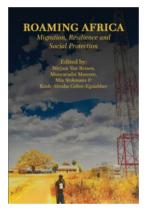
Inhospitable Realities: Refugees' Livelihoods in Hitsats, Ethiopia

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Kristína Melicherová

Introduction

In the past few years, Ethiopia has introduced an open-door policy

towards refugees from Eritrea, who are welcome on Ethiopian soil. However, the need for a durable solution remains stalled in practice. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 18,000 Eritreans fled their country to Ethiopia in the first 9 months of 2017 (UNHCR, 2017). Most of the Eritrean refugees are situated in refugee camps in Tigray region in northern Ethiopia. The chance of them returning safely to their country of origin remains very low, unless there is a positive shift towards human rights in Eritrea. Therefore, a solution is needed that can provide these refugees with dignified prospects for their

Until recently, Eritrean refugees in Hitsats refugee camp in Ethiopia did not access have to income-generating activities. This contributed to a sense of hopelessness and motivated secondary migration. Basic conditions for livelihoods have been inadequate - refugees have not had the right to work, to obtain a drivers' licence or live outside the camps. However, there has been a political shift in Ethiopia, which has brought new and positive attention to refugee issues and a focus on harnessing their potential. Combined with recent developments in the political and policy streams in Ethiopia, such as the adoption of the Nine Pledges and revision of the Refugee Proclamation, it seems that a policy window may be opening for refugees' livelihood issues to finally reach the agenda.

future through livelihoods and integration into the local community in the host country (Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016).

Access to a sustainable livelihood is essential for refugees living in the camps, as well as urban refugees, in order to prevent secondary migration and the dangers associated with it, which include human trafficking. In addition, livelihood programmes can enhance self-reliance and lower the dependence of refugees on humanitarian aid (Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016). The low access of refugees to livelihood activities has been a concern in policy-making and academic circles, as well as among practitioners, in the past years.

The present chapter aims to analyse the dynamics of livelihoods in the refugee camps in northern Ethiopia. With the presumption that access to livelihoods is a crucial entry point for strengthening refugees' self-reliance and prospects, the present study looked into the main sources of income-generating activities, limitations and obstacles faced by refugees and the practices of organisations working with the refugees in the camps relating to livelihoods.¹

According to UNHCR, 'self-reliance' is the social and economic ability of people to fulfil their needs and exercise their rights in a sustainable manner (UNHCR, 2005, 2012). In order to achieve a durable solution for refugees, UNHCR has developed the Development Assistance for Refugees framework, which, among other things, aims to facilitate the "empowerment and enhancement of productive capacities and self-reliance of refugees" (UNHCR, 2003). The Development Assistance for Refugees framework highlights two prerequisites needed for livelihood programmes to lead to self-reliance: the political will of the host government and access to socio-economic activities (UNHCR, 2003). While this study looked at the access of refugees to income-generating activities, the political will of the host government was not included in the empirical research, but is reflected in the literature review.

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ See also Melicherová (2018), which presents the full case study on which this chapter is based.

The next sections in this chapter outline the theoretical framework for this study, including Kingdon's (2014) policy streams, human rights in international law and the need for a human rights culture. As several research works show, there is a close link between human rights protection and livelihoods (Jacobsen, 2002; Horst & UNHCR, 2006). These sections are followed by the research question and the methodology used during data collection in Hitsats refugee camp. The literature review is then presented, followed by the findings of the empirical study, including the livelihood opportunities for refugees in Hitsats, as well as refugees' main sources of income. The access of refugees to income-generating activities in the camp is also examined, as well as the main obstacles that prevent refugees from pursuing livelihoods. The chapter then looks at the basic needs of refugees and how they are provided in the camp, as well as some of the practices of the organisations based in the camp. The final section presents some concluding remarks.

Multiple streams of the policy agenda

In recent times, the refugee question has become high on the political agenda of various countries. Kingdon, in his multiple streams theory, looks at how particular issues reach the decision agenda. He describes three separate, but loosely-coupled streams – the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political stream (Kingdon, 2014). The problem stream is where legitimate issues that need to be addressed are identified. Problems can be identified through feedback procedures, such as reports or reviews, or through other systems introduced by the government to monitor a specific situation (Kingdon, 2014). Refugee integration and the enhancement of refugees' livelihood has been recognised as a problematic issue by several actors (International Rescue Committee, 2018; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016; Samuel Hall, 2014; Carciotto & d'Orsi, 2017).

To frame a problem in a particular way requires conceptual and political effort. However, problems do not get resolved on their own, without political will and an explicit policy framework. It is, therefore, important to develop ideas for solutions, discuss the ideas within specific platforms, and combine and change existing ideas. Kingdon (2014) affiliates this process with the policy stream, during which there is discussion and debate among various stakeholders, such as researchers, academics and policymakers. Although a wide variety of ideas are considered, there are some general criteria that have to be taken into account, including technical feasibility (the solution has to be possible to implement), value acceptability (it should fit with the country's values), and anticipation of future or unexpected constraints (such as budget constraints) (Kingdon, 2014).

The enhancement of self-reliance through economic empowerment and access to livelihoods has a strong place in UNHCR's protection mandate (UNHCR, 2012). The study of livelihoods has also been pursued by various development actors, which have developed different frameworks² in order to address the importance of this issue. However, it is important to note that the literature does not indicate which framework is the most appropriate for refugees (UNHCR, 2006). In addition, new policies, frameworks or ideas have to be backed up by the political will of the state, which is referred to by Kingdon as the political stream.

