

*“Maybe I will have a good life in the future...”*: The lives, experiences and choices of rural girls as they negotiate different pathways to urban secondary schools in Ethiopia.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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Under the supervision of Professor Robbie Gilligan

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## **DECLARATION**

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**Louise Yorke**

## SUMMARY

Situated at a time when increasing educational aspirations are met with growing questions about the value of education, this study explores the education and migration pathways of a group of 27 rural girls enrolled in urban secondary schools in Southern Ethiopia (SNNPR). Traditionally rural girls have represented one of the most marginalised groups in terms of accessing and pursuing their secondary education in Ethiopia, as identified in the literature and through preliminary research conducted as part of this study. The study seeks to fill a gap in our understanding of the phenomenon of the migration of rural girls to urban secondary schools in Ethiopia, from the perspectives of rural girls themselves. The high aspirations and considerable agency of the participants are at the forefront of this study, and the research explores how they negotiate and navigate different pathways into, through and beyond education. Specifically the study investigates the lives of girls in their rural communities before they migrate (RQ1), the factors and processes underlying their migration decisions and pathways (RQ2) and the experiences of rural girls when they reach the city, inside and outside of school (RQ3). A particular advantage (and also challenge) of the study is its ability to make connections across time (past, present, future) and location (rural, urban) and to connect the different themes of rural poverty, gender, migration and education. The leading strength of this study is the in-depth and detailed information that emerges from the encounters with this group of girls.

A qualitative research approach with participatory elements helped to navigate some of the expected challenges associated with being a white researcher in this context and to challenge assumptions of vulnerability commonly associated with girls and women in Ethiopia, particularly those from rural areas. The research is guided by Amartya Sen's capability approach and is situated within a critical feminist research approach. The theme of *journeys* is central to the current research. This captures the physical journeys of the participants through time and space, their journeys through education, as well as their journeys of personal growth and development. In addition, it captures my own journey from a somewhat naïve and optimistic researcher who underestimated the messiness of fieldwork, through the many intellectual, practical, physical and emotional challenges that I faced along the way, and the decisions that I took to enable me to carry out the research successfully in the current context. Attempts are made to realistically reflect these multiple journeys in this thesis.

The main data collection was carried out over the course of 10 months in Hawassa City in the Southern Region of Ethiopia (SNNPR) and involved three phases including a pilot phase of data collection (2 months), a main phase of data collection (6 months) and a follow-up phase of data collection (2 months). Twenty-seven female participants between the ages of 14-20 years old, from rural communities across 14 different woredas (districts) were chosen to reflect wider trends of rural migrants in the student population. A select

number of participants' family members were also included. The study made use of multiple methods including participatory video, group discussions, life story interviews, as well as informal observations to help participants tell their stories. This in turn helped to provide sufficient depth into their lives and to take us closer to an authentic understanding of their experiences. The research approach maintained a level of built-in flexibility to help to respond to challenges of conducting research in this context. A female research assistant (RA) from the Sidama Zone in the SNNPR helped to facilitate the research and also provided cultural insights throughout the fieldwork.

The stories of the rural girls presented in this study highlight the nuances and complexities of their lives and provide us with a mixed picture. On one hand, the high educational aspirations of rural girls and their families and their agency in achieving these goals shine through in these stories. We see the many benefits that the participants in this study gain in urban areas, including access to a good quality education, the opportunity to acquire social and cultural capital and the chance to forge a new identity. On the other hand, we also uncover the many trade-offs and sacrifices that rural girls make with the hope and expectation that their lives will be better in the future. However, despite the significant challenges that the participants have overcome, it seems that the odds are stacked against them. Many of the rural girls in this study fail their Grade 10 examination, are unable to secure paid employment beyond education and have to return home to their families. For those who have assimilated urban lifestyles, returning to their rural communities is a bitter reality that leaves them with a feeling of personal failure. Nevertheless, in other ways their experiences have been transformative and changed the way in which they view themselves, and how their families and communities view them.

The findings reveal the many layers of inequalities present within the education system in Ethiopia in particular, but also wider and intersecting inequalities across gender, location and socioeconomic status. The findings have relevance for the Ethiopian government who must work towards addressing these gaps in order to ensure that the planned expansion of secondary education is inclusive and equitable. In addition, strategies to address the residual effects of a poor quality primary education on students' current and future outcomes deserve consideration. The findings support the work of others who urge caution about the assumed link between education and positive development, indicating that education may not always be the 'unqualified good' that it is sometimes taken to be (Unterhalter, 2003). They also remind us of the need to consider not only the presence of resources but the ability of individuals to access these resources and how these resources are then converted into positive outcomes. Finally, the stories of the participants in this research do not end here and future research should aim to uncover the impact of these potentially transformative experiences on the lives of the participants and the implications these may have for their future families.

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While this work is entirely my own and I take full responsibility for any mistakes or errors, this thesis would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of the many inspiring, courageous and dedicated individuals that I have been lucky enough to encounter along my PhD journey.

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## **ACRONYMS**

EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

ESDP – Education Sector Development Programme

ETP – Education and Training Plan

GER – Gross Enrolment Rate

GTP – Growth and Transformation Plan

KI – Key Informants

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

MOI – Medium of Instruction

NER – Net Enrolment Rate

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

SNNPR - Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region of Ethiopia

TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front

TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training

TVT - Technical and Vocational Training

TTC – Teacher Training College

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1. OVERVIEW**

The lived experiences of twenty-seven young women from fourteen different rural sending communities in the Sidama zone of Southern Ethiopia (SNNPR) are the focus of this study. Focusing on their lives and experiences as they migrate from their rural communities to the city in search of better education and better opportunities, it follows their pathways across both time and space. This study is situated at a point in time when increasing educational aspirations promoted by the rapid expansion of education, are met with growing concern about the value of education and whether it really is the ‘unqualified good’ (Unterhalter, 2003) that some purport it to be. In Ethiopia, and internationally, education is generally understood in terms of the instrumental role that it plays in the lives of young people, most notably in terms of their ability to enter into paid employment, but also in terms of social gains (e.g. delaying entry into marriage). However, as in many countries, Ethiopia’s recent economic growth and the unprecedented expansion of education has not been met with a reduction in inequalities, but rather in many cases they have been exacerbated. As we will see from the stories presented in this thesis, despite the significant investment of rural girls in their education and their attempts to carve out a better future for themselves, they face many challenges along the way that hinder and sometimes prevent their progress. While migration provides them with an opportunity to overcome many of these challenges, often the residual effects of rural inequalities are still felt in urban settings while new difficulties also emerge and their outcomes remain uncertain. The stories presented in this thesis cast doubt on the assumption that more education automatically leads to better outcomes. At the same time, while the futures of the girls this study are still unclear their experiences have nonetheless been transformative in many ways and there are many intrinsic benefits in pursuing their education. Ultimately what we learn is the importance of understanding the nuances and complexities of the everyday lives and experiences of these girls as they navigate their environments and the structures that facilitate and constrain their choices. The purpose of this initial chapter is to provide the background and context for the research study. It starts by setting out the motivations for pursuing the research and the focus of the research. The chapter ends with an outline of the thesis.

## **1.2. MOTIVATION FOR PURSUING THE RESEARCH**

Journeys are central to the current research. This captures the physical journeys of the study participants across time and space from their rural communities to the city, their journeys through primary and secondary education, as well as their journeys of personal growth and

development. In addition, it captures my own journey from a somewhat naïve and optimistic researcher who underestimated the messiness of fieldwork prior to my doctoral research, through the many intellectual, practical, physical and emotional challenges that I faced along the way and the decisions that I took to enable me to carry out the research successfully in the current context. Attempts are made to realistically reflect these multiple journeys in the thesis. I thereby wish to first set out my motivations for pursuing my research topic before then going on to discuss the journey of the research methodology and design.

My interest in my research topic was driven by a strong personal belief in the role and value of education in improving the lives of children, particularly girls. This developed from my experiences with children who face many risks in their lives in a number of settings including India, Kenya and Ireland. These experiences gave me a unique appreciation for the intrinsic and instrumental value of education in the lives of children and young people. I was also motivated by the high educational aspirations of many of these children as a means of improving their lives and the investments that they make even though the odds seem stacked against them. Building on these experiences, my MSc thesis focused on the resilience of children from disadvantaged communities in Ireland who were at-risk of dropping out of school early. During my MSc I had the opportunity to complete an internship with the Young Lives<sup>1</sup> study in 2011, I had the opportunity to combine my background in psychology with my interests and experiences in international settings of childhood poverty and education and inspired me to continue to work in this area. My interest in Ethiopia grew during this time and I was motivated to understand more about the fascinating but very complex education system within Ethiopia. I also grew increasingly aware of the challenges of conducting research in a developing country context and hoped that engaging closely with the context would provide insight into ways of doing so satisfactorily. This led me to my current research project that began with an initial focus on girls' secondary education in Ethiopia.

### **1.3. JOURNEY OF THE RESEARCH**

One of my main goals in undertaking this study was to seek to work as much as possible in a participatory and collaborative way. When I began this study I was acutely aware of the challenges and tensions of carrying out a study as a white researcher in a developing country context (to be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four). In an attempt to help

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<sup>1</sup> An international longitudinal study of childhood poverty in four developing country contexts (Ethiopia, Vietnam, India and Peru).



to navigate some of these challenges and to try to avoid being an extractive researcher, I adopted a relatively unconventional approach and undertook a number of preliminary field visits to Ethiopia in in March, May and November of the first year of the research study (2014). The aim of these visits was to identify appropriate ways of carrying out the study in the context of Ethiopia and to incorporate the perspectives of relevant stakeholders (government officials, NGOs, principals, teachers and students) into the research design. These preliminary field visits involved a number of activities including key informant interviews, visits to a number of primary and secondary schools in rural and urban areas in Southern Ethiopia and formal and informal consultations with various groups of students. In addition, this stage of the research included establishing an academic advisory panel, setting up a collaboration with a local NGO, hosting a briefing and consultation in the Irish Embassy in Addis Ababa with key stakeholders and establishing a research partnership with the Centre for Development and Policy Research at Hawassa University. Many of these processes began during the preliminary fieldwork and continued throughout and beyond the main data collection (e.g. local research partnership). This stage of the doctoral research was integral, not only in helping to reveal potential challenges in carrying out the main data collection, which in turn helped to illuminate the need for a more innovative and nuanced methodological approach (see Chapter Four), but also in informing the focus of the research. The substantial contribution of many individuals and organisations to the research in both formal and informal ways is one of the more difficult aspects to capture in this thesis. The development of the focus of the research is represented visually in Figure 1.1 below and the evolved conception of the study will be outlined in detail in Chapters Four and Five.

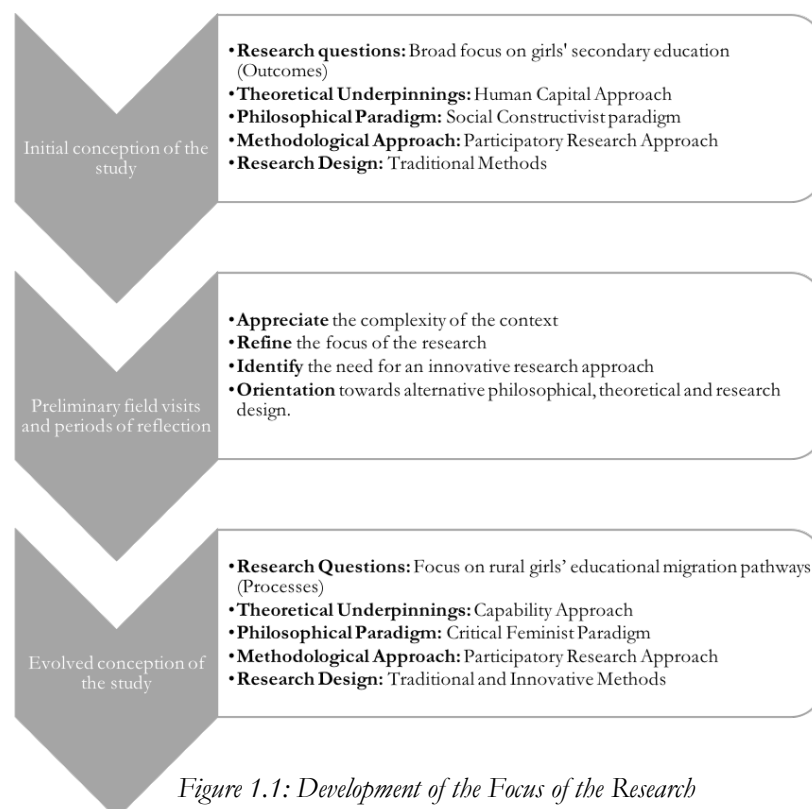


Figure 1.1: Development of the Focus of the Research

#### 1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Beginning with a general focus on girls' secondary education access in Ethiopia, the focus of this study turned to the increasing phenomenon of rural girls' educational migration as a result of the evidence gathered during the preliminary field visits and from a review of available evidence and literature. Emerging information from these preliminary field visits identified rural girls as one of the most marginalised groups in terms of accessing, pursuing and benefitting from secondary education in Ethiopia. It was found that as a result of the many challenges that they face in rural areas in terms of accessing and pursuing their education many girls are migrating to urban areas with the hope of continuing their education. Nonetheless, there was a lack of in-depth understanding of this phenomenon, especially from the perspectives of rural girls themselves, and we knew little of whether the investment by rural girls and their families in education converts into real opportunities or benefits. This topic is undoubtedly an important one given the lack of comprehensive information available on the experiences of rural girls who migrate to urban areas for secondary education in Ethiopia, however it also captures a number of wider issues of concern in Ethiopia including the inequalities students faces in terms of accessing and pursuing their education, particularly in terms of gender, location and rural-urban status. The high educational aspirations of young people in Ethiopia and the role they attribute to education in helping them to achieve a better future and the considerable agency of young people, despite the many structural barriers in their pathways. Thus, the topic chosen was considered to be a worthwhile one. The specific research questions developed from these processes are as follows:

- Research Question 1: What are the challenges that rural girls face in their sending communities in terms of accessing and pursuing their secondary education?
- Research Question 2: What are the factors and processes that contribute to rural girls' migration to urban areas for secondary education?
- Research Question 3: What are the individual and shared experiences of rural girls in urban areas inside and outside of school?

A particular strength of the study is the fact that rural girls who have migrated to urban schools are uniquely placed to provide insight into the experiences of female students across time (life before migration, migration and life in urban areas, real and imagined future) and location (rural and urban), from their own perspectives. Understanding the lives and experiences of rural girls and women in a more nuanced way is imperative to ensure better futures for individuals, communities and wider society (Pankhurst, 2017).

