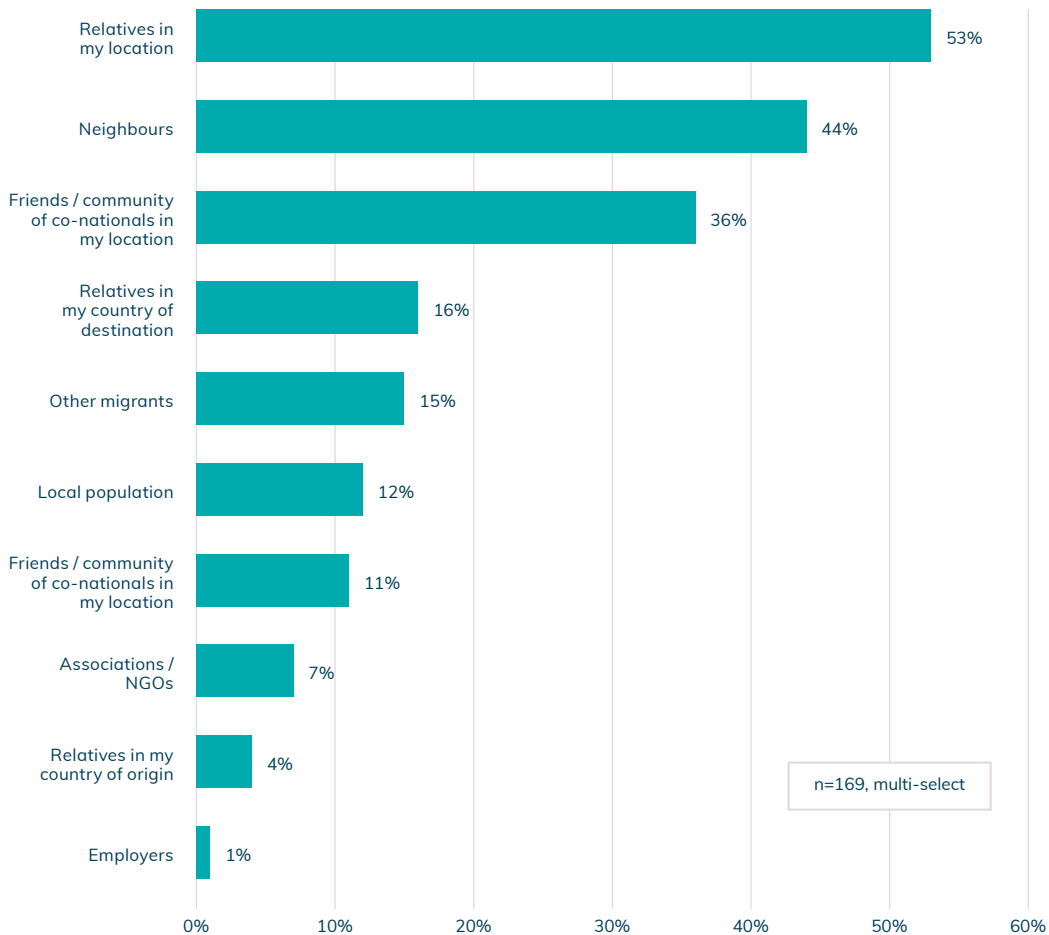
Figure 4. What kind of services related to education do you need the most?



In case of an emergency, respondents would reach out to their networks within Ethiopia

In the event of an emergency, 53% of respondents said they would contact relatives living in their current location, while 44% would reach out to their neighbors; 36% reported they would contact friends or co-national communities in Ethiopia, indicating the presence of a reliable support network among refugees and migrants in the country.

Figure 5. In an emergency, who could you reach out to?



4Mi data collection

[4Mi](#) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field enumerators are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in Eastern and Southern Africa, North Africa, West Africa, Europe, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Note that the sampling approach means that the findings derived from the surveyed sample provide rich insights, but the figures cannot be used to make inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at www.mixedmigration.org/4mi