The primary actors in the political stream are the various government actors, such as the prime minister, president, parliament, and other political appointees. Within this group, general agreement is formed primarily by bargaining and making compromises to build a coalition. The political considerations can be influenced by the national mood, as well as organised political forces such as political parties, interest groups, pressure groups or influential political individuals. A major source of political opportunity can arise from political change in the country and change in key personnel. If a new government comes to power, particularly if it is formed by a different party, political opportunities may change significantly.

² Examples are the Department for International Development (DFID), CARE, Oxfam, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), all of which have developed livelihood frameworks.

When an existing problem, the political will to address the problem and a new political environment (the three streams) are coupled together at a particular time a policy window opens (Kingdon, 2014). A policy window can open because a particular problem is brought to attention by an unexpected situation or government observations, or it can open because of an administrative change in the government. When a policy window is open, policy entrepreneurs have to be ready to push the issue onto the decision agenda. If a problem is identified, but no suitable options exist to solve it, it will be unlikely to make it on to the agenda. Similarly, if there is political will, but the issue is not considered a pressing problem, it is also likely to fall short of the agenda. But when all three streams exist and a window opens, policy entrepreneurs have to be ready to take action immediately (Kingdon, 2014).

Human rights in international law

One of the factors preventing refugees from pursuing livelihoods is the restriction of the rights of refugees. However, some of these rights are guaranteed under international human rights and refugee law (Jacobsen, 2002; Horst & UNHCR, 2006). Refugees, like other individuals, should be enabled to fulfil their potential and support themselves by engaging in employment. Access to lawful employment is a fundamental human right, and there is a wide range of international and national legal frameworks protecting the right to work. However, when it comes to refugees, legal provisions regulating the right to work vary. One of the most relevant international legal instruments concerning the rights of refugees is the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. Refugees' right to work is covered by three articles in this Convention: Article 17 (Wage-earning employment), Article 18 (Selfemployment) and Article 19 (Liberal professions) (UN General Assembly, 1951). Article 17 (1) provides for a minimum standard of treatment for those refugees engaged in wage-earning employment. States that are signatories to the Convention are obliged to secure the enjoyment of the right protected under Article 17 through their national legislation. Additionally, a host country has to grant the same

access to the labour market to refugees as any other non-national is granted (University of Michigan Law School, 2010).

Even though the 1951 Convention is a pivotal source of law protecting refugees' right to work, it does not guarantee a job for refugees. Furthermore, as identified in Craven's commentary, states are not obliged to create work opportunities based on the preferences of individuals seeking work (Craven, 1995). Instead, work can be seen as "a gateway through which refugees may provide their value to a receiving country, [and] rebuild their lives with dignity" (Wirth, Defilippis & Therkelsen, 2014, p. 11).

The 1951 Convention has to be read and examined together with other human rights treaties. The right to work is established in Article 23.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Preamble of the Convention particularly points to the principles upheld by the Declaration. The right to work is also enshrined in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN General Assembly, 1966; UN General Assembly, 1948).

For international legal provisions to be effective, it is necessary that they be recognised on the local level, which means that they need to be brought into national legislation (Rorty, 1993). Signatory states are bound to enforce their obligations under international law by, among other things, bringing them into national law. Only national legislation and implementation on the ground can bring these provisions into existence and, thus, connect theory with practice. Therefore, it is vital for the present research project to see to what extent the described human rights are recognised in local law and practice, which depends to some extent on the human rights culture in the host country.

Human rights culture

The term 'rights' has been described by contemporary philosopher Shelly Kagan as 'horrendously ambiguous'' (Kagan, 1997). However, as Rhoda Howard-Hassmann (2012) writes, all human beings are entitled to human rights merely by virtue of being biologically human. Hence, individuals do not have to earn rights, as they inhere in them unmediated by social relations. Richard Rorty's contribution to the discussion explains that "nothing relevant to moral choice separates human beings from animals except historically contingent facts of the world, cultural facts" (Rorty, 1993, p. 116). He continues that 'rationality' is a human attribute that grounds morality and denies that there are any morally relevant "transcultural facts" (Rorty, 1993). Rorty claims that a culture in which human rights are respected is the bare minimum level of morality. The idea of a 'human rights culture' emerged strongly after Wold War II. A human rights culture is what is left of human rights when one gives up the idea that there are natural rights present in some aspect of our humanity itself (Rorty, 1993). Human rights are represented by human rights treaties, conventions and agreements. However, the treaties do not bring human rights into existence. Rights can be only attained once they are positively recognised as rights. The concept of a human rights culture represents a basis for their realisation.

Research questions

The current study was conducted in Hitsats camp (which was established to accommodate *Eritrean refugees*) in order to improve our understanding of the access of Eritrean refugees to livelihoods. To meet this objective the following research question was posed: *To what extent do Eritrean refugees have access to livelihood opportunities and to work in refugee camps in Ethiopia and how do Kingdon's multiple streams align for agenda setting on this issue?*

These questions are approached through the following sub-questions:

- What is the policy of the Government of Ethiopia in relation to livelihoods and the right of refugees to work?
- What access to income-generating activities do refugees in Ethiopia have?
- What are Eritrean refugees' main sources of livelihood?
- Which obstacles and opportunities do refugees face within the camp setting in accessing livelihoods?