## 1.5. CHAPTER OUTLINE

Nine chapters make up this thesis as follows:

- **Chapter One** sets out to introduce the study outlining the motivation and journey of the research and the research questions.
- **Chapter Two** sets out the context for the study including the country context and the role of secondary education in Ethiopia's development. In addition, it provides an overview of the education system in Ethiopia.
- **Chapter Three** reviews the literature and evidence most pertinent to this study. Drawing on government data and empirical sources, key challenges facing the education system are considered, followed by a consideration of the specific challenges rural girls face in their rural communities in accessing, pursuing and benefitting from education. Previous literature concerning the phenomenon of independent child migration is also reviewed. It concludes by highlighting some of the identified gaps in the lives and experiences of rural girls who migrate for education.
- **Chapter Four** outlines the methodological approach of the study. This includes the normative framework of the study provided by the capability approach and the critical feminist research approach taken. Consideration of how the qualitative research approach with participatory elements fits into this framework is also given.
- **Chapter Five** outlines the research method and design of the study. It charts the three phases of data collection include the pilot phase (Phase I), the main data collection (Phase II) and the follow-up data collection (Phase III). The selection of the research assistant is outlined and the selection, recruitment and background of the participants is given. The multiple methods used for the study including a participatory video approach, life story interview and semi-structured interviews with family members is given. The translation process and data analysis are also considered.
- **Chapter Six** the first of three findings chapters. It provides a retrospective account of the lives of the rural girls in this study in their respective sending communities before they migrated to Hawassa, considering both their common and unique experiences. The manifestation of restrictive gender norms and expectations in the form of domestic work responsibilities and expectations for marriage are considered.
- **Chapter Seven** offers an overview of the factors and processes influencing the education and migration of rural girls. The diversity of strategies and pathways are highlighted, outlining the various reasons that the participants indicated as

influencing their pathways, how the decision to migrate was made and their feelings about migration.

- **Chapter Eight** is the final findings chapter and it describes the lives and experiences of rural girls in Hawassa city. The quality of education that they received is considered and the benefits that that accrue both inside and outside of school are considered. The chapter ends by considering the academic outcomes of those students who recently sat the Grade 10 examination and the opportunities that are available to them in light of their results on this examination.
- **Chapter Nine** is the final chapter which sets out to summarises the main messages that emerged from the findings of the study. It seeks to situate these findings within the wider context of Ethiopia and considers the relevance of the findings in relation the literature. It considers the advantages, challenges and limitations of the research approach, including my own reflection of the journey of the research. The thesis ends with some tentative implications of the study and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to situate the research in the wider context social, economic and political context of Ethiopia in order to provide a backdrop to lives and experiences of the rural girls in this study. The chapter begins by discussing the current economic and social context of Ethiopia considering its recent economic growth amidst challenges such as rising inequalities and high unemployment rates. The plans of the government to address these challenges are acknowledged and the role of secondary education in Ethiopia's development is outlined. From here an overview of the education system in Ethiopia is given, describing some of the features that are most pertinent to the study to help to situate the current research study including the language policy of the education system. The access, enrolment and achievement of students at primary and secondary level across gender and location are considered and some of the challenging in providing quality education for rural students in particular are considered including the lack of and poor infrastructure and facilities, teacher quality and difficulties in implementing the language policy of the government. Finally, some of the ways in which these challenges disproportionately affect girls are considered, before moving onto a discussion of the specific challenges facing rural girls in Chapter Three.

### **2.2. COUNTRY CONTEXT**

Ethiopia is home to a rapidly growing population of over 100 million (2016), half of whom are under the age of 25. It is a federal democratic state and it consists of nine ethnic based regions (see Figure 2.1.), which are further divided into zones, woredas and finally kebeles, the smallest administrative unit (Hagmann & Abbink, 2011). The capital city Addis Ababa is a fusion of the city's different ethnicities, religions and cultures and is emblematic of the juxtaposition of increasing modernity and traditional modes of life, offering the promise of a better life. Ethiopia has a long and rich history and is considered to be the only African country never to have been officially colonised, which is a great source of honour, pride and discussion among Ethiopians. In terms of geography, climate and wildlife, the country spans mountainous regions to low-lying plains, providing an array of landscapes from lush greenery to barren desert areas and is home to diverse human activity and life. More than 80 languages are spoken in Ethiopia and these languages are intrinsically linked to individual identity and culture. Amharic (29.3%) – the official language of the government – and Oromifa (33.8%) are two of the most widely spoken languages in Ethiopia (CSA, 2007). All of the world's three monotheistic religions are represented in Ethiopia (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and religious groups generally live together peacefully side by side.

Located in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has considerable political influence in the region and internationally, given both its geographical position and its relative political stability in contrast to its neighbours.

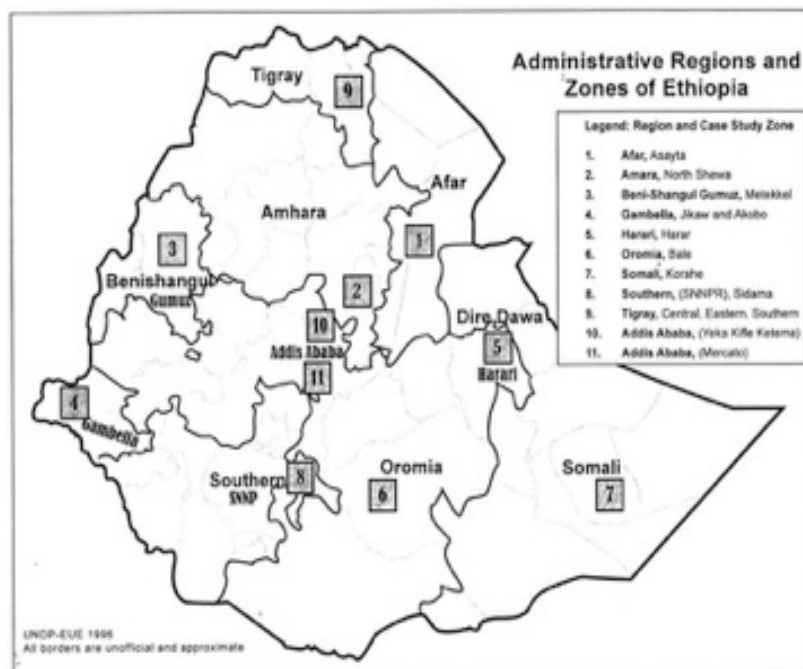


Figure 2.1: Administrative Regions and Zone of Ethiopia (Source: Pankehurst, 2016)

The Ethiopian economy is largely dependent on agriculture that contributes the largest share to its GDP, although the service sector has registered a significant growth in recent year (Semela, 2011). Ethiopia is the origin of the coffee, which is also its largest export in addition to livestock products, oil seeds, flowers and chat.

Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) (National Planning Commission, 2010) is the key policy document that sets out the government's medium-term development strategy and its aspirations of economic transformation. GTP I spanned the period from 2010 to 2015 and was heavily influenced by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were placed at the centre of this development strategy, as well as a number of other key national frameworks. The first GTP (2010-2015) set out its plans to alleviate poverty and help Ethiopia to achieve middle-income status by 2025 through the stated objective of continued economic growth with a target of 11 per cent per annum (National Planning Commission, 2010).

During GTP I (2010-2015) Ethiopia experienced rapid economic growth, which was reported to be double the average of other Sub-Saharan African countries during this

period<sup>2</sup>. Urban populations have doubled between the years 2005 to 2016 from approximately 10 per cent to 20 per cent brought about by Ethiopia's significant industrialisation and urbanisation. The rural landscape has also changed becoming less rural and more diversified through processes of growth and the extension of urban infrastructure and facilities into rural areas (Bevan, 2017; Pankhurst, Dom and Bevan, 2017). In terms of social gains, poverty has been reduced with those living below the poverty line falling from 38.7 per cent in 2003 to 29.6 per cent in 2010 and then again to 23.4 per cent in 2015 even with the rapidly increasing population (National Planning Commission, 2016). There has also been increased access to public services and increased standards of living in recent years.

The current Ethiopian government came into power in 1994, after overthrowing the socialist Derg regime in 1991 led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Since then the government has been working hard to shed the widely held image of Ethiopia as a developing nation ravaged by poverty and famine and present a new image of growing and prosperous nation. However, within Ethiopia there are still many challenges. Economic and social progress has not been shared equally across individuals and groups and differences between regional location, urban-rural areas and socioeconomic status are a concern, especially as a number of the population still rely on food aid to survive (Assefa, Van Damme, Williams & Hill, 2017). The current el Niño crisis sees an estimated 18 million people short of food - with some suggesting that today's crisis is more severe than that experienced during the 1984 famine - which also seen the growth of the economy slow in 2015/16 (World Bank, 2016). Other issues affecting the country in recent years include a surge of protests by the Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups against the predominantly Tigrayan government, the source of which have been attributed to the ethnic-based federalism introduced by the government in 1994. The intensification of these protests led to the government declaring a state of emergency in 2016, and the imposition of a number of restrictions on the general population, including access to the media and increased surveillance of the population. As such, Ethiopia has faced criticism from a number of international sources for the arbitrary detention of journalists, its crackdown on opposition political party members, its curtailment of NGOs to work on human rights issues and its stronghold over the media.

A particularly challenging problem in Ethiopia is the fact that the majority of young people are not benefitting from Ethiopia's supposed growth (World Bank, 2016). Unemployment is high, especially in Addis Ababa where it has reached 24 per cent (World Bank, 2016). While in rural areas youth unemployment is low, it is mainly agricultural and is characterised

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>

by low income levels and low levels of transferable skills (Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati, 2006). Despite high levels of unemployment youth are attracted to urban areas where they at least have a chance of better prospects in terms of income (Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati, 2006). Unemployment by education level is highest for secondary level at 22 per cent compared to 18 per cent at primary level and 11 per cent at post-secondary level, signalling that there is not enough opportunity for those with primary and secondary education in Ethiopia (World Bank, 2016). Young women fare even worse and gender equality is one of the areas where progress has been slowest and girls and women are still more likely to go hungry, less likely to attend school and are more likely to be involved in unpaid domestic chores than boys (Alemu et al., 2003; Haile & Haile, 2007; Orkin, 2012). Girls and young women aged 15-24 years old are the most disadvantaged in terms of employment as they are concentrated in the informal economy with higher unemployment rates and lower earnings than boys and young men (Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer, 2017). Opportunities to continue to higher education are also limited especially for girls, with only a very small percentage of students continuing to higher education (despite the recent rapid expansion) which also sees girls significantly disadvantaged – only 35 per cent of the total number of undergraduate students enrolled (729,028) were female in 2015/16 (MoE, 2017). Of those few girls who beat the odds and make it to higher education they are generally from urban areas such as Addis Ababa (Mulugeta, 2004).

### **2.3. SOUTHERN NATIONS, NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLE'S REGION**

This study was carried out in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), one of the nine different regions in Ethiopia<sup>3</sup>. In 2007, the population of the Southern Region was estimated at approximately 15 million (CSA, 2007) and population density is considered to be very high in this region. However, given the fact that the most recent census was conducted over 10 years ago, it is more likely that the current population of the SNNPR is closer to 19 million<sup>4</sup>. The focus of this study was on the Sidama Zone, one of 14 Zones and 4 special Woredas (districts) within the Southern Region and is said to be one of the most densely populated areas in the Southern Region. The participants in this study came from a number of different woredas and kebeles within this zone with only three participants coming from outside this zone.

During my time in this region, I commonly heard it referred to as a '*mosaic of people and culture*', which is certainly true, as the SNNPR is home to a vast array of 56 different ethnic

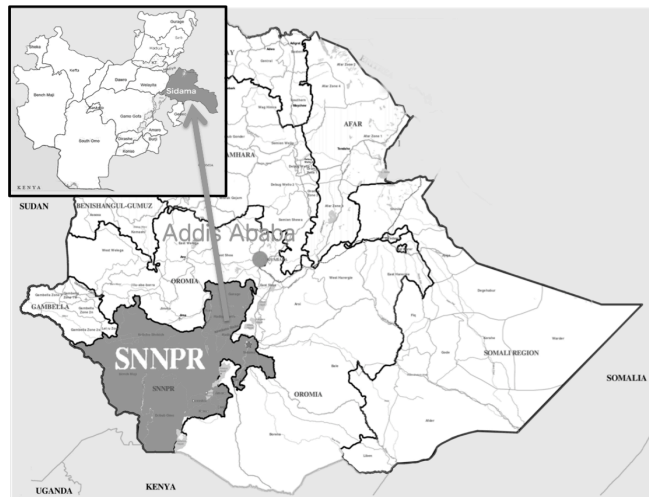
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<sup>3</sup> Criteria for selecting this region is discussed below.

<sup>4</sup> Based on an average population growth of 2.5% per year.



groups, many of whom have their own language, culture and traditions (Semela, Regassa, Dejene & Matewos, 2015). Many of Ethiopia's 80 languages are found in the SNNP region, and Sidamigna, the language of the Sidama group is the most widely spoken language in this region (19.59% in SNNPR, 4.85% nationally), followed by Wolaytigna (10.48%) and Hadiya (8%). Many of these languages have different scripts (e.g. Amharic Fidel, Latin), and the Latin script of the Sidama language was only recently introduced in 1992. As such many speakers of the Sidama language are not able to read or write in the language, while there are also many inconsistencies in how it is written.



*Figure 2.2. Location of the Sidama Zone and SNNPR Region*

Overall, three to four million of the inhabitants of the Southern Region live in the Sidama Zone, and the Sidama ethnic group make up 4 per cent of the overall population of Ethiopia (CSA, 2016). As in the majority of locations in Ethiopia, agriculture is the main income generating activity and farmers in the Sidama Zone mainly depend on the production of enset and coffee for both subsistence and commercial farming. It is one of the leading coffee-producing regions in Ethiopia. Figure 2.3 displays a traditional Sidama house and the enset crop in the foreground.

Access to infrastructure and facilities is variable across woredas within this Zone including access to asphalt roads, telephone and communication services, water and electricity. The capital of the Southern Region, Hawassa city is located within the Sidama Zone. Similar to Addis Ababa, Hawassa is also a city experiencing rapid growth, development and urbanisation (Figure 2.4). From my first visit to Hawassa city in May 2014 to my most recent visit in May 2017, I witnessed the rapid development in this city including an endlessly sprawling city boundary, new and improved roads, countless new buildings (especially hotels), a new industrial park (Figure 2.5), all of which offering the promise of new employment opportunities and a better life.



*Figure 2.3. Traditional Sidama Household*



*Figure 2.4. Hawassa City Centre*



*Figure 2.5. Hawassa Industrial Park*

## 2.4. SECONDARY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Aware of the challenges that lie ahead, the government has set out its commitment to sustaining rapid, broad based, inclusive and pro-poor growth during the second phase of GTP (GTP II, 2015-2020). It seeks to modernise the agricultural sector and expand industrial development and to encourage participatory democracy (GTP II, National Planning Commission, 2016). Specific targets include reducing unemployment (from 16.1 per cent to 12.2 per cent) reducing poverty (from 23.4 per cent to 16.7 per cent) increasing net primary enrolment (from 96.4 per cent to 100 per cent) and increasing primary school completion from (52.2 per cent to 74 per cent). Thus, equality and inclusive development are at the core of GTP II. Given the huge youth population in Ethiopia ensuring that the government can harness the potential of this population is particularly important as the country moves towards middle-income status.