- What are the basic needs of refugees and how are they provided for in the camp setting?
- What practices have been established by organisations within the camp with regard to refugees' livelihood activities?

Methodology

This study consisted of a literature review and an empirical study, both quantitative and qualitative. The literature review was conducted on the existing policies and livelihoods in refugee camps in Ethiopia. The empirical study can be characterised as ethnographic research and was based on two visits to Hitsats refugee camp, which is situated on the Ethiopia-Eritrea border. Hitsats camp is the youngest of four refugee camps for Eritrean refugees in Tigray region, Ethiopia. The camp is set in challenging climate conditions, including hot temperatures and strong aridity. At the time of the field research, the camp hosted around 13,000 Eritrean refugees, however, the precise number is difficult to estimate due to the high influx and out-flux of refugees.

The first visit, in December 2017, was aimed at identifying the livelihood options available to refugees in the camp, as well as the obstacles and practices related to earning a livelihood within the camp. This was done by collecting quantitative data through a survey. The qualitative interviews were conducted during the second visit, in January/February 2018. The population studied during the research visits encompasses refugees (both men and women) who had been living in Hitsats refugee camp at least 30 days prior to the day of data collection, as well as the staff of organisations that are active in the camp (non-governmental organisation [NGO] workers). A total of 94 questionnaires were collected from refugees in the group sessions and 7 questionnaires were collected separately from NGO workers (see Table 11.1).³ In addition to the questionnaires, qualitative interviews were conducted to deepen the understanding of refugees' livelihoods in Hitsats camp.

 $^{^{3}}$ All tables and figures in this chapter contain original data collected during empirical study by the author.

The study population of refugees was divided into two groups during the selection process: those who had received vocational training by Zuid Oost Azië (ZOA), an international relief and recovery organisation, and those who had not. Participants from both groups were aged 18 years and older and had resided in the camp for more than 30 days prior to the date of data collection. The first group of refugees was selected with the support of ZOA from the list of refugees who had participated in its vocational skill trainings initiatives. For this group, stratified sampling (based on gender) was used (random sampling from the list of male and female beneficiaries of the ZOA training), which resulted in 47 returned questionnaires. The data were gathered in 4 sessions, of maximum 12 participants each, held in Hitsats camp. The sessions were divided according to gender due to convenience during the selection process.

The second group of refugees was selected with support from local fieldwork assistants who helped with the distribution of questionnaires among refugees who had not participated in the ZOA training programmes. Two non-probability sample techniques were used. At first, a convenience sampling technique was used to select participants on the basis of convenience in terms of availability, reach and accessibility. Then a snowball sampling method was implemented for further selection of participants. The gender balance was respected during the whole selection process. For these groups, data were gathered in 5 sessions of maximum 12 participants each, held in Hitsats camp. For this group, 47 questionnaires were also collected.

During each session, a local translator and fieldwork assistant were present. Each question was read to the participants by a translator in the local language and the participants were given time to fill in the answers. In some cases, additional questions were asked by the participants to clarify the questions. Participants who faced problems with literacy or other difficulties were helped by fieldwork assistants to fill in the answers.

The quantitative data collected was transferred into Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to prepare

a platform for analysis. Each participant and completed questionnaire was allocated a specific code. In order to establish whether there is statistical evidence that the associated population means are significantly different, an independent samples t-test was carried out in SPSS.

When it comes to the representativeness of the study sample of both refugee groups, several considerations need to be taken into account. As the research question focuses on the livelihoods of the refugees within the camp setting, the interviews of refugees took place in reallife situations to maximise the accuracy of representative samples. In order to ensure that the input from both genders would be represented equally, the study sample was split into men and women. The criterion that the participants needed to have resided in the camp at least 30 days prior to data collection was aimed at increasing the likelihood that the selected samples would reflect upon the livelihood situation within the camp. However, it is important to note that the occurrence of sample bias cannot be excluded entirely from the research. It is possible that mistrust of refugees towards the researcher or towards the fieldwork assistants misled the study sample. In addition, the research on trauma relief conducted within Hitsats camp (Kidane & Stokmans, 2018), observed the presence of individual as well as collective trauma, which may have affected the overall performance and participation of refugees in the study sample. Because of these limitations, the overall representativeness of the sample group selected from the refugee population can be questioned.

The NGO workers were selected using the snowball sampling method, which was carried out with the help of ZOA. In total seven questionnaires were collected. Six questionnaires were contribution by ZOA employees, out of which two were distributed in Hitsats and four in Shire (the city near Hitsats camp). One questionnaire was filled in by an employee of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Having experience with livelihood programmes within the refugee camp was a prerequisite for selection.

Table 11.1. Overview of quantitative analysis

Respondents	Sampling	Data collection
	method	method
47 refugees,	Stratified and	Questionnaire for
beneficiaries of ZOA	random sampling	refugees
skill trainings		
47 refugees, non-	Convenience and	Questionnaire for
beneficiaries of ZOA	snowball sampling	refugees
skill trainings		
7 NGO workers	Snowball	Questionnaire for
	sampling	NGO workers

The second data collection followed the analysis of all collected material from the quantitative study. The purpose of the second phase was to conduct qualitative interviews with refugees and NGO workers to deepen the understanding of livelihoods within the camp. The questions used for the qualitative interviews were based on the questionnaires used during the quantitative data collection. Respondents were asked to elaborate upon the questions. Interviews with refugees were conducted in a group setting, during which a local translator assisted with interaction and communication between the interviewer and interviewees. Respondents were selected based on the convenience sampling method, with the help of a fieldwork assistant. In total, four refugees participated in the interviews (three men, one woman). Interviews with NGO workers were held separately in the English, and the selection process was based on convenience sampling. Four conversations with NGO workers were recorded and transcribed into a word document. One conversation was conducted off the record and only the notes were captured from this interview.

Migration policy in Ethiopia

According to UNHCR, approximately 916,678 refugees were registered in Ethiopia as of 31 March 2018 (UNHCR, 2018). The largest group of refugees fled from South Sudan, followed by refugees from Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. Several reports show that despite

Ethiopia's open-door policy towards refugees, refugees face several restrictions and obstacles in relation to entering the labour market (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016; Carciotto & d'Orsi, 2017; Samuel Hall, 2014). This section (and the next) presents the results of the literature review and helps answer the first sub-research question.

From a legal perspective, Ethiopia is a party to the 1951 Convention, the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, as well as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Organization of African Unity, 1969; Organization of African Unity, 1981). As discussed earlier, the 1951 Convention upholds the right of refugees to work in Articles 17, 18 and 19. The 1969 Convention is complementary to the 1951 Convention, but has no specific provision protecting refugees' right to work, however, the African Charter upholds the right to work under Article 15. Ethiopia's national legal framework also deals with the rights of refugees in the Refugee Proclamation No. 409 of 2004. Although this Proclamation grants some rights to refugees, the legal right to work remains restricted (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2004). Refugees in Ethiopia are eligible to work only to the extent that the law allows other foreign nationals to do so (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2004, Article 21[3]). Furthermore, as recognised by Zetter and Ruaudel, "Ethiopia's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs only grants work permits to foreigners when there are no qualified nationals available and in practice does not grant work permits to refugees" (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016, p. 25). It is, therefore, welcomed that the Government announced the revision of the Refugee Proclamation to expand the rights granted to refugees under this instrument (International Rescue Committee, 2018).

In September 2016, Ethiopia adopted an ambitious plan with 'Nine Pledges' aimed at improving the lives and livelihood conditions of refugees residing on Ethiopian territory. These pledges extend and strengthen policies in thematic areas such as work and job creation, education, out-of-camp policies, documentation and local integration (Samuel Hall, 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 2017). Since 2018, the situation in Ethiopia has been developing rapidly, due to new political shifts.⁴ In May 2018, the Council of Ministers approved a draft refugee proclamation to implement a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, which provides a platform for the Nine Pledges and will, thus, improve the integration process for refugees (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 2017; Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, 2018). In addition, the new bill aims to align its protection measures with the international and regional instruments adopted by Ethiopia (Abiye, 2018).

One of the Nine Pledges is to build industrial parks to expand the job opportunities for refugees and host communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 2017). However, as the International Rescue Committee points out, there are several challenges with industrial parks. Primarily, they are unlikely to generate significant outcomes for job creation in the near-term. Also, the selection process, training of refugees, and transportation to the parks could prove too timely, costly and unsafe. It is, therefore, important that the planning for new job opportunities for refugees goes beyond the introduction of industrial parks (International Rescue Committee, 2018).

Despite the positive initiatives of the Ethiopian government in forming new policies, the current situation leaves refugees in Ethiopia unable to enter the formal labour market. The integration of refugees and protection of their rights has been recognised as a problem, which the new policy instruments are trying to address. The new developments in the political stream have aligned with these instruments and opened a policy window. However, at this moment, it remains unclear what change this will bring for refugees on the ground.

⁴ Restrictive policies may face a wind of change with the approach of the new Ethiopian government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Since taking office in April 2018, he has adopted a number of reforms, declaring peace with Eritrea and promising to reform civil society and the situation for refugees (Sengupta, 2018).

Livelihood opportunities for refugees in Ethiopia

Several studies show that access to income-generating activities remain low, both inside and outside refugee camps (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016; Samuel Hall, 2014, Melicherová, 2018). The following factors have been recognised as constraining access to livelihood opportunities for refugees in Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2013; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016; Moses Okello, 2014):

- Restrictions on freedom of movement: Under the Refugee Proclamation No. 409, Article 21(2), Ethiopian authorities designate where refugees and asylum seekers shall live (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2004). Until 2009, Ethiopia enforced a strict policy of encampment for all refugees. Since then, an out-of-camp policy has been implemented to allow Eritrean refugees to leave the camps as long as they are able to sustain themselves financially or are supported by relatives living outside the camps.
- Lack of work permits: Ethiopian authorities do not grant work permits to refugees, which prevents them from entering the formal labour market.
- *Discrimination:* Many refugees complain that they are subject to discrimination, which makes it difficult to find stable employment.
- Lack of job opportunities and language barriers: Lack of job opportunities, language barriers, lack of experience and lack of market information also hinder access to livelihoods for refugees in Ethiopia (Samuel Hall, 2014, p. 7).