Secondary education has a prominent place within the government's development strategy and there are plans to increase general secondary education enrolment from its current rate of 40 per cent to 79 per cent by 2020 (Joshi & Verspoor, 2012; FDRE, 2015). In particular, it seeks to increase enrolment in science and technology in view of the rapidly growing economy and the planned transformation from an agrarian to an industrial society (MoE, 2008). The government reasons that by focusing on increasing lower secondary education access they will be to provide a skilled labour force that will help to meet labour market demand and in turn will be able to contribute to Ethiopia's goal of achieving middle-income status by 2025 (Joshi & Verspoor, 2012; MoE, 2013). The targets of the government are in line with the recently agreed Sustainable Development Agenda- consisting of 17 goal and 169 targets - which some say will have an even greater role in shaping the development agenda in the next 15 years than the MDGs (Esquivel, 2016). In terms of education the Sustainable Development Goals call for universal completion of primary and secondary education by 2020 (SDG4) and seek to ensure that the expansion of education is equitable and inclusive, especially amongst those who are most vulnerable and marginalised (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016; Fukuda-Parr, 2016; Razavi, 2016). The SDGs are considered to be a considerable improvement of the narrow education targets set out in the MDGs and usher in a more expansive approach to education referring to all levels of education from pre-primary to university and adult education (Unterhalter, 2017). They focus on education completion rather than just enrolment, which will require a focus on what happens to students after they have enrolled and how they progress through education and the quality of education that they receive.

The Ethiopian government also outlines the importance of education for girls, stating that education will help to unleash women's potential and enable them to move from traditional roles into paid employment (GTP, II). Despite this narrow economic reasoning of the

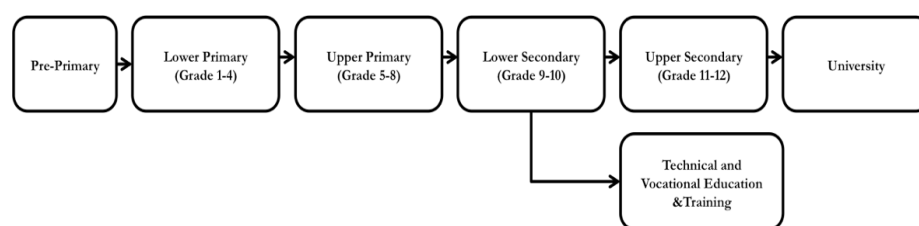
government, the emphasis on the education of girls is welcomed, particularly as education is considered to contribute to many individual and social benefits for girls and young women such as improved health and well-being, increased opportunities and independence, the potential to transform restrictive gender norms and expectations, the ability to combat early marriage and violence against women and for promoting girls' agency, self-esteem and independence over decisions affecting their lives (Boyden, 2012; DelFranco, 2010; Rihani 2006; Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012). This may also help to work towards achieving the gender targets in the SDGs that lay out a transformative and multi-dimensional approach to gender equality including ending discrimination; ending violence against women, ending child, early, and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation and universal access to sexual health and reproductive rights (Fukuda-Parr, 2016; Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016). As such progress in both education and gender equality will be necessary and complementary.

## **2.5. OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ETHIOPIA**

In Ethiopia, education is delivered through a highly decentralized system, designed to shift the authority of the Ministry of Education (MoE) at the Federal level to the regional educational offices and then further down to the local/district levels. This decentralized system is considered to respond better to local needs, to provide resources more efficiently and, to make services more accountable (Khan, Faguet, Guakler & Mekasha, 2014). At the Federal level the government provides policy guidance, monitoring and evaluation for the entire education sector which is guided by the Education and Training Policy (ETP, 1994). The ETP sets out the objectives of education, the strategies to achieve them and the priority areas. Its implementation is guided by a series of Education Sector Development Plans (ESDP I-V) which set out the clear strategies for the government to achieve the goals of the ETP over a series of five-year periods. ESDP V (2015-2010) is the most recent, and central education strategy document of the government, which places a renewed focus on improving the quality of general education (G1-10) and helping to retain children in school and provide them with the knowledge skills and values to become productive and responsible citizens able to compete in a global economy. Moving to the regional government level, decisions such as choosing the language of education, developing the school curricula, as well as management and administration are under the jurisdiction of respective regions (Semela, 2014). The regional level government is also responsible for the training of primary school teachers, for providing primary textbooks and for adapting the primary syllabus to local conditions. The management and financing of primary and secondary education is the responsibility of the regions and woredas

based on the national policy and standards developed and approved by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2012).

In Ethiopia, the education system consists of a number of stages including pre-primary, two stages of primary education, two stages of secondary education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and University. Students must complete two cycles of primary education, over the course of eight years: lower primary level (Grades 1-4) and upper primary level (Grades 5-8). The official age of entry into primary education is seven years old for the first grade (MoE, 2016). To enter into secondary education students must sit a regional exam in the final grade of primary school. Again there are two cycles of secondary education available: general secondary (Grades 9-10) and preparatory secondary (Grades 11-12). The government sets out a twin-track model whereby two years of secondary school (G9-10) are considered to be sufficient for the majority of students (80%) to enable them to enter into the labour market, while at the same time providing the opportunity for the remaining students (20%) to continue into preparatory secondary school (G11-12) and then continue on to university (Joshi & Verspoor, 2012). In Grade 10, students must then sit a national exam education (Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination) to progress to either Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or preparatory secondary. Preparatory Secondary Education is the second cycle of secondary education and prepares students for university education. Those who do not fulfil the criteria for the preparatory level can enter into TVET, which is considered a second grade option for those students who score a low mark in the Grade 10 exam (Dom, 2017; Semela, 2011). A representation of the structure of the Education system is presented in Figure 2.6 below.



*Figure 2.6. Author's representation of the structure of the levels Ethiopian education system*

As in many developing country contexts, in Ethiopia many students attend primary and secondary school on a double shift basis. Forty four per cent of government primary schools 80 per cent of government secondary schools are said to operate on a shift basis (usually two shifts), although this differs across region (World Bank, 2005). A 'morning' shift caters for one group of students and an 'afternoon' or 'evening' shift caters for another group of students, with each shift running for four hours each day with the same teacher teaching both the morning and evening shift. The shift that a particular student attends alternates from week to week i.e. morning shift students will attend the afternoon shift the

following week. This double shift system is thought to be a way to deal with resource constraints within the education system and also a way for students to balance their school and work commitments. The students who attend these two shifts are usually referred to as 'regular students'. In addition to these two shifts, in some schools mostly in urban areas there is a third 'evening' or 'night' shift which is only available in urban areas. This shift runs for two hours in the evening, after the regular shifts are completed. Students attending the evening shift must complete four years of secondary school as opposed to the two years that regular students must attend (Grade Nine A, Grade Nine B, Grade 10 A and Grade 10 B). The night shift is designed to cater for individuals who wish to engage in (paid) work activities during the day and attend their education in the evening time. Bajaj<sup>5</sup> drivers, domestic maids and other students who engage in (paid) work activities during the day are usually among those who attend this shift. It is usually students from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds who attend this shift, and they generally have lower status within the school environment, as observed during the fieldwork.

## **2.6. SECONDARY EDUCATION: KEY CHALLENGES**

### **2.6.1. ACCESS, PROGRESSION AND ACHIEVEMENT**

In recent decades, Ethiopia has experienced significant progress in school enrolment with national enrolment in primary education reaching 109 per cent (114% male, 104% female) in 2015/16 (MoE, 2017). In addition, there has been a 'breath-taking' expansion of higher education (p24, Semela, 2011). While this progress has been driven forth by the government's strong commitment to education, efforts have been largely concentrated at the primary and tertiary level – in 2013 only 16 per cent of total education expenditure (27% of GDP) was spent on lower secondary education. As such, the targeting of the government's resources towards primary and tertiary level education has led to much slower progress at the secondary level reflected in the low of enrolment of secondary students - only 45 per cent of students were enrolled in secondary education in 2015/16 increasing only by 6 per cent from 2010 (MoE, 2017). This represents a fragmented and short-sighted approach to education and it hard to conceive how progress will be made in both primary level and tertiary level without improved access to a quality secondary education. For example, in particular a limited and poor quality secondary education leads to shortcomings in the provision of appropriately and sufficiently trained teachers to deliver a good quality of primary education (Porter, Hampshire, Mashiri, Dube & Maponya, 2010). An integrated approach across all sectors of the education system is needed.

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<sup>5</sup> Widely used, three-wheeled transportation vehicle.

Nevertheless, the government is working to redress a number of issues affecting education quality and have recently turned their attention to secondary education as we seen in Chapter One. Still, to ensure progress in this area a better understanding of some of the issues that students face in accessing, progressing through and benefiting from secondary education is needed, especially for those who are most marginalised. In reviewing the existing evidence it seems that progress at secondary level is hampered by a number of challenges including inequalities in education access across groups (gender, region, rural-urban location), poor retention and completion of students and poor learning outcomes. While this is not an exhaustive list, these challenges will be outlined in more detail below followed by a consideration of some of the key supply-side barriers that contribute to these shortcomings.

#### 2.6.2. INEQUALITIES ACROSS GROUP: REGION AND GENDER

While primary education enrolment has dramatically increased in recent decades government data reveals how access to primary education still varies considerably across region and gender. Regionally significant variation is found, fluctuating from 133 per cent in Addis Ababa to 66 per cent in Afar indicating inequalities between regions that are more developed and those that are less developed or emerging (MoE, 2017). The SNNP Region is slightly above the national average at 115 per cent. Gender differences are also significant and gender gaps favour males in almost every region – on average there is a 10 per cent gap in the enrolment of male and female students (MoE, 2017). However in Addis Ababa the trend is reversed with more girls enrolled than boys, which could perhaps be attributed to the large proportion of female migrants who are moving to urban centres in search of education. Progress through primary education is also a problem and many children are not entering the system on time as seen from the disparity between gross enrolment rates (109%) and net enrolment rates (100%) in 2015/16. Keeping children in school is also challenging and while enrolled at lower primary level is 137 per cent this falls to 69 per cent at upper primary level (although this drop is greater for males than for females), while only 54 per cent of students complete primary education. There is significant attrition of students across grades in what Woldehanna and Araya (2016) called the ‘pyramid structure’ of the Ethiopian education system, which in turn limits progress at secondary level.

These trends at primary level are also found at secondary level. Secondary education access for Grades 9-10 is highest in the urbanized capital Addis Ababa (113%) compared to the national average enrolment rate of 45 per cent. Enrolment rates are again much lower across the majority of other regions, particularly in the emerging regions such as Somali where the enrolment rate is a mere 11 per cent. Again the SNNP Region stands slightly above average standing at 49 per cent. Unsurprisingly, gender gaps are present with higher enrolment of males than females at both lower and upper secondary school. There is a

three per cent gap between males and females at lower secondary level and a two per cent gap at upper secondary level. While gender gaps have decreased slightly in recent years it seems that this is due more to the decreasing enrolment of males rather than the increased participation of females. Figure 2.7. below visually represents these inequalities across region and gender.

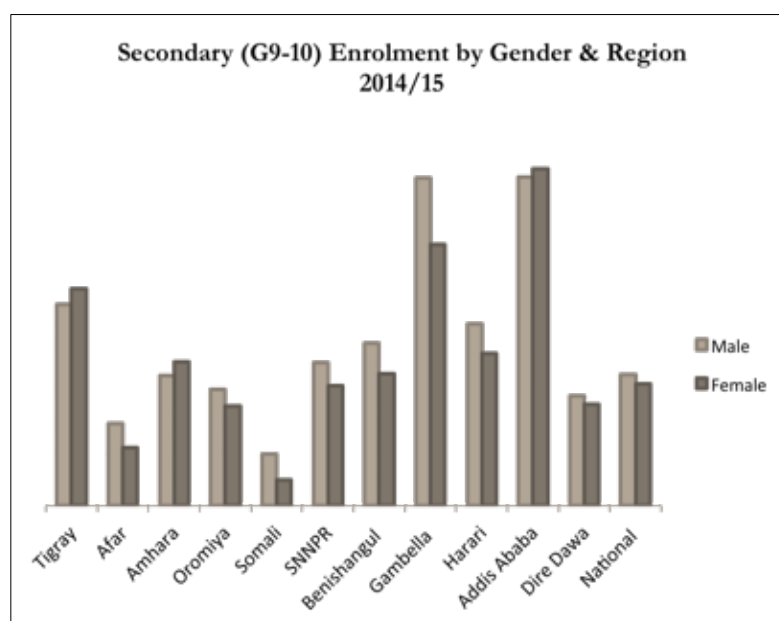


Figure 2.7. GER by Gender and Region

However these figures only represent inequalities across region and gender and it is likely that further inequalities exist within regions across a number of markers such as socioeconomic status and rural-urban location. This will be explored in more depth in this thesis. If the government is to achieve its goal of equitable expansion of secondary education from its current rate to 79 per cent at lower secondary education by 2020 (GTP II), they must address these inequalities across gender and location. It is well evidenced that gaps in education access, progression and achievement translate to gaps in economic and social mobility, which in turn serve to entrench individuals and families in cycles of disadvantage (e.g. Woodhead, Dornan & Murray, 2014). As Dom (2017) writes, equity in education is critical to achieve equitable growth, which requires geographical and social imbalances to be addressed so that individuals and groups do not get *'left behind'*.

### 2.6.3. STUDENT LEARNING AND EDUCATION QUALITY

Globally increasing attention is being given to the quality of education that students receive, rather than simply their access to education, or the numbers of years they have spent in school (Pritchett & Sandefur, 2017). Nevertheless, education quality is an elusive concept that is difficult to define and even more difficult to measure but is usually thought to be reflected in students' learning outcomes. In Ethiopia, the National Learning and Assessment conducted every four years in Ethiopia serves as an evaluation of the operation



of the entire education system and has found that the learning results of Grades Four and Eight have reduced slightly over time, while at Grade 10 only 14 per cent of students score 50 per cent and above. Inequalities in learning outcomes are also found across groups and in all subjects in all grade, boys perform better than girls while urban schools outperform rural schools (Woldetsadik, 2013). The results from this examination indicated that learning outcomes have in some cases stagnated and in other cases dropped.

The global concern with education quality and students learning outcomes is also one of the Ethiopia government, who in 2008 together with donors such as the World Bank launched the General Education Quality Implementation Program (GEQIP), with the overall aim of improving the quality general education (Grades 1-12) throughout the country, based on a school-effectiveness model (MoE, 2008). Broadly speaking, many different factors are presented as contributing to the poor education quality of education that students receive, some of which are discussed below including poor infrastructure and facilities, low teaching quality and difficulties in providing mother tongue instruction, especially in a country as linguistically diverse as Ethiopia. To improve the quality of education in Ethiopia, specific targets of the GEQIP include curriculum development, support and assessment, teacher training and school management. GEQIP II (2013-2017) also emphasises the needs of regions, communities and groups that lag behind compared to national averages. There are now also plans for a third GEQIP programme which is said to have a focus on equity issues in particular in addition to a continued focus on education quality. All the same it is worth considering how specific challenges to education access and quality play out in the context of Ethiopia, and limit the education access, progression and achievement of rural girls in particular.