Access to livelihoods for refugees in camps in Ethiopia is very low, especially for young refugees. The largest source of employment for camp refugees who are working is with institutions, NGOs or the Ethiopian Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) (Samuel Hall, 2014). Exclusion from the formal sector means that refugees have to engage in informal labour, which exposes them to the risk of abuse, exploitation and, in the case of young women, sexual harassment. The research conducted by Samuel Hall Consulting found that camp refugees engage in the following economic activities (Samuel Hall, 2014, pp. 2–30):

- *Petty trade:* Refugees establish their own small shops with various products. The size, range of products and monthly revenue⁵ varies.
- *Construction-related services:* Skills such as electricity, woodwork and metalwork are particularly supported by shelter programmes.
- *Personal services:* Shops offering services such as beauty parlours, hairdressing salons and barber shops have been established in the camps.

The work in the camps is irregular, which contributes to the financial insufficiency and lack of self-reliance of the refugees. This makes most refugees dependent on aid provided by UNHCR and NGOs in the camps and motivates refugees to look for alternatives outside camps. However, not that many refugees apply for the out-of-camp programme, because of obstacles such as lack of relatives who could sponsor them, or no guarantee of accessing a livelihood in urban areas (Samuel Hall, 2014, p. 39).

Livelihoods in Hitsats camp

This section presents the results of the empirical research conducted in Hitsats camp and helps answer the remaining sub-research questions. In total, 94 refugees took part in the survey in Hitsats camp. Due to the sampling procedure used, men and women were represented equally (47 of each gender) in order to observe whether gender differences affected livelihood and work opportunities. Even though the gender balance was preserved within quantitative data collection, the qualitative interviews found that male refugees dominated the overall camp population: "In every aspect, there is a dominance of male refugees. In [the] overall demographics [of the camp], even in our training and livelihood activities, male refugees are

 $^{^5}$ Smaller shops reported monthly revenue of between 50 and 150 Ethiopian birr (ETB), while larger ones reported up to ETB 550.

dominant" (NRC worker, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 30 January 2018).

In addition to being dominated by young male refugees, some other interesting demographic phenomena were noticed in the camps during the analysis, which are confirmed by other research studies mentioned in the literature review. Almost 80% of the refugee respondents, both men and women, are between 18 and 30-years old, which means that a high proportion of young Eritreans are forced into migration. As Hitsats camp is the youngest in the region, all newly-arrived refugees are situated there, unless they ask for family reunification in one of the other camps. The demography is also fluctuating, as many young refugees leave the camp within a short period of time after their arrival. However, a significant number of Eritreans have been living in the camp for several years. This is because they lack the resources to undertake secondary movement in search of a better future. It is difficult to assess whether living in Hitsats camp is a positive choice for these refugees.

Those who have the chance, opportunity or power have left the camp. People who live in this camp are those who didn't have any chance or power to go. In this camp it is only those who don't have money, [or] support. But those who have relatives or money have left. (Interviewee 4, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

One of the consequences of migration at an early age is that refugees have often missed out on receiving a full education. Respondents to the questionnaires did not have problems with literacy, however, the majority had 10 or less years of education (54% and 33% of female and male respondents, respectively). Consequently, the range of knowledge or practical skills that refugees managed to develop before they were forced to flee Eritrea remains low.

Refugees' main sources of livelihood

Despite the low access to regular income-generating activities, refugees conceded that they had previously accessed specific sectors through which they had earnt their livelihood. A major sector that

provides opportunities for refugees to earn some income is institutional employment. Alongside institutions, refugees engage in petty trade, personal services (such as beauty parlours, hairdressers, and barbers), construction work and technical services (mainly for male refugees). Refugees in Hitsats are not allowed to own a piece of land and, therefore, access to agriculture livelihoods is lacking. The qualitative interviews confirmed that refugees are able to access livelihoods through sectors, even though this access is inadequate.

There are several opportunities in petty trade, personal services, and small businesses – like shops. Those are the main sources of livelihood activities. The main gap is in small industries – like leather craft and soap making. Even agriculture like dairy, poultry, and home-gardening is lacking. (ZOA worker 2, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 14 December 2017)

In total, 87.5% of respondents have not been able to find employment in the same sector as they worked in Eritrea. This is closely related to the fact that most of the refugees are very young and did not have the opportunity to gain experience in the labour market before fleeing Eritrea.

Access by refugees to income-generating activities

The study demonstrated that any kind of income-generating activity, even through informal channels, is severely hinder by several factors. Table 11.2 illustrates, how many respondents had access to work in the 30 days prior to the day of data collection. The independent samples t-test revealed (t=0.933, df=91, p=0.353) that gender does not play a significant role in whether or not the refugee had work in the past month. The vast majority of refugees do not receive any regular income from other sources (e.g., family), which leaves them dependent on humanitarian aid. Even those refugees who have established a small business could not rely on regular earnings, as they lack customers.

		Worked	Total	
		Yes	No	
Gender	Female	5	42	47
	Male	8	38	46
Г	otal	13	80	93

The irregular character of income-generating activities in the camps prevents young Eritreans from developing self-reliance, even those who have had the opportunity to access livelihood programmes. Only 15 respondents claimed to work regularly, however, many refugees continuously search for opportunities, even when their access to activities leading to income is irregular.