#### 2.6.4. INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Following the rapid expansion of education in Ethiopia in general and the targeting of resources on primary level and third level in particular (as described above), there are a lack of sufficient secondary schools and facilities, while the quality of those that are available is poor. Figures from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education in 2015/16 indicate that there are only 3,156 secondary schools currently available across all of Ethiopia, although this is an increase of 326 from the previous year. Despite some progress in expanding the number of secondary schools continued efforts are needed in this area to move towards the secondary education enrolment targets of 79 per cent by 2020. Almost half of these schools (40%) are located in the Oromiya region to cater for the large population in this region (which includes Addis Ababa), 22 per cent are found in SNNP Region, six per cent in Tigray, 13 per cent in Amhara and one per cent in Afar (MoE, 2017). While the distribution of schools across regions is relatively consistent with the overall population distribution in these regions, the actual number of schools in each region is not sufficient to cater for the

corresponding school age population. Moreover, in Ethiopia as in other countries (e.g. Tanzania, Wedgwood, 2007) the majority of secondary schools are found in urban areas, automatically placing rural students at a disadvantage. For example, in the WIDE study of 20 rural communities in Ethiopia, there were only five reported communities where students could attend lower secondary school in or near their community (Dom, 2017). There is a clear urban bias in the provision of infrastructure and facilities in Ethiopia (Grieve, 2016).

The lack of available schools has a very immediate and direct impact on student access and attendance given that students must travel long distances to school every day, which may incur significant time costs if they travel by foot or financial costs if they are to use public transport. Travelling long distances to school has been found as one of the most common factors for students non-attendance at school in Ethiopia (Pereznieta & Jones, 2006) and was also found as a reason that students did not enrol on time given that young children could not walk the distance to school (Mulugeta, 2004). While both male and female students must travel long distance to school, this is considered to be particularly challenging for girls given both the time that it takes to reach the school which cannot be spent on domestic chores, but also the risk of physical and sexual harassment and violence (Mulugeta, 2004; Rihani, 2006; Rose, Yoseph, Berihun & Nuresu, 1997). In Mulugeta's (2004) study of the education problems of rural girls she found that many were harassed by boys on their way to and from school, which could end up in being beaten or insulted and female students also feared abduction which was common in rural locations.

Accessing school is often only the first of many hurdles for students in Ethiopia - once students are in school they often must contend with a challenging school environment, especially in rural areas as better resources are found in more developed regions and urban areas. Undoubtedly, the lack of adequate facilities and resources affects the learning environment of students and can be a barrier to attendance progression and student learning. Overall in Ethiopia, recent government statistics found that only 70 per cent of secondary school have access to electricity, 74 per cent have a library and 75 per cent have a computer (MoE, 2017). While these figures reveal that a large portion of schools do not have access to electricity, a library or a computer, for those schools that do have access to these resources we do not know the quality of these resources, or how access to these resources is dispersed in the school. The poor availability of facilities in Ethiopian (secondary schools) also has gendered dimensions particularly in enabling girls to manage their menstruation. Girls' menstruation usually starts around the same time as their secondary education, however only 34 per cent of secondary schools are identified as having adequate menstruation sanitation facilities. For example, Mulugeta (2004) found that many girls waited until they returned home to use the toilet due to the poor availability of resources available in schools. The inability of girls to manage their menstruation while

at school impacts girls attendance and can contribute their subsequent dropout. For example in Tigray, Wall, Belay, Bayray, Salih & Gebrehiwot (2016) found that absenteeism is common during menstruation, which was due in part due to poor facilities which prevent them from managing their periods.

#### 2.6.5. TEACHER QUALITY

Teacher quality is a serious issue in Ethiopia and teachers are often blamed for the many shortcomings of the system by the government and parents alike (Abebe & Woldehanna, 2013; Semela, 2014). A number of issues are said to impact the quality of teachers available and the government has directed considerable effort towards improving the qualifications of teachers in Ethiopia. During ESDP III (2005-2010) an upgrading programme was introduced whereby the requirements to be a teacher were changed from the one-year certificate programme to a three-year diploma (Abebe & Woldehanna, 2013). However, according to the Ministry of Education (ESSA MoE, 2017) there are still a huge proportion of inappropriately qualified teachers working in schools and it is also questionable whether the upgrading of teacher qualification translates into improved teacher quality in the classroom. It seems that there are more fundamental issues at play that affect the poor quality of teachers, and more recently attention has shifted to the fact that the teaching profession is characterised by a lack of suitable candidates who are appropriately trained and motivated are necessary to ensure that children receive a quality education and cater for the needs of students, especially those most marginalised (Abebe & Wolehanna, 2013). While to enter the teaching profession candidates must complete their Grade 10 examination, it is increasingly acknowledged that the pool of prospective teachers is made of low achieving students who did not successfully pass into higher education (MoE, 2014; Semela, 2014). This is a serious concern and it indicates what authors term a *vicious cycle*, whereby the poor quality education and low performing entrants into the teaching profession who perpetuate the same teaching methods they were exposed to (Porter, Hampshire, Mashirir, Dube & Maponya, 2010; Wedgwood, 2007). Without adequate secondary education it will not be possible to improve the quality of teachers in Ethiopia.

A further issue is the high turnover of teachers in the education system, with an attrition rate currently at 5.7 per cent at the secondary level, more than double the government target of 2.5 per cent (MoE, 2017). Worryingly, it has been found that 70 per cent of teachers who were currently working in the teaching profession would leave the teaching profession for an equally paid position (MoE, 2014). Unlike previous decades (e.g. Imperial era) when teachers were held in high esteem and were generously remunerated, teaching is no longer considered to be an attractive profession in Ethiopia and it is linked to low social prestige, low-salary and unfavourable working conditions (Abebe and Woldehanna, 2013;

Abdo & Semela, 2010, 2014; Semela & Admasu, 2004). These changes are said to have occurred during the socialist period (1974-1987) when the requirements to join the teaching profession were lowered in an attempt to increase the supply of teachers - as was also the case in other African countries such as Tanzania (e.g. Wedgwood, 2007). Progress up the career ladder is slow for teachers in Ethiopia and currently it may take a teacher 17 years to progress to the height of the profession where teachers will only get a little more than double the salary of a newly qualified teacher (UNESCO, 2013). As in other countries, e.g. South Africa (Porter, Hampshire, Mashiri, Dube & Maponya, 2010), the retention of teachers in rural areas in particular is challenging. Teachers express a strong preference for working in urban and well-resourced settings and generally do not wish to be deployed to rural locations where they may not speak the language, or the infrastructure and facilities are poor (Abdo & Semela, 2010; Abebe & Woldehanna, 2013; Semela, 2014; Shibeshi, 2009). Those who are assigned to a region not of their choosing often do not take up their posting, while those who do report low motivation.

Another challenge is the low number of female teachers in the education system, which has specific impact for girls, especially those from rural areas. Contrary to the struggle to attract more males into teaching in most other countries, in Ethiopia the problem is the reverse with low levels of females in the teaching profession (Semela, 2014). In primary school 40 per cent of teachers are female and this drops to 18 per cent at secondary level (MoE, 2017). While this share has risen since 2003/4 when the percentage of female teachers was only 8.1 per cent it is still unsatisfactory and has consequences for girls' education (Semela, 2014). Mulugeta (2004) describes how the lack of female teachers may affect the participation of girls in class, while support from a female teacher is often an important facilitator to girls' education especially in rural areas where female role models are few. Similarly, Rose (2003) points out how the low number female teachers is a major shortcoming to girls progressing through the system as female role models are particularly important for girls when they reach puberty around the time they move into secondary school where female teachers are fewest.

In an effort to address the poor quality of candidates entering into teacher training, ESDP V (2015-2020) (FDRE, 2015) stipulates that new candidates will have to complete Grade 12 and score two and above (2+) in the national exam and will have to complete a degree to teach at secondary level. This will require an improvement of access and learning at secondary level to ensure there are sufficient and appropriate candidates. At the same time authors also point out that ensuring that teachers are motivated will be as important as teacher training in increasing the quality of education that students receive (Abeba & Woldehanna, 2013; Semela, 2014). These challenges will perhaps be greatest in rural areas. As Semela (2014) concludes that the challenge surrounding teacher education is not one of training modality but resides with the poor attraction of teaching as a career and there is

no way that the quality of education would show any sign of improvement as long as teaching is left for poorly prepared, unmotivated and low achievers.

#### 2.6.6. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

According to the 1994 Education and Training Plan primary education should be given in mother tongue in recognition of the pedagogical advantages it brings, and at the secondary level the language of instruction switches to English. Semela (2014) notes this is one of the consequences of ethnic-based federalism whereby local languages should be used for self-governing and for education. Nevertheless, the medium of instruction used in school has considerable impact on the quality of education that students' receive and subsequently their progression and achievement. In the SNNP Region in particular, where the fieldwork of this study took place, implementing this language policy is considerably challenging concern given the sheer diversity of this region where 56 of Ethiopia's 80 languages are spoken and eight local languages of instruction officially set out for use at the primary level (Cohen, 2000). To prepare students for their entry into secondary education, English as a subject begins early in primary school usually in the first grade and schools then transition to English as a medium of instruction at the upper level of primary school, starting from Grade onwards depending on discretion of the region. In the SNNPR the official switch occurs at Grade Five.

While a number of authors have written on this issue it is still one on which it is difficult to reach consensus (Alemu & Tekleselassie, 2006/2011; Heugh Genson, Bogale & Yohanes, 2007; Nekatibeb, 2005, Assefa, 2002; Vujcich, 2013). Mother tongue instruction has been linked with benefits as well as disadvantages. On one hand it is suggested that learning in mother tongue may improve students' learning outcomes as it facilitates the understanding of new concepts and strengthens affective measures such as self-esteem, identity, motivation and creativity (Assefa, 2002; Heugh et al., 2007; Nekatibeb, 2005). On the other hand, some argue that mother tongue instruction disadvantages students, especially where languages may be unable to express modern concepts in fields such as mathematics and science (Vujcich, 2013). However, as Alemu and Tekleselassie (2011) remark the debate gets more complicated with multilingual societies. They argue that the proposed benefits of mother tongue will be realised only when suitable conditions prevail including quality teachers who can speak the target language and sufficient resources and materials. However, this is not the case in Ethiopia and the reality is that mother tongue instruction may have the unintended effect of disenfranchising and marginalised certain groups - particularly minority language groups - and is potentially detrimental to creating a unified national identity and potentially aggravate inter-ethnic tensions (Wagaw, 2001).

In addition to challenges of providing quality education in multiple language at primary level, the effects of transitioning to English as a medium of instruction at the secondary

level are found to be challenging. Dom (2017) identifies how in some rural communities there is as concern that the teaching of English in particular is inadequate to prepare the children to secondary school, while Vujich (2013) points out that often teachers themselves have limited proficiency in English and have very few opportunities to practice English outside of the classroom. In some instances secondary school teachers were reported as teaching the material first in Amharic and then repeating it in English to mitigate the low language skills of students (MoE, 2014).

While the language policy of the education system has been deemed a success by the government, Alemu and Tekleslassie (2011) point out that this so-called success is only based on political gains stating that the instructional language policy has been more effective in cultural maintenance rather than addressing the academic needs of specific minority ethnic groups/students. Given the lack of resources to sufficiently implement this policy effectively, they ask of what purpose the policy serves if it does not promote student learning, indicating that while maintaining culture is important, equipping students with skills to function in the global marketplace is crucial and language policies should be crafted in view of this greater good that take into account both local and global realities (Alemu & Tekleslassie, 2011).

## **2.7. CHAPTER TWO SUMMARY**

The education system in Ethiopia is highly complex and while significant progress has been made at the primary level in terms of enrolment there are significant inequalities in terms of different groups accessing education particularly across gender, region and rural-urban location and progress at the secondary level is slow. While the evidence presented in this section has been illuminating, at the same time the processes underlying these challenges is somewhat unclear and the effects on the educational experiences of students are not well-established. While aggregate figures may provide a broad picture of some of these inequalities they do not go far enough in identifying ways in which they can possibly be addressed. In addition, questions have been raised concerning the reliability and validity of government statistics. For example, Grieve (2016) highlights the need to be more cautious about official figures and data and suggests that there are more children out of school than official figures suggest, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups, which may have been driven by the global push to meet the MDGs. Nevertheless, in summary the challenges presented in general and their specific impact on rural girls demonstrates the need for a deeper, more holistic understand of the ways in which education intersects with girls' lives, as well as a need for critical evaluation of existing policies concerned with girls' education (Jones, 2011).

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Having outlined the focus of this research, briefly discussed the social, economic and political context and sketched out some of the key features, achievements and challenges of the education system, this chapter reviews the literature relevant to rural girls' migration to urban areas for secondary education. This topic intersects a number of thematic areas including education, gender and independent child migration. These vast literatures have provided important insight to the topic at hand, however a comprehensive review of each of these different fields was difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, efforts were made to highlight the most pertinent issues relevant to this study to set out current understandings relevant to this topic. The importance of taking account of the opinions, experiences and lives of children and youth in developing country context has been extensively documented by many others (e.g. Beazley, Bessell, Ennew & Waterson; Grieve, 2016; Hart, 2013; Punch, 2002) and is not discussed in detail here, but its importance is acknowledged throughout this thesis. This chapter is divided into two sections. First, having outlined some of the most significant barriers that limit the education of both rural boys and girls in the previous chapter, this chapter considers the significant impact of gender norms and expectations are considered on the lives and experiences of rural girls, and the manifestations of these gender norms in the form of expectations for marriage and domestic work responsibilities are discussed. Second, given the increasingly common phenomenon of the migration of children and adolescents from rural to urban areas in search of education and work, some of the most pertinent features of this phenomenon will be taken into account including who it is that migrates, why they migrate and how they migrate, as well as experiences in urban areas. Finally, some of the gaps in our understanding of the specific experience of rural girls who migrate to urban areas for secondary education will be highlighted. Chapter Four will discuss the theoretical and methodological framework for the study.

## 3.2. THE LIFE OF RURAL GIRLS

### 3.2.1. GENDER NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

While the previous section discussed some of the challenges to education that both male and female students in Ethiopia often must contend with, considering their particular implications for rural girls, this section focuses on the *specific* challenges that rural girls face in accessing, pursuing and benefitting from their education. These specific challenges are routinely the manifestation of gender norms and expectations in rural communities that structure the lives, experiences and choices of rural girls in Ethiopia (Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer, 2017). In this section these manifestations are discussed in the form of expectations for marriage and domestic work responsibilities, seeking to demonstrate how they limit girls' education especially their secondary education.

Through this exploration this section is acknowledging the powerful interaction of gender and rural location and is attempting to make the what is often invisible visible (Forsberg, 2001; Guarcello et al., 2008; Chuta & Morrow, 2015). As a number of authors argue, rural locations should be understood as more than just a mere setting or context but we should seek to understand how lives unfold in this contexts girls (Moletsane & Ntombela, 2010; Pini, Molestane & Mills, 2014). This involves going beyond simple dichotomies whereby females is understood in relation to males and rural is understood in relation to urban as is often the case with quantitative analysis, to understand how these interactions take shape in the real world. As demonstrated by researcher such as Camfield (2011) very often the lives of rural and urban girls follow very different trajectories. Understanding what underpins these different trajectories warrants further attention. However it should also be noted that rural girls are not a homogeneous group and while it may be possible to discuss urban and rural trajectories it is nonetheless important to retain focus on the fact that each rural girl has a unique experience.

### 3.2.2. 'YILUNTA/YILUGNTA'

The ubiquitous nature and strict adherence of individuals, families and communities to gender norms and expectations in Ethiopia has been explored by a number of authors and captured by the concept of 'Yilunta' (Chuta, 2013; Crivello & van der Gaag, 2016; Heinonen, 2011; Mains, 2012). Heinonen (2011) describes 'Yilunta' as a heightened sense of what others in the community or wider society might say or think about what an individual does, either in public or private and is associated with family honour, shame or pride. Chuta (2013) indicates that Yilunta can be literally translated into '*what people would say*'. Yilunta, says Chuta, provides young people with a compelling sense of '*right or wrong*' based on social expectations and the motivation to avoid behaviour that others would not approve, while Mains (2012) suggests that Yilunta is a reminder that others are watching



and judging. In the Sidama language there are two equivalent words for Yilunta - 'fokkifata' and 'saalfata' - signifying the importance of this concept amongst this group (Heinonen, 2011).

This omnipresent belief of how a person *should be*, reveals itself in the strict gender norms and expectations that structure and shape the lives of girls, boys, women and men in Ethiopia, which are also said to transcend boundaries of ethnicity and class (Chuta, 2013, Heinonen, 2011). Heinonen (2001) suggests that in the cultural psyche, women are associated with object, utility and dependence while males are associated with subject, action and agency. For males cultural roles pivot around dignity, respectability and maintaining their social status. In her study of youth gangs in Ethiopia she found that for males their social responsibility lies in maintaining their status and was fundamental to the rationale behind their actions. Male members of society are expected to be dignified and rational at all times. In exploring the lives of unemployed young men in Jimma Mains (2012) found that despite being unemployed, 'yilunta' meant that men would not engage in work that is considered below them, preferring to remain unemployed rather than taking on low-status and/or low-paying positions. This also extend to the unlikelihood that they will engage in domestic work which is considered to be beneath them (Mains, 2012; Von Massow, 2000). As Crivello and van der Gaag (2016) describe, for boys yilunta is about being seen as male, but also more importantly as not being seen as female.

While Yilunta has a powerful effect on the life of male members of the community it is perhaps even more influential in the lives of girls and women. These socially constructed traditional forms of masculine and feminine identities work to maintain the subordinate status of women (Heinonen, 2011). Generally speaking some of the defining characteristics of girls and women *growing up well* are respect, hard work the acquisition of new and useful (domestic) skills, modesty, respect for elders, obedience and self-control (Chuta, 2013). Similar to males, it is the social responsibility of individual girls and women to appear respectable at all times and to adhere to these hard set of rules, however these rules are even more limiting for females. The physical movements of girls and women are restricted, and they are discouraged from spending time outside - if they do their movements are controlled and monitored (Porter et al., 2011; Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer, 2017). Inside the home the '*space*' that men and women occupy is visibly different. Heinonen (2011) describes how traditionally raised Ethiopian women seem to take up so little space in a crowded room, and hosting guests with decorum becomes second nature for most Ethiopian women. If an individual girl does not conform she may bring shame to herself and, most importantly, to her family (Heinonen, 2011; Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer, 2017).

While understanding these gendered norms and expectations is important, it also leads us to ask the questions as to how they are reinforced and maintained. One possible mechanism is suggested by Hussein (2009) whereby hierarchies are maintained through the repetition of proverbs which work to shape and influence the behaviours of males and females (Hussein, 2009). In considering a collection of proverbs<sup>6</sup> from different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, Hussein found that proverbs worked to both reflect the unequal status of females and also to reinforce that inequality. While Hussein does not link this directly to the concept of *yilunta* his findings do provide some insight into this questions. Overall, the concept of ‘Yilunta’ reflects and captures many of the unspoken rules and norms at work in Ethiopian culture. Nonetheless, few studies have considered this concept in depth from the perspectives of rural girls and young women, especially in terms of the effect that it may have on their access to secondary education. Other studies have offered valuable contributions of the relevance of this term in relation to street gangs (Heinonen, 2011); boys and young men (Crivello & van der Gaag, 2016) young men (Mains, 2012) and young people in poverty (Chuta, 2013). In the following sections, the influence of gender norms on girls’ educational experiences will be considered.

### 3.2.3. MARRIAGE EXPECTATIONS

Ethiopia has one of the highest rates of early marriage in Sub-Saharan Africa (Erulkar & Muthengi, 2009). According to the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) (CSA, 2016) in Ethiopia in 2016, 14 per cent of girls were married by the age of 15 and 40 per cent were married by the age of 18 years old. This is much higher than in neighbouring country such as Kenya and Tanzania where 23 per cent and 31 per cent of girls are married by the age of 18 respectively. Only in South Sudan is there a higher percentage of girls (52%) married by the age of 18 years. While the median age of marriage is 17.1 years among women aged 25-49 years old with 68 per cent of women marriage before the age of 18 years, the prevalence of early marriage differs across regions. The highest rate of early marriage found in the Amhara (16.2), Benishangul Gumuz (17.1) and Tigray (17.2) regions while the highest age of marriage is in Addis Ababa (23.9). In rural areas the expected age of entry is generally much lower, usually around the age of 15 years old, with one in six girls said to be married before the age of 15. Eighty two per cent of those who are married before the age of 15 are from rural areas (Erulkar, 2013) and girls entry into marriage occurs on average seven years earlier than that of their male counterparts in Ethiopia (Stavropoulou & Gupta-Archer, 2017). In rural areas, the age of entry into secondary education often coincides with the expected age of entry into marriage and at this time pathways often diverge as these

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the proverbs analysed include the following: ‘*Women in the kitchen/pantry, man in the court*’; ‘*Woman can grow tall but without wisdom*’; ‘*Women cannot speak intelligently, but she can prepare good dish in the kitchen*’.

choices are usually seen as mutually exclusive (Del Franco, 2010; Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012).

As Ansell (2004) points out, the fact that young people who stay in school and marry later has long been recognised (e.g. King and Hill 1993; Psacharopoulos and Tzannatos 1991; Schultz 1993). While primary education is seen as a protective against entry into marriage, secondary education is considered as an even greater protective force against early marriage, and this has been demonstrated in countries such as Niger, Bangladesh and Tanzania (Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012). According to the DHS survey the median age for marriage in Ethiopia increases with education level from 16.3 years old amongst those with no education, to 17.8 years amongst those with primary level, to 22.4 years for those with secondary education (CSA, 2016). Delaying early marriage can give girls an opportunity reach their desired level of schooling and enter into paid employment (Dimbiso, 2009), can build girls' confidence and self-esteem and enable them to make better decisions about marriage when the time comes by giving girls greater self-esteem and greater control over decisions affecting their lives in the future (Boyden, 2012; DelFranco, 2010). For example, in a study of college students in a rural areas of Bangladesh, DelFranco (2010) found that girls who enrolled in higher education developed more complex and differentiated aspirations for the future, increased self-worth and self-esteem and identify their hopes of becoming economically independent and more in control of important life choices. In terms of restrictive gender norms and traditions, education may also help to challenge customary social norms and practices in various ways. For example, Dom (2017) reports that educated girls were said to be more likely to resist being overburdened with domestic chores, stand up against arranged marriage and female circumcision and be wanting to choose their partners or to get independent income before marrying. The benefits of education are said to accrue not only for individual girls, but also for their future families and children of more educated mothers are said to be healthier and better educated (UNICEF, 2011).

While the prevalence of early marriage is said to be declining in many areas, it nevertheless persists despite the government setting the legal age of marriage at 18 in 2000 (Jones, Tefera, Stephenson, Gupta & Perezniето, 2014; Mjaaland, 2016; Stavropoulou & Gupta-Archer, 2017). Even with these efforts of the government to address the issue of early marriage, it seems that cultural logic and practice often have greater sway than this law in rural parts of Ethiopia. It is interesting to explore why cultural practices prevail given the fact that the need to gain access to more land, which was a major driver of this cultural practice in times past, is dwindling as a cause (Dagne, 2008). Drawing on data from her ethnographic study from 1993 to 2016, Mjaaland (2016) found that in rural Tigray in Northern Ethiopia, people were unaccepting of the law against early marriage. She describes an encounter with one community leader who took his daughter out of school

for marriage despite his awareness of the newly introduced law explaining how *'we have demolished that law ourselves'* (p5). In seeking to probe deeper into why this practice persists in Tigray, Mjaaland (2016) found that social norms about virginity and sexual morality – which are necessary to gain respect in the community- were powerful drivers in sustaining the practice of early and underage marriage (this was also found by Dagne, 2008; Stavropoulou & Gupta-Archer, 2017). Similarly Alemu (2008) found that the strongest reason for the sustained practice of early marriage is the desire or need to maintain the status of the family. In addition to maintaining the status of the family and ensuring the future of daughters, a significant motivator was found to be the fear of the family falling prey to gossip if their daughter was unmarried past the expected age. In such cases, Alemu (2008) describes how the family would be laughed at and flaws in their background or conduct would be suspected.

In simple terms, marriage plays a protective role in maintaining the respect and status of girls in their communities. There is significant pressure for females to maintain their virginity until marriage and males are encouraged to marry a virgin (Alemu, 2008; Dagne, 2008; Mjaaland, 2016; Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer, 2017). If girls wait until a later age to marry they are seen as unsuitable partners, as it is assumed that they had already engaged in sexual activity and thus would either fail to marry or would enter into an unhappy marriage. This in turn would bring shame to the girl and her family - a powerful social moderator in Ethiopia. In many cases parents do not wish to educate their daughters as they believe that girls who are educated will not be accepted for marriage (Rihani, 2006). In addition financing a girls' education is seen by some as a loss of investment given the fact that girls would most likely leave the home to join their husband's household after marriage (Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012; Mjaaland, 2016; Rose & Al-Samarrai, 2001; Weir, 2010). To avoid this shame falling upon the family, parents (and often sibling) would keep their daughters from attending secondary school. While in some cases girls are promised that they will be allowed to continue their education once they are married, in reality girls are unlikely to have the opportunity to do so, either because their husband does not permit it or because she falls pregnant very soon after marriage (Jones, Tefera, Stephenson, Gupta & Pereznieto, 2014).

In addition to maintaining the status of girls and ensuring their marriageability, Chuta and Morrow (2015) describe how early marriage is considered to safeguard the economic futures of girls, who up until the point of marriage are provided for by their families. Once a girl leaves her family home and enters the home of her husband, her parents will no longer have to take care of her, and they consider that she will have a better life with her husband. This is also found by Boyden, Pankhurst and Tafere (2012) who found that marriage is often seen as a more secure way than education of ensuring girls' economic future and security. It seems that at least part of the problem is that there are few other real

economic and employment opportunities for rural girls in their communities outside of marriage, even for those who do have the opportunity to continue their education, few opportunities may be available for them post-education. Overall even though there may be a protective logic to the practice of early marriage, the consequences of early marriage can be detrimental to girls in a number of ways including an increased number of pregnancies over the life course, poorer health for women and decreased access to school and employment with implications for women's empowerment (Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012). The practice of early marriage also has associations with other harmful traditional practices such as female genital circumcision and mutilation, which is seen in a number of places in Ethiopia as a necessary prerequisite for securing marriage (Boyden, 2012; Chuta & Morrow, 2015).

Another aspect related to the interplay between education and the practice of early marriage that warrants attention is the fact that in some girls themselves are arranging their marriages which highlights that girls' may have more agency in these decisions that previously acknowledged (Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012). While in many cases of early marriage girls know little of the marriage beforehand more attention has recently given to the fact that early marriage (and female genital mutilation) is evolving away from arranged marriage and towards adolescent marriage (Erulkar; 2013; Jones et al., 2017). Returning to Mjaaland's (2016) study in Tigray, she found that girls too understood the risk to their education by not entering into marriage and would therefore take steps to avoid this risk, as they too realise that opportunities are few. Therefore, while it may be that in many cases that girls are forced or tricked into marriage, this does not capture the full story as marriage may also be something that girls choose for themselves in the midst of limited opportunities. As Grieve (2016) argues there is a need to challenge the moralistic tone present in some (education) literature and to recognise that many of the choices made by those living in challenging circumstances often reflect the least worst or most strategic option amidst constraints and limited opportunities. This highlights the need to know more about his practice from the perspectives of girls themselves.

In summary, from this evidence it seems that are both cultural and economic factors underpinning the practice of early marriage and it is necessary to consider the impact of the interplay between education and marriage on the lives of rural girls not only in the present but also in the future. While those who continue to push the expectation of early entry into marriage for rural girls may be well-intentioned they are often misinformed and culture should not be an excuse for securing the rights of girls and women. In addition, while the literature has shown that increasing girls' access and progression through secondary education has positive benefits in the present and may offer an important protection against early marriage while girls are still in school, it is also important to consider what happens to girls after they finish their secondary education as once girls leave

school, there are few opportunities for them other than marriage (Mjaaland, 20016). Finally, it is also necessary to understand the agency and choices of individual as they navigate their social environment, from their own perspective recognising that social norms often interact with limited economic opportunities for females in rural areas.

#### 3.2.4. DOMESTIC WORK

In addition to expectations for marriage, cultural norms and expectations determine the work that males and females engage in. While in Ethiopia, engaging in work activities is considered to be a normal part of childhood, the work that children to engage in is highly gendered (Abebe and Kjørholt, 2009; Orkin, 2012; Van Blerk, 2008). Generally speaking, girls are expected to carry out domestic chores whereas boys are assigned to farming duties (Abebe & Kjørholt, 2009). Although the relationship between work and schooling in Ethiopia is not straightforward, with some evidence suggesting that engaging in work activities can help children to be able to continue their education, in general the work activities that girls engage in are considered to be less compatible with their schooling than those of boys (Admassie, 2003). While boys often receive financial compensation for their work, girls rarely do and thus it may only be boys who find themselves in a position to earn money to support their education (Admassie, 2002; Haile & Haile, 2007). Furthermore, while the school shift system is intended to allow children to take part in work and school activities at different stage of the day as discussed earlier, Orkin (2012) describes how domestic chores usually require a long and continuous block of time and are difficult to balance with school and studying. In a review of evidence concerning the lives of adolescent girls in Ethiopia, Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer (2017) found that almost half of young adolescent girls spent a minimum of 28 hours weekly on housework compared to 35 per cent of boys. Porter et al. (2011) write that the burden of domestic work on girls is often so severe that failure to fulfil domestic responsibilities and chores can be a trigger for violence.