One of the interviews with NGO workers revealed some interrelation between motivation to search for livelihood opportunities and market demand:

Refugees need sound businesses within the camp. As long as there is a satisfactory opportunity in terms of market linkage, they are interested [to search for opportunities]. If they see that the link to the market is missing, they might not be interested. In existing businesses [the missing link] leads to drop-out [from the business activities]. (ZOA worker 1, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 14 December 2017)

Figure 11.1 provides an overview of the motivational factors that keep refugees participating in income-generating activities. The largest motivational factor is 'self-sufficiency', which was indicted by 84% of respondents. Refugees seem to be more than willing to use their talent and potential through their work and leave behind dependency. An independent samples t-test was done to compare genders in relation to all eight motivational factors. The results indicate that none of the compared variables is significant (p>0.05).

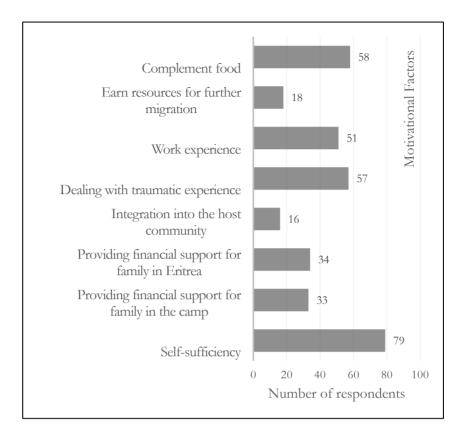


Figure 11.1. Factors motivating refugees to engage in income-generating activities

The qualitative interviews revealed, however, that beneficiaries of livelihood programmes often lose their motivation to continue with a particular livelihood activity (e.g., a business activity), which may lead to drop-out: "A loss of motivation in a beneficiary is often a problem. Most of them are young. They expect to have a short-term benefit and [, at the same time, a] huge benefit" (ZOA worker 2, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 14 December 2017).

Obstacles and opportunities to access livelihoods

A wide range of obstacles have been observed among the respondents, which explain the low access of Eritrean refugees to livelihoods (Table 11.3). By far, lack of job opportunities is

considered to be the main constraining element by refugees, which makes it difficult for them to gain an additional income. The independent samples t-test showed that the interaction between the two genders and lack of the market information variable is significant (t=2.284, df=92, p=0.025).

Except for a few micro-businesses, like beauty salons, shops, cafés, and restaurants, very few income-generating activities have developed in the camp, which is closely linked to the demographics and the constant secondary movement of refugees. Even refugees who own a small business face challenges on a daily basis to sustain the business and generate a small income from it.

I try to work. Mentally, it helps me. I have my small business, but I don't have a good income. In order to have an income, I need customers. But these people [refugees within the camp], they don't have money. If they don't have money, how come they can come to the café to eat? Sometimes you open the doors and for two, three days no one comes. I try to work. But how do I get people to come here? There is no good ground for work. These people are very, very poor. The money they get is not enough for a living. (Interviewee 3, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

Some people have the opportunity to open a café or a shop, but it is very difficult because they don't have customers. I don't have the will to open a café nor a shop [when] I see that they [owners] are not working. (Interviewee 4, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

The restrictions on the freedom of movement of refugees affect their ability to find work in urban areas. In order to be eligible to leave the camp legally, a refugee has to obtain written permission from ARRA, which requires the holder to return to the camp after a predefined period. For the majority of Eritreans it is impossible to meet the eligibility criteria for the out-of-camp policy, which would entitle them to work in cities. Also, the remoteness of the camp brings challenges for refugees with small businesses, as it is difficult to secure supplies: "There is no chance to go to other cities to work. You need special permission to go. Such conditions do not encourage you to work (Interviewee 4, interview, with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018).

Obstacles	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Restriction of movement	18	25	43
Lack of work permit	22	16	38
Discrimination	13	6	19
Lack of job opportunities	36	34	70
Language barrier	9	12	21
Lack of experience	5	8	13
Lack of education	9	13	22
Lack of market information	2	9	11
Lack of acceptance by the host	8	3	11
community			

Table 11.3. Obstacles identified by refugees and their relation to gender

The qualitative interviews confirmed the severity of the lack of income-generating activities.

It is very difficult to live here [in the camp], [both] mentally and physically. Because it is very hot here. There are no work opportunities; only for few people. ... Sometimes there is some opportunity to build [shelters], but it is for a short time. When you finish, there is no work anymore. (Interviewee 3, interview, with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

Even for existing activities, it is very challenging to generate some income due to the low level of market opportunities: "In any type of livelihood activities, the market is not encouraging. Alongside the skill trainings and getting support investments, they [refugees] have to be linked to the markets which is tough work for the NGOs" (ZOA worker 1, interview, with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 14 December 2017).

Basic needs of refugees and how they are provided for

All of the constraining factors cause Eritrean refugees to struggle to meet their basic needs on a regular basis. Life in Hitsats brings only a few opportunities to generate income, which makes refugees highly dependent on assistance from UNHCR. However, both refugee respondents, as well as NGO workers, reported many challenges with the aid provided (Table 11.4). In particular, many complained that the monthly food supplies provided by the World Food Programme do not last for the whole month. Each person receives 10 kilograms of wheat and ETB 60 (approximately USD 2), which has been reduced from ETB 100 (approximately USD 3.5). In addition, refugees receive 0.9 litres of oil, 1.5 kilograms of pulses, and 0.25 kilogram of salt.