Of particular concern is the fact that the heavy work burden that many rural girls and young women in Ethiopia face is not only gendered but is also spatial (Forsberg, 2001). Due to the limited resources and infrastructure available in rural areas such as electricity and running water, the domestic chores that girls engage in are incredibly time-consuming as girls' must often compensate for these limited resources and infrastructure (Mulugeta, 2004; Porter, 2013). As such, rural girls in particular are often kept at home from school so that they can complete these burdensome chores, or at least until a younger sibling who is able to take over these responsibilities comes along (Mulugeta, 2004). The impact of the poor availability of resources and infrastructure its consequences for rural girls who must offset for these deficiencies is perhaps under researched given the significance it has on

their lives. One of the authors who does discuss the significance of this issue for rural girls and women is Porter (2013) who talks about the 'transport gap' that women in African countries must fill. The transport gap refers to the lack of cheap, regular and reliable transport in rural areas and the principle onus that falls on women to compensate for this transport gap and carry the heavy burden of water, firewood and agricultural products required for household use (Porter et al., 2011). This in turn is found to significantly impact the education of rural girls and their school attendance may be delayed, impeded or curtailed (Porter et al., 2011).

While the important impact of parents attitudes to their children's education is well understood (e.g. Admassie, 2003), parental attitudes towards may be tempered by the need for girls' contribution towards domestic chores. It seems that one of the key reasons why mothers wish to keep their daughters from school is to relieve their own domestic work burden, and we find that often mothers and female relatives are the one who are reinforcing restrictive gender norms (Mulugeta, 2004). For those who do get the chance to attend school, it has been pointed out that the heavy work burden that rural girls face often means that they arrive at school exhausted unable to mentally engage with the academic work while their interest in education may diminish (Admassie, 2002/2003; Porter et al., 2011). Mulugeta (2004) found that parents in rural areas often overburden their children mostly because they do not understand that success in schools involves much more than merely attending class. As the majority of parents have little or no experience of the education system they are perhaps unaware of what it takes to be successful in their education. Given the heavy work burden that rural girls face that impacts their education, we may suspect that those few rural girls who do succeed in their education may be rural girls who have somehow managed to escape this domestic work burden. However, while this may be the case for some evidence from Mulugeta (2004) suggests that those who successfully reached higher education often sacrificed meals or sleep or both so that they could keep up with their schoolwork, which they say was a continuous struggle. Even further Semela, Bekele and Abraham (2017) found that the absence of women as academics and leaders in higher level institutions in Ethiopia - where women are 50 per cent less likely to hold the rank of 'lecturer' and 72 per cent less likely to hold the position of assistant professorship - has been linked to the overwhelming domestic responsibilities that they face (Semela, Bekele & Abraham, 2017). This is important as it indicates that we must not only consider how girls' domestic work affect girls' education access, but also their progression and achievement, in education and beyond.

### 3.2.5. SUMMARY

The evidence presented in this section has served to illustrate the very substantial barriers that rural girls face to their education in addition to those faced by rural boys, which are often a result of gender norms and expectations in these communities. These gender norms and expectations offer a compelling sense of what is considered to be right and wrong for both individuals and families and the lives of rural girls in particular are largely structured by these beliefs. However we also see these cultural expectations do not operate in isolation but rather interact with economic opportunities and constraints, including (lack of) access to basic resources and employment opportunities in the community. From this evidence we could perhaps conclude that strategies to empower girls by getting them into school will not be sufficient on their own, as even when in school girls continue to face discrimination in terms of their domestic work burden, while expectations for marriage still await them even after they have completed education, especially if economic opportunities are limited (Jones, 2011; Mjaaland, 2016).



### 3.3. RURAL GIRLS' INDEPENDENT MIGRATION

#### 3.3.1. RISING EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

In Ethiopia, increasing educational aspirations are said to be a response to the recent and rapid expansion of formal schooling over the past two decades in Ethiopia and now both parents and children are now making huge efforts to realise these aspirations (Tafere, 2014). For example, in their study of 20 rural communities in Ethiopia over the past 20 years Pankhurst, Dom and Bevan (2017) found that changes in aspirations were brought about by greater access to education. For those living in rural areas in particular, the expansion of education is helping children to reimagine alternative futures to those that seemed mapped out for them in rural communities (Ansell, 2004; Posti-Ahokas and Palojoki, 2014). A number of authors have pointed out how due to the expansion of formal education, education is now becoming an expectation of childhood and a sign of well-being and 'successful' youth transitions in many developing country contexts including Ethiopia (Crivello, 2011; Froerer, 2011). Boyden (2013) indicates that in developing country context such as Ethiopia education is now replacing work as children's main responsibility to their families and the social mobility of families is increasingly thought of as dependent on children's education and there is a growing belief that education leads to a better future. As a result children and their families are willing to invest substantial effort in attempts to achieve their ambitions.

Authors have remarked how increasing educational aspirations alongside economic growth and education expansion demonstrate how structures (social, economic and cultural) play a role in influencing the formation of aspirations of individuals and groups and their subsequent decisions and behaviours (e.g. Conradie, 2013; DeJaeghere, 2016; Gale and Parker, 2015). In this respect, a particularly useful way of conceptualising aspirations is as a *navigational capacity* based on the work of Appadurai (2004) whereby the aspirations and agency of individuals are understood to unfold within the structures and context in which they are located. This brings the importance of culture into our understanding of how aspirations develop: '*In culture... ideas of the future as much as those about the past, are embedded and nurtured*' (p59, Appadurai, 2004). Aspirations are understood as a *cultural capacity* whereby individuals navigate through these contexts and different factors can simultaneously constrain future choices while also presenting openings for new opportunities - aspirations as involving a dialectical relationship between *what is desired and possible* (DeJaeghere, 2016; Gale & Parker, 2015). Applying this logic to the current study is particularly useful given how recent economic and social developments (explored in Chapter Two) are found to contribute to the raised the aspirations of girls and their families and how migration and education provide them with opportunities to challenge the deeply entrenched inequalities that they face.

Appadurai goes further to suggest that through the capacity to aspire those who are marginalised can contest their conditions of disadvantage:

*‘...in strengthening the capacity to aspire, conceived as a cultural capacity, especially among the poor, the future-oriented logic of development could find a natural ally, and the poor could find the resources required to contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty’* (p59, Appadurai, 2004).

Understanding aspirations as a navigational capacity closely associated with individual agency is important for several reasons. First, it helps to attribute greater agency to individuals, including those who are disadvantaged, while at the same time recognising the structural factors that influence, and sometimes constrain their pathways (Gale & Parker, 2015). Secondly, it implicitly acknowledges the fact that culture is not something fixed or rigid but rather is some that is negotiated, involving a dialogue between current circumstance and future possibility. As competing ways of being and doing become available to the participants they are able to critically reflect on what is taken for granted in their rural lives and conceptualise a new way of living and in turn, plan to improve their life and well-being in the present and future (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009a; de Haas, 2009; Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007). While strict gender norms have a powerful influence in determining pathways of rural girls, they are not immovable and young people are finding opportunities and openings to challenge and contest them. Thirdly while ‘rural and traditional’ are sometimes seen as oppositional to that which is ‘urban and modern’, especially in the case of Ethiopia, understanding aspirations as a navigational capacity recognises how these two seemingly oppositional forces interact with and influence one another.

### 3.2.2. INDEPENDENT CHILD MIGRATION

The phenomenon of independent child migration is not unique to Ethiopia but rather is increasingly common in a number of developing country contexts, whereby young people are leaving rural areas in search of better opportunities for employment, independence and better futures (Boyden, 2013; Crivello, 2011; Greany, 2012; Murray, 2012; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014; Punch, 2007; Rao, 2010). Independent child migrants are generally considered as those under the age of 18 years old who move from their home and live at their destination without a parent or guardian in contrast to other forms of child migration such as trafficking or asylum seeking where children generally move with their parents (Temin, Montgomery Engebretsen & Barker, 2013; Yaqub, 2009). One of the biggest differences between independent child migrants and other forms of child migration is the greater opportunity that they have to exercise their agency. In a time when rapid economic growth and education expansion is not reaching all citizens and inequalities are emerging with rural areas being left behind, migration may often be the only viable option in an

attempt to secure a better future even if the success of such an investment is uncertain (Arnot, Schneider & Welpy, 2013; Rao, 2010; Yaqub, 2009). As we have seen, increasing educational aspirations amidst limited opportunities for a good quality education are driving migration in many instances (Boyden, 2013; Rao, 2020). While both hope and uncertainty characterise independent migration, perhaps what it captures most is the incredible agency that they demonstrate in the search for a better futures. However, it is difficult to determine a consistent profile of independent child migrants, and considering different large scale surveys of this group in different contexts patters are shown to be diverse (Kwankye et al., 2007 in Ghana; Erulkar, Mekbib, Simie & Gulema, 2006 in Ethiopia). There is some evidence that females migrate later (Punch, 2007) and often more often than boys (Erulkar et al., 2006). Nevertheless more work is needed in this are to determine more about the characteristics of those who migrate to ensure that their needs are provided for.

### 3.2.3. MAKING THE DECISION TO MIGRATE

A number of authors describe decision-making as a shared process between migrant girls and their parents with children's control over their migration seen as a continuum with parents influencing these decisions in various ways and degrees (Yaqub, 2009). In some cases one or both parents may instigate or actively encourage children's migration, in other cases parents may resist it and children may leave against their parents' wishes (Kwankye et al., 2009; Yaqub, 2009). In her study in Peru, Crivello (2015) found that migration decisions are commonly made within the context of mutual dependence within the generations and in expectation of reciprocity over the life course. In Hashim's (2007) study migration was found to be initiated by children themselves, their parents or sometimes as a request from the host family, but only a very small minority had no input into the decision to migrate. The idea of a shared decision-making process is what some researchers call '*negotiated inter-dependence*' whereby children meet family needs but at the same time assert agency over their migration decisions and life choices allowing young people to gain a level of independence while at the same time not abandoning their family ties (Whitehead, Hashim & Iversen 2005; Punch 2002; Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013; Yaqub, 2009).

Broadly speaking the decision to migrate can be understood as a diverse process often made within a range of opportunities and constraints and involving a number of investments and trade-offs (Ferrant, Tuccio, Loiseau & Nowacka, 2014; Punch, 2007). Factors contributing to the decision to migrate are said to include family factors (income generation for consumption family roles and intra-household position), pursuing the opportunity to accumulate skills (education) and responding to shocks or self-protection.

Erulkar, Mekbib, Simie & Gulema (2006) found that educational opportunities were most commonly cited as the reason for migrants amongst youth, with 51.4 per cent of girls and 44.9 per cent of boys citing this reason. Work opportunities were the second most commonly cited reason for migration amongst 32.4 per cent of girls and 28.6 per cent of boys. Van Blerk (2008) found that migration of rural girls was linked to a number of factors including escaping traditional cultural practices, failed marriages, pregnancy, the stigma of having sex outside of marriage, paid work and the glamorous lifestyle friends and relatives had achieved by living in the city (Van Blerk, 2008). In reality it is often the case that migration decision are complex and involve a number of competing motivations.

Migration for education, particularly at the secondary level, as in most of sub-Saharan Africa due to the lack of secondary schools and employment opportunities there is an understanding that children will have to move out of rural areas in order to make it (Porter et al., 2011). However, amongst those who do migrate for education, there may be a number of different reasons why they do so (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). First of all, many may migrate to urban areas when there are no available secondary schools in their area or where they have to travel long distances to reach the closest secondary school (Ansell 2004; Punch 2004 as cited by Punch, 2007). As indicated earlier, travelling long distances to reach secondary school is considered to be particularly unfavourable for female students for a number of reasons which include the time that it takes to reach the school which cannot be spent on domestic chores, but also the risk of physical and sexual harassment and violence (Mulugeta, 2004; Rihani, 2006; Rose, Yoseph, Berihun & Nuresu, 1997). Secondly, while in some areas there may be available schools close by, the quality of education in these school may be poor and young people may migrate to find better quality schools in urban areas (Boyden, 2013; Dom, 2017). This represents the growing understanding within communities that low quality education provided rural areas is not equipping students with the skills they need, reflecting the wider inequalities in the education system between rural and urban locations.

A third reason for migrating for education is that living in urban areas offers migrants the opportunity to not only pursue their education but also to engage in (paid) employment, or to *'earn and to learn'* and support their education and possibly also support their families. In his study of independent child migration and education in Ghana, Hashim (2007) suggests that there are both positive and negative aspects of migrating for both education and work. While migration can provide children with the opportunity of accessing education by enabling them to earn an income to cover school costs, or through the prospect of exchanging their labour for support in pursuing their education, a negative finding was that when children migrate for work it sometimes undermines their access to education and they may expose themselves to abusive and exploitative working conditions that in turn limit their education prospects. He concludes that migration enables some

young people to access opportunities that might not be accessible otherwise but also puts other at risk.

A fourth reason, while not directly linked with education, is that many young people from rural areas are attracted to urban centres due to the glamorous lifestyles it promises which may become known to them either by visiting urban areas or through stories from other young people who return from the city with new clothes, jewellery and money that they acquired in urban areas and may also promise girls that they will help them find jobs (Van Blerk, 2008). This is undoubtedly attractive for rural girls especially those who are disillusioned with traditional rural ways of life (Van Blerk, 2008). However while seeing others benefit from migration may be a powerful driver, it could also be that returning migrants exaggerate the benefits of migration and minimise the challenges hardships and failures (Hertrich & Lesclingand, 2012 as cited by Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). As a result, some migrants may have an idealised view of urban centres and may not be prepared with the adequate information that they need to ensure their successful outcomes in urban locations (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). In addition to the glamorous lifestyle that girls may believe exists in urban areas, they may also be attracted by the availability of better resource services in urban areas, which may simply make their life easier, which is what Gosnell and Abrams (2011) term this 'amenity migration'. Whatever the case, the phenomenon of independent child migration represents the growing dissatisfaction of rural youth with rural lifestyles and the escape route offered to them through migration and the belief that there is a better life elsewhere (Mains, 2012; Porter et al., 2011).

Finally, migration provides girls and young women with an opportunity to escape restrictive gender norms and expectation in their sending communities, which as we have seen can limit their opportunities for education (Ferrant, Tuccio, Loiseau and Nowacka, 2014; Van Blerk, 2008). In Erulkar et al.'s (2006) large scale survey 25 per cent of the migrants had migrated to escape marriage, the majority of whom migrated between the ages of 10-14 years old. Migration not only provides the chance to escape early marriage but it is also suggested that migration provides a socially acceptable alternative to marriage in many settings (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013).

#### 3.2.4. RESOURCING MIGRATION

While independent child migration is said to be increasing, it may be the case that only a particular portion of the population can or wish to migrate. Some studies suggest that independent child migration is only available to those who have adequate resources to support it and therefore is not available to the very poor (Ansell & van Blerk, 2005), while other evidence states that it is the poor who migrate (Yaqub, 2009). A number of studies

have pointed to the important role of social networks in helping to facilitate children's migration who may help to supplement or offset the costs of migration (Crivello, 2015; Ferrant, Tuccio, Loiseau & Nowacka, 2014; Yaqub, 2009). In Erulkar et al.'s (2006) large scale survey, many children who came to Addis Ababa came to live with relatives, especially aunts, uncles or siblings (84%) where they would often engage in domestic work. In Peru, Crivello (2015) found that children's extended family, siblings and peer networks were essential for them to be able to convert their aspirations into concrete plans and actual migration. The ways that social networks may facilitate migration include contributing to the costs of migration, providing ready accommodation in urban areas (often in return for their contribution to the household) and also providing other resources such as school supplies, and importantly providing support and advice in urban areas (Mulugeta, 2009; Punch, 2007).

Entering in domestic work in urban ways is an attractive way for girls to facilitate their migration. Domestic work is easy to enter and does not require capital or educational preparation and should also mean safe, secure and ready accommodation (Gallotti, 2013). Migrating into domestic work might be driven by the need to fulfil basic needs as it allows them to access the bare minimum of food and lodgings that their parents could not provide (Kifle, 2002) while other may migrate into these roles in the hope that domestic work will lead to other opportunities such as formal education or employment (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). For example, in Ghana Tsikata (2009) found that one in five girls entered into domestic work as their employer promised them to support vocational training either during or after their service. Social networks have been identified as the primary mode of recruitment for domestic work and relationships between migrants and relatives/employers may be mutually beneficial where in return for accommodation and food and support in their schooling, girls assist in domestic work.

Some migrants migrate with the full knowledge that they will be engaged as domestic works while in other cases relatives may lie to recruit girls. For example, Erulkar, Semunegus and Mekonnen (2011) describe the experience of one girl whose aunt promised to send her to school if she came to Addis Ababa, however when she arrived her aunt did not allow her to attend school and 'locked her in the house' (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). Other forms of recruitment into domestic and other forms of work may include brokers (both legal and illegal) who meet girls at the bus station as soon as they arrive in the city (Van Blerk, 2008). For those who don't migrate to the homes of relatives or enter into domestic work they may enter into rented accommodation financed either by rural girls themselves or by their families or in some cases, where they are available, they may enter into boarding schools, as was found to be the case in Ghana and South Africa (Porter et al., 2011).

### 3.2.5. URBAN LIVING

Once in urban areas the situations of female students may vary considerably and girls might encounter different supports and barriers that may interact in various ways to produce distinct outcomes (Erulkar, Mekib, Simie & Gulema, 2006). Some may fail to enter secondary school, others may be faced with various barriers and constraints that may compromise their progression through secondary school, while others may successfully enter into and complete secondary school. Erulkar, Mekbib, Simie and Gulema (2006) found that many did not realise their aspirations when they arrived with 13 per cent of girls who came to Addis Ababa for schooling never having been to school.

Beside education, a number of other benefits and challenges have been reported by migrants. Benefits include greater agency and control over their own lives in destination communities where they can make choices about their lives, better income levels, economic independence from families at the place of origin and better and improved quality of services in the cities (Atnafu, Oucho & Zetly, 2014). Challenges include loneliness and homesickness especially on arrival to cities come to terms with their new environments which may be intensified when migrants are unfamiliar with the local language and culture (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). However, it is also suggested that migrants' experiences in their host communities may change over time given that experiences tend to be more intense at the start of their migration journey (Ansell & van Blerk 2007; Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013).

For many rural girls, entering into domestic work means that girls are at risk in in urban areas where they are sometimes highly invisible and highly vulnerable (de Regt, 2016). Some risks associated with domestic work include a lack of material or family support, limited or no social networks, exploitation, disputes with host families, heavy work burdens and their work responsibilities being privileged over their education, school dropout and repetition, violence and sexual abuse, and having to return home to their families (Erulkar et al., 2006; Erulkar & Mekbib, 2007; The Population Council, 2013). Erulkar and Mekbib (2007) found that adolescent domestic workers had lower self-esteem and few friends than other adolescents. Working for relatives might actually mean they are less likely to receive financial remuneration even though they may receive compensation in kind Kifle (2002). Fernandez (2010) describes how her participants (who were domestic workers in the Middle East) were on call 24 hours a day seven days per week and working between ten and twenty hours daily.

Because of their gender, rural girls are specifically vulnerable in cities in other ways. The work of Van Blerk (2008) suggests that those who do face unfavourable circumstances as domestic workers may be at risk of entering into commercial sex work. In her study of sixty rural-urban migrants who entered into commercial sex work in urban areas in Ethiopia, she

found that not all girls immediately entered into commercial sex work but first tried to support themselves working as domestic maids. Reasons for leaving domestic work and entering into commercial sex work included difficult working conditions such as working long arduous hours often without pay and occasional abuse from employers. Another suggested risk to rural girl migrants in the city is the formation of relationships with males in return for resources such as rent, or material gifts such as clothes, makeup and mobile phones (Ankomah, 2006 as cited by Porter et al., 2011). Access to such material items, in particular mobile phones was found by Porter et al., (2012) to be an important marker of success.

### 3.2.6. SUMMARY

Migration to urban areas provides rural girls with the opportunity to exercise their agency and realise their educational aspirations even if the likely success of their efforts is unknown. Girls may make migration decisions with or against the wishes of their family. In urban areas they have access to better quality schools closer to where they are living and also the chance to acquire other skills and benefits. Entering into the home of a relative or other family in urban areas allows girls to exchange their domestic labour in return for support in their education. Pressure to enter into early marriage is not as prevalent in urban areas and domestic chores are not as burdensome. Nevertheless, situations in urban areas are often unknown and may differ substantially given different supports and barriers girls may face but in most cases returning to rural areas is an unappealing option. Understanding more about the common and unique experiences of rural girls who migrate to urban schools from their own perspectives is necessary. In particular understanding all phases of migration from rural lives through to urban experiences will help to provide unique insights and information and add a new perspective to this phenomenon (Yaqub, 2009).



### 3.4. CHAPTER THREE SUMMARY

The increasing value placed on education as a means to a better future is based on the assumption that education provides children with the skills that they need to enter into employment and that opportunities for employment are available for children when they leave school. However, due to the poor quality of education available to many students, education no longer translates automatically to better outcomes - especially where the quality of education is poor - while opportunities for employment after education are limited (Kaffenberger & Pritchett, 2017; Pritchett & Sandefur, 2017; Rao & Hossain, 2012; Ryan, 2000). As we have seen earlier, unemployment is high in Ethiopia and there are a lack of viable opportunities for many who complete their education, especially girls, with those who have complete secondary education more likely to be unemployed.

A number of authors have discussed this phenomenon of unfulfilled expectations in relation to young men in Ethiopia, describing how despite the high aspirations of children and young people better outcomes were not guaranteed and transitions from education into paid employment were becoming less secure. In Mains' (2012) study of young rural men who were unemployed, it was found that the lack of available work was the biggest challenge they faced in realising their aspirations. Mains (2012) suggests rather than youth transitions have now the potential to become indefinite and being hopeless and possessing unprecedented aspirations are no longer mutually exclusive. Similarly, Pankhurst (2017) found that in many rural communities in Ethiopia, the inability of young men - who had benefitted from some education - to find jobs has led to disillusionment with education. Limited opportunities for young men also led to concerns of them sitting idle and engaging in bad habits including addiction to alcohol or chat, theft and/or violence. In this way young people's transitions to adulthood were described as becoming longer and more complex (Pankhurst, 2017). This is what Jones and Chant (2009) term a 'crisis of youth' whereby an increasing number of young people find it more difficult to gain access to education, a job and raised standards of living. As such, Jones and Chant (2009) suggest that rather than education as a catch-all solution we need to give more attention to the costs incurred by and for young people in pursuing education and training to the operation of and actual opportunities in the labour markets.

Given these challenges, there is growing suspicions regarding the value of education and the fact that education may not always be the '*unqualified good*' it is sometimes taken to be (Ansell, 2004; Crivello, 2011; Morrow, 2013; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014; Unterhalter, 2003). As Dom (2017) notes in many communities in Ethiopia, rising aspirations are found to co-exist with the re-emergence of uncertainties about the returns from education and there seems to be inherent tensions between what children and families aspire to and what is possible. For those who are 'unsuccessful' there is a possibility that they will be left feeling

as if they have failed which wrongly places a burden on children whose success may never have been possible in the face of significant structural constraints (Crivello, 2011; Morrow, 2013). In summary, while schooling and formal education is seen as instrumental in helping to address and overcome inequalities and is a prerequisite for gaining formal employment, barriers to education can in fact reinforce inequality and restrict what an individual can be and can do and thus has a role in creating, maintaining and reproducing inequality and disadvantage (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bowles and Gintis 1976; DeJaeghere & Lee, 2011; Greany, 2012; Terzi, 2007; Unterhalter, 2003; Walker, 2007; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). Froerer (2011) goes further to suggest that education can consolidate forms of social separation, not simply by reproducing social inequalities but by introducing new ones.

Securing better futures for girls and women in Ethiopia presents a major challenge as the government seeks to ensure continued and sustained development for all its citizens and girls' secondary education has an important role to play in achieving these goals. While significant progress has been made in the Ethiopian education system in terms of increasing access at primary and tertiary level, it falls short in many areas and significant challenges remain in terms of the access, progression and achievement of different groups, with rural girls one of the most disadvantaged groups. Migration provides rural girls with an opportunity to pursue better education and better futures, however our understanding of this is not well-rounded. Understanding the common and unique experiences of rural girls along their education and migration pathways is imperative including experiences in rural areas that contribution to migration decisions, what particular population of rural girls migration and how they resource this migration and what their experiences in urban settings are inside and outside of school.

This chapter sought to situate the current research study. While it does not claim to be comprehensive, the goals of this chapter were to provide insight into some of the issues relevant for understanding the context of the study. If nothing else, this section has served to highlight the complexity of the issue at hand. Weaving together different insights from these separate fields of gender, education and migration this study seeks to understand the everyday lives of rural girls and their experiences insider and outsider of school following their stories from their sending communities before they migration, their migration pathways and their experiences in urban settings. It has highlighted the need for a better understandings of the issue at hand which this study hopes to provide through in-depth qualitative research which will illustrate the common and unique experiences of rural girls in their educational journeys and the factors both inside and outside of school that contribute to their experiences and outcomes. The next chapter will outline the theoretical and methodological approach of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Having outlined the background and context of the study in Chapter Two and reviewed some of the important literature relevant to the topic of rural girls' migration to urban areas in Chapter Three, this chapter will set out the methodological framework of the study. Amartya Sen's capability approach provides the normative framework for this research study which adopts a critical feminist research approach employing qualitative methods with participatory elements. This approach is considered appropriate to capture the complexity of the lives of the participants in this study helping to answer the research questions and is aligned with the aims and objectives of the study. The specific elements of the methodological approach of the study will now be considered in more detail.

### **4.2. A NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK**

#### **4.2.1. AN IMPOVERISHED NORMATIVE MODEL**

The Ethiopian governments' strategy for development and education (outlined in Chapter Two), while commendable, is nonetheless aligned with a human capital framework whereby the aims of education are understood in terms of the contribution education makes to national growth (e.g. Hanushek, & Wößmann, 2007). While this is not necessarily negative if the purpose of economic growth is to contribute to broader development goals - such as decreasing inequalities and improving livelihoods - it nonetheless encourages an (over)emphasis on economic growth. What is perhaps more problematic is that with a human capital framing there is an assumption that development happens in a linear fashion, whereby more education, leads to more and better skills, resulting in better jobs and maximised economic returns (King & Palmer, 2006). Associated with this is the belief that if children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to education this will help to remediate for deficits earlier in life and help them to overcome situations of poverty and disadvantage (Blanden, Greg & Macmillan, 2006; Heckman, 2007; King & Palmer, 2006; Bird, 2007). However, as we have seen in Chapter Two, this is not the case and despite Ethiopia's rapid economic growth and education expansion, inequalities are widening and unemployment is pervasive. It seems there is a missing link within the human capital reasoning. This is perhaps linked to the fact that it fails to take account of how wider structural forces (social, economic, political) that may impact the ability of individuals and groups to convert their skills and resources into valued outcomes, while also failing to account for human agency and well-being (Walker, 2012).

#### 4.2.2. AN EXPANSIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

The capability approach provides a more expansive approach to development and education than the human capital framework. Authors coming from within the Capability Approach tradition describe the human capital framework as a somewhat *impoverished* normative model for development and for education. Grounded in the work of Amartya Sen who provides the philosophical foundation for this approach it places the person at the centre of its concern and is guided by a concern of equity and social justice, the objective of which is to promote human flourishing and well-being (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009b; Deneulin, 2009; Deneulin & Shanani, 2009; Robeyns, 2011). The capability approach does not reject economic growth; however it suggests that the marketplace should not dictate the shape of society, but rather economic growth should be a tool that helps to create the type of society that individuals have reason to value and helps people to realise their potential (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009b; Deneulin, 2009; Nussbaum, 2000). The capability approach has similarities with a human rights approach as both are based on the idea that the individual should be treated as an end and not as means and the agency of individuals is recognised and valued (Deneulin, 2009). Although the capability has sometimes received criticism for representing an individualistic view of development (e.g. Hickel, 2014) this is a misjudgement. Rather, the capability approach highlights the important role of social arrangements in both facilitating and constraining the agency of individuals. In essence, it can be said that the capability approach seeks to connect individual biographies with social and collective arrangements, underscoring the important role of social arrangements in the realisation of an individual's agency or their ability to convert their goals into outcomes (Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007; Sen, 1992).

#### 4.2.3. THE CAPABILITY TO BE EDUCATED

'Capabilities' are understood as the real freedoms or opportunities that a person has to achieve their outcomes (functionings) that in turn contribute to their well-being (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009b; Robeyns, 2011). Agency is at the centre of the capability approach and individuals are viewed as active participants rather than passive spectators who are both producers and products of social systems (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009b; Nussbaum, 2002; Sen, 1993/1999; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). The 'capability to be educated' can be understood as the real opportunities that an individual has for both formal and informal learning and education has a role in helping individuals to achieve a good life and thus the goals are wider than those associated with investing in education for economic growth (Greany, 2012; Hart, 2012; Terzi, 2007). From this perspective education has both an *intrinsic* and an *instrumental* value (Raynor, 2007; Walker, 2007; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). Its instrumental role is that an equitable and quality education enables freedom, capabilities and development and helps to bring about social change and is seen to have a redistributive effect between social groups, households and within families (Sen, 2001;

Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). The intrinsic value of education is that education enhances the possibility to appreciating, and being engaged in, a wide range of activities that are fulfilling for their own sake (Walker, 2007). In the current study, understanding education in terms of capabilities has the potential to provide a more in-depth understanding of the real inequalities and challenges that students face in terms of accessing and pursuing their education. The capability approach is not prescriptive in terms of theorising about education, but provides a general framework, which in turn can be adapted to different circumstances (Nussbaum, 2000, Alkire, 2002; Robeyns, 2003; Walker & Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007).

#### 4.2.4. CURRENT APPLICATION OF THE CAPABILITY APPROACH

The capability approach provides a suitable normative framework for understanding the lived experiences of the participants in this study. Placing the participants at the centre of the study, the agency of the participants will be a core concern, while at the same the research seeks to reflect upon the wider structural forces that impact on their lives and experiences. Through the lens of the capability approach we can start to think differently, not only about individual and groups experiences, but also about the wider development context, in terms of the type of development that is sought and the role of education in achieving this development. In terms of understanding education, increasingly authors have called for a dual focus on both individual capabilities but also where macro level policies intersect with 'real lives' and where the processes of schooling and marginalization take place (Unterhalter, 2017; Greany, 2012). This is what Greany (2012) terms the '*glocal*'. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an in-depth analysis of wider macro forces on the lives of the participants, retaining a focus on what is happening at a wider level as set out in the previous chapter is nonetheless worthwhile.

In particular the capability approach offers a useful framework for thinking about the inequalities that rural girls face in terms of accessing, progressing through and benefitting from their secondary education. In considering inequalities, Sen's (1992) foundational proposition is that it is insufficient to focus on equality of outcomes, but rather the focus should be on the equality of individuals to achieve the outcomes that they value, or their individual capabilities. Rather than looking at the number of girls who are enrolled in secondary education or their achievement on a test, we focus on their pathway into and through secondary education and the factors inside and outside of school that impact their journeys. In contrast to other approaches that focus on inter-group analysis when considering inequalities (e.g. differences between males and females), the capability approach takes account of differences both between and within groups. Considering differences both within and between groups is particularly relevant in the context of

Ethiopia. Authors such as Pankhurst (2017) have done excellent work in highlighting the multiple intersecting inequalities that individuals face in many rural communities, including both between and within communities and between and within families. In addition, thinking about differences within families is particularly important when considering the lives of rural girls in Ethiopia as often they are implicated in what Sen (1987) terms 'cooperative conflicts', this is most readily understood in the gendered division of labour within the same household. The emphasis on cooperative conflicts highlights how the individual, rather than the family is the appropriate unit of analysis as failing to take account of these intra-family differences would obscure these unequal relationships (Nussbaum, 2002).

Focusing on capabilities allows us to consider the additional challenges that rural girls may face in addition to those experienced by their rural male counterparts. As evidenced through the review of the literature, females face a range of additional barriers that restrict their education capabilities and the emphasis should be on the real choices that are available to each individual rural girl and their genuine ability to pursue the choices that they value. If we are to focus on equality of outcomes between groups, we might assume that females are doing relatively well in relations to their male counterparts given that on an aggregate level gender gaps are decreasing. The capability approach directs our focus to the lived experiences of individuals and helps us to take account of the nuances and differences in their lives. In addition, it helps to identify how two female students sitting side by side in the same classroom may have very different starting points, different access to resources and different abilities to convert their resources into functionings. In summary, focusing on capabilities invites a range of more searching questions in terms of understanding and conceptualising education and has the potential to provide a more nuanced understanding of the education experiences of young women (Unterhalter, Vaughan and Walker, 2007).

### 4.3. A FEMINIST RESEARCH APPROACH

#### 4.3.1. OVERVIEW

At the outset of this research study a traditional interpretivist framework was envisaged involving a straightforward approach to data collection to include semi-structured interviews over the course of six months. This captures the somewhat naïve and optimistic view that I had informed from my desk in Trinity College Dublin and how I underestimated the ‘messiness’ of fieldwork and the resources and investment need to carry out the research successfully. The time spent on the ground in Ethiopia during the preliminary field visits assisted in the realisation that my initial approach to the study design might not capture the multitude of factors that impacted the education experiences and subsequent development of girls and young women in Ethiopia. The physical journeys back and forth between Ethiopia and Ireland were challenging in coming to terms with the context and this time was also very demanding both intellectually and emotionally as I tried to consolidate the different and sometimes conflicting demands between the ‘academic world’ and the ‘real world’. While I was aware of some of the challenges of conducting the research as a white researcher I had not considered the extent to which this could potentially impact the research. A critical engagement with the literature, especially postcolonial feminism, helped to shape my thinking and approach to the fieldwork and was aligned with many of the values that I wished to espouse in my study. I understood that it would be necessary to identify an approach that could retain a dual focus on the experiences of participants at the individual level, while also accounting for the structural factors that impacted the lives of the participants in different ways. A critical feminist research paradigm was considered to be most appropriate to frame the in-depth qualitative research approach. In addition the study adopted participatory elements, as was suggested by a number of stakeholders consulted during the preliminary field visits. In this section I will consider the defining characteristics of a critical feminist research paradigm that provide the rationale for pursuing this approach in this research study. The in-depth qualitative research approach using participatory elements will then be discussed.

#### 4.3.2. A CRITICAL FEMINIST APPROACH

A critical feminist research approach was considered to be particularly suitable for this study as it places the inequalities faced by girls and women at the heart of its focus and provides a critical lens for assessing the role of structural forces (social, cultural, economic, political) in shaping their situations (Creswell, 2003/2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Olesen, 2005). Lather (1986) outlines the ideological goal of feminist research as seeking *‘to correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women’s unequal social position’* (p71). Feminist research itself encompasses a broad and diverse range of

approaches and paradigms and has been used within different methodological frameworks. According to Olesen (2005) complexity and controversy characterise many elements of feminist research including the nature of research, the definition of and relationship with those with whom research is done, the positionality of researcher and the creation and presentation of knowledge. She suggests that even within the same strand of feminist research there are many disagreements. In this way feminist research can be said to embody the very complexity it seeks to capture. Lather (1992) outlines three different strands of feminist research. First, feminist empiricism seeks to advance the objectives of women, through mainly conventional research approaches. Second, standpoint feminism seeks to understand women’s experiences through their own eyes and to provide a more complete and less distorted understanding of their experiences. Thirdly, critical approaches to feminist research (e.g. postcolonial and post-structural approaches) rules out the potential for ‘feminist science’ in favour of the multiple stories that women have, to tell about the knowledge that they have. Thus feminist research spans all three research paradigms. The characteristics of different paradigmatic approaches (positivist, post-positivist, critical) are outlined in Table 4.1.

*Table 4.1. Defining Characteristics of Different Research Paradigms*

Positivist/ Post-positivist Paradigms	Interpretivist Paradigms	
	Traditional Approaches (e.g. Social Constructivism)	Critical Approaches (e.g. Critical Feminist, Participatory)
Erase complexity	Incorporate complexity	Embrace complexity
Exclude vulnerable groups	May include vulnerable groups	Privilege vulnerable groups
‘Objective’ knowledge	Subjective knowledge	Transactional knowledge
Legitimate Eurocentric knowledge	Eurocentric knowledge and local understandings	Focus on local understandings (indigenous)
Ignore/contribute to power structures	Recognises power structures Social justice or neoliberal capitalism	Analyse/seek to transform power structures
Mostly aligned with neoliberal capitalism		Concerned with social justice

This study is located within a critical feminist research approach which is not set out in opposition to traditional interpretivist research paradigms, but rather builds on and extends such approaches. A critical feminist approach recognises the need to go beyond gender-disaggregated data to one that captures the unique and diverse experiences of individual participants together with the structural factors that impinge upon their lives (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemologically a critical feminist research approach suggests that knowledge creation is transactional, and calls for a dialectic, dialogic and reflexive research approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this study drawing insights from different fields of



research (education, gender, migration), theories and approaches helped to provide new insights as did the different methods used and interactions with important stakeholders in the field. This approach remains faithful to a feminist research approach that considers itself dialogic and dialectical which offers significant potential in developing new insights, syntheses and understandings, which in turn become the ground for further research, practice and policy (Olesen, 2005 citing others).

A critical feminist research approach acknowledges the contested nature of categories and the transactional nature of knowledge construction (Lather & Pierre, 2013). This was particularly important in the current study as a challenge of this research was seeking to be attuned to both the unique and individual experiences of the participants while also holding onto the tenuous nature of categories used to define participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). For example while the category of 'rural girls' is useful to delineate the focus of the research, it is important to acknowledge that the experiences of rural girls are not homogeneous and their experiences are diverse, Lather (2007) terms this as the potential to 'get smart'. This approach is considered to be suitable as it will provide both the methodological rigor but also the sufficient flexibility needed to understand the lives and experiences of the participants in this study.

A feminist research paradigm is particularly compatible with the capability approach (CA), and it is also suggested that the CA should be supplemented with other theories given that it is a deliberately incomplete approach. Both the CA and the critical feminist research approaches view people as active agents in their own lives who values and insights matter thus participation is at the core of both approaches (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009b; Creswell, 2012; Deneulin, 2009; Deneulin & Shanani, 2009; Frediani, 2007; Robeyns, 2011). In addition, both approaches are concerned with the social, cultural, economic and political landscape in which the individual is located. They seek to ensure that individuals are enabled to obtain the outcomes that they value. They are well aligned epistemologically as they regard the issues of 'who decides' to be equally as important to 'what is decided' (Alkire, 2002; Alkire & Deneulin, 2009a; Deneulin, 2009; Deneulin & Shanani, 2009; Frediani, 2010; Robeyns, 2011).

#### 4.3.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A FEMINIST RESEARCH APPROACH

The core characteristics of the critical feminist research approach adopted in this study are presented in Figure 4.1. and are explained in detail below.

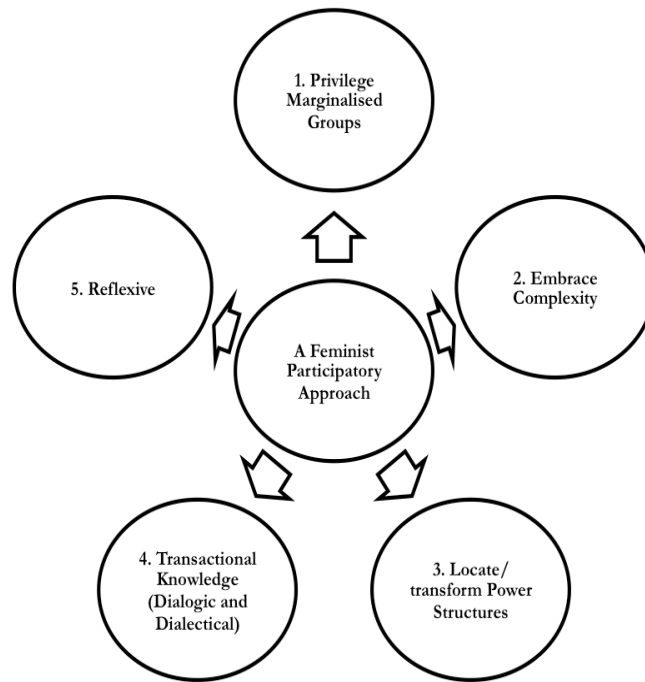


Figure 4.1. Key Characteristics of a Feminist Research

**Privilege Marginalised Groups:** Rural girls have been identified as one of the most marginalised groups in terms of accessing and pursuing their secondary education in Ethiopia. Placing the experiences and opinions of rural girls at the centre of the study was of paramount concern in this study and is a key feature of feminist research. However at the same time it was understood that rural girls might not be used to having their stories heard because of their historic and ongoing marginalisation. For this reason (among others) the study adopted a qualitative approach with participatory elements, situated within a critical feminist research approach. This was thought to be an appropriate way to sensitively elicit and capture their experiences while also helping to ensure that the research did not portray the participants as only vulnerable and would enable me to help take account of the complexities and contradictions present in their lives and experiences (e.g. Mohanty, 1988; Spivak's, 1988). Although marginalised, the participants in this study have demonstrated considerable agency in independently migrating to the city, and enrolling in urban secondary schools and a nuanced understanding of their lives was necessary.

**Embrace Complexity:** Feminist research embraces complexity in all its guises, providing the opportunity to gain a more nuanced understanding of the lives of participants, appreciating both their common and unique experiences. Rather than trying to explain away complexity, critical feminist research helps to consider and account for the diversity of the experiences of rural girls and the nuances in their lives. To provide an account of the rich complexity of participants' lives, the study drew on the theory of *intersectionality*

pioneered by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) who criticised the tendency of mainstream feminism to treat race, gender and class as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis. Through the lens of intersectionality this study considered the multiple categories in which rural young women are positioned. This encouraged and helped me to critically reflect on what the categories are, how they are constructed and how they change over time and location. The categories used to define the participants were not considered as fixed, but rather they remained open and flexible to how these categories emerge from the and how participants place themselves within these categories and how they intersect and overlap. In this way it was hoped that by embracing complexity it may be possible to produce different knowledge and also produce knowledge differently moving away from positivist and phenomenological assumptions, giving up representational and binary logics, seeing language, the human and the material as mixed entities (Lather & Pierre, 2013).

***Transactional Knowledge:*** Feminist research seeks to question the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is produced, to acknowledge the transactional nature between the researcher and the participants and to understand that it is difficult, if not impossible to produce more than a partial story of women's lives in oppressive context (Olesen, 2005). It argues that there is no clear window into the life of the individual and even individuals themselves are unable to provide full explanations of their actions or intentions and all they can offer is their own interpretation of what they have done and why and any view that we do have is coloured by language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The dialogic and dialectical approach of feminist research extends beyond the subjectivist epistemology in traditional interpretivist accounts. The research is dialogical in the sense that it is considered to be the interaction between the researcher, research assistant and participants that produces the knowledge. In situations where power balances are unequal and participants may not be used to having their experiences and opinion heard, building a sense of reciprocity into the design is important in helping to build trust and in turn to elicit the knowledge and insight of the participants. The aim is to establish a truth through discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned arguments and to produce knowledge through encounters with difference. This perhaps is one of the key distinguishing features between traditional interpretivist research and more critical paradigms such as this. The dialectical approach is not limited to the interaction between the research team and the participants but rather extends to the methodological and research approach whereby different paradigms, theories and data sources can be used in a dialectical manner to learn more about the topic of research and in turn contribute to greater validity.

***Reflexive:*** In feminist research the question of positionality is paramount. In the current study it was necessary to critically examine the power or positionality of the researcher, and

also that of the research assistant and how we related to each other and to our research participants to help to find a way forward for working anti-oppressively as a researcher. The 'insider-outsider' debate, while not resolved, seems to have settled on the idea that researchers can never truly be *insiders* or *outsiders* but rather occupy *the space between* as they move in and out of similarities and differences with their participants and that all accounts are meaningful in their own right (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). Disagreements regarding the value of research by *insiders* versus *outsiders* may be too simplistic as it would require a set of guidelines of how many categories of similarities or differences one must have before they are classified as an outsider or insider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Hamid, 2010; Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). For example, I am a white Western researcher, which means that I am inherently different from the research participants, but also, I am female which means that I share similarities with the participants that a male Ethiopian researcher may not. The idea that only researchers can conduct research overlooks significant differences within as well as between groups and does not take account of the flexible and multifaceted nature of identity (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Hamid, 2010; Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). Nevertheless, ensuring the research approach remained reflexive helped to take account of the impact of positionality on the research and emerging data.

***Locate/Transform Power Structures:*** Finally, the feminist research approach seeks to locate and transform power structures. This involves both the implicit power structures in traditional research