Only 10 kilograms of wheat are given to the people. It is not enough. Maybe it is enough for two or three weeks. But after that, what are they doing if they don't have any money? [In order] to manage for one month, the people cook and eat together [rather than] alone. ... It is difficult. When I see it, I am disturbed. (Interviewee 1, interview, with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

It is very difficult to live here. We don't get enough food. Even the food they give us is not enough. ...and because people don't have enough food they are exposed to illness. (Interviewee 4, interview, with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

Another problem is water supply. There are constant shortages, even though water taps were installed in Hitsats. The international refugee standard prescribes 20 litres of water per person per day: "Sometimes there are problems with distribution. Sometimes refugees do not get even 20 litres [of water] per day. So they go to rivers or water holes, and they use unsafe water. That is a challenge" (NRC worker, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 30 January 2018).

This time the water [situation] is difficult. For example, now there is a shortage of water. Only two jugs are allowed per house per day. Forty litres is not enough. We can buy water from the locals who have wells, [we have to pay] 2 ETB for 20 litres. (Interviewee 2, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

There is a shortage of water. We can buy water, but it is not safe. Nobody knows whether it is clean or not. Even during the rainy season, people go to wash in the river. But it is not good. It brings some allergies. ... The situation with water is getting worse. (Interviewee 4, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

Each refugee who arrives in Hitsats is granted a shelter. However, challenged by the lack of space, refugees have to share shelters with many others. There can be as many as 10 people assigned to share one shelter.

Nine or ten people live together in one house. But we are different. We have different ethnicities, culture; we came from different villages, cities; we don't know each other or our behaviours. So it is very difficult to live in one house like this. I don't live with my family nor my friends. Instead, I live with different people who came from different regions. (Interviewee 2, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

Lastly, the low level of access to energy adds another struggle to the daily reality of refugees. The lack of wood and coal, which are essential for cooking, obliges refugees to search for alternative solutions: "[A] furnace without coal is nothing" (Interviewee 1, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018). Consequently, refugees often cut trees to get some firewood for cooking. This creates tension and causes clashes between refugees and the host community.

We don't have [fire]wood or coal. We have to pay for it. If we try to take wood from locals [host community] we may fight with them, or they may beat us, or we may [end up in] a detention centre. (Interviewee 2, interview with Melicherová, face-to-face, Hitsats, 1 February 2018)

Need	Number of respondents		
	Provided by	Earnt additionally	
	assistance		
Food	92	88	
Water	90	82	
Transport	11	78	
Health care	85	69	
Sanitation	16	83	
Communication	6	90	
(mobile, Internet)			
Clothing	12	91	
Education	90	12	
Access to energy	9	85	

Table 11.4. Needs of refugees and how they are provided for

Practices of organisations

Several organisations based in the camp are keen to promote and support livelihood programmes and build greater self-reliance. Refugees are highly motivated to take part in the programmes offered and to obtain certificates, which they may use in the future even after leaving the camp. All the procedural and technical aspects of livelihood programmes initiated by NGOs have to be approved by ARRA, the governmental agency present in the camp.

Various NGOs run programmes to enhance the capacity of refugees through vocational skills trainings and by providing start-up materials and micro-loans for small businesses. Vocational skills trainings are provided inside the camp for refugee as well as host communities. Each NGO provides these training independently based on the assessment conducted prior to the start of livelihood programmes. Long-term programmes of six months include training on skills such as furniture making, food preparation, garment making, and construction. Short-term trainings of three months cover laser work, metal work, and beauty services such as hairdressing. Upon receiving vocational training, participants receive business skills training. After graduating from the trainings, organisations provide micro-loans and start-up kits for groups to start their own small businesses. NGOs are highly dependent on donors and have a limited budget; therefore, not every graduate qualifies for start-up materials, as the demand is much higher than amount of resources.

Organisations have to face a lot of limitations and challenges, which is closely linked to their limited budget and capacity. This study also found that multiple NGOs are providing the same type of trainings, which leads to duplication and saturation of the market. This is due to lack of horizontal cooperation between organisations during the assessment phase and livelihood planning. "To train people is not enough. To put them in a good business market and to give them a market is good" (Interviewee 1, interview with Melicherová, face-toface, Hitsats, 1 February 2018).

The connectivity of refugees to the economic market outside the camp is non-existent, which dramatically decreases their chances of generating enough income to sustain their business activities, which at the same time increases the vulnerability of refugees.

There are also dependency problems. You help them [refugees] to start up a business, and they feel like you will support them all their life here. NGOs try to help them within their limited budget and capacity, but [refugees'] expectations of NGOs are a lot higher. They feel like you always have to be there to support them rather than [they] strengthen themselves. These syndromes are [present] there. It is a problem to make livelihoods really sustainable. You see that their businesses collapses and they start to go down. (ZOA worker 1, interview with Melicherová, face-toface, Hitsats, 14 December 2017)

Both the qualitative and quantitative data confirmed that the livelihood programmes in the camps cannot be considered sustainable. Sustainability in livelihood planning is essential, and it also helps to prevent secondary migration movements. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) qualifies a livelihood as sustainable when it does not depend on external assistance, when it recovers from external shocks and stresses, and when the long-term productivity of natural resources is preserved (DFID, 1999). Therefore, it is necessary to shift from short-term to long-term planning with a holistic approach. Nevertheless, further research is needed in order to understand how sustainability can be embedded within livelihood programmes for refugees.

Conclusion

Thousands of young Eritreans are forced to flee their country every year to seek a safe and dignified life. However, their dreams and visions of a life in dignity vanish in the inhospitable reality of the refugee camps. The challenges are diverse and interlinked, but they have one common denominator – all of them take away hope and any visible prospect of self-reliance. The refugees are left in limbo. This chapter look at the access of Eritrean camp refugees to livelihood opportunities in Ethiopia and whether or not a policy window (Kingdon, 2014) has opened to put refugees' livelihood issues on the decision-making agenda. Despite the international legal instruments that Ethiopia has adopted, the right to work for refugees has not been legislated into national law and is not implemented in practice. The rights of refugees cannot be fully attained, as explained by the concept of a human rights culture (Rorty, 1993), as they are not fully recognised and implemented in practice.

The empirical study found that Eritrean refugees in Hitsats have low, almost non-existent, access to income-generating activities. A major sector that provides employment for camp refugees is institutional employment; refugees are also engaged in petty trade, personal services (such as beauty parlours, hairdressing, and barbering), construction related work and technical services (mainly for male refugees). However, the lack of income-generating opportunities, even in the informal sector, and the irregularity of existing ones leave the majority of Hitsats' refugees highly dependent on humanitarian aid and the assistance provided by UNHCR. Searching for work alternatives outside the camp in urban areas is also not a viable option, due to the restrictions on freedom of movement defined in Ethiopia's out-of-camp policy (Samuel Hall, 2014), as well as the lack of resources of refugees. As well as restriction of movement, the study found ineligibility for work permits and lack of employment opportunities to be major obstacles to accessing livelihoods. According to the Development Assistance for Refugees framework, the access of refugees to socio-economic activities is one of the essential prerequisites for self-reliance. Given the fact that refugees cannot rely on regular income, the social and economic ability of refugees in Hitsats to fulfil their own needs is unattainable (UNHCR, 2003).

Based on the interviews with refugees and NGO workers, it appears that monthly rations of food for camp refugees are not sufficient to sustain them. Refugees tend to cook, eat and manage food rations in groups in order to sustain themselves. In addition, the study found that access to water, shelter and energy are highly challenged within the camp setting. Refugees often do not even get the 20 litres of water a day prescribed by international standards. In addition, water purchased from the water wells to supplement that given is not purified and may lead to health problems. Low access to power also brings complications for refugees, who depend entirely on coal and firewood for cooking. In desperation, refugees often cut down trees for firewood, which causes tension between refugees and host communities. The remoteness of Hitsats camp contributes to these problems. Due to poverty and the hardships faced in camp, young refugees have to strive hard to supplement their food, water and coal supplies. However, it is impossible to do so without regular income or remittances from family members or friends. Even those refugees who have established micro-businesses in the camp are affected, as they do not have enough customers on a regular basis.

Despite the endeavours of several NGOs to promote livelihood activities for refugees, the element of sustainability is lacking in livelihood programmes in Hitsats camp, which is proven by the high number of drop-outs from these programmes. Even though sustainability was not explicit part of the present research, it was observed that in order to bring about long-term solutions, a holistic approach needs to be adopted, together with improvement of horizontal cooperation between NGOs. According to ILO, in cases where the environment is not sufficient to link refugees to the market and public services, the skills of refugees are not utilised to the full extent (ILO, 2017). Subsequently, this prevents refugees from integrating into the host society (Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016), in this case into Ethiopian society.

The results of the present study show that young Eritrean refugees live in a vicious cycle, where one challenge leads to another. This evokes feelings of frustration and hopeless among the refugees. Consequently, refugees often opt to move on from Hitsats camp, in search of a better future. The need for better livelihood programmes remains high. The concept of refugee livelihoods, however, cannot be resolved on its own without looking at the problem holistically. It is not the mere creation of job opportunities and providing skill training that will result in self-reliance and lead to resilience. Livelihoods should be considered within the policy mechanisms available in the host country (Samuel Hall, 2014). A comprehensive study carried out in Northern Uganda showed that the improvement of livelihoods is possible only when trauma relief is taken seriously within the livelihood programming (Van Reisen, Nakazibwe, Stockmans, Vallejo, & Kidane, 2018; also see Kidane & Stokmans, 2018 regarding Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps).

These problems have been recognised, not only by refugees on the ground, but also by policymakers and the government. Combined with recent developments in the political and policy streams in Ethiopia, such as the adoption of the Nine Pledges and revision of the 2004 Refugee Proclamation, it seems that there is hope for refugees' livelihood issues to reach the decision agenda. As Kingdon (2014) explains, the problem stream and policy stream have to be supported by a positive political climate in order to introduce specific agenda setting. Over the past years, Ethiopia has gone through great political change and shifts which appear to have been a factor in pushing issues relating to refugees onto the agenda. However, at the time of the empirical data collection, it appears that the policy window has not completely open and the implementation of rights on the

ground is still lacking. While the political shift, led by the new prime minister, has brought new attention to refugee issues, it remains unclear what change this will bring about for the refugees in the near future.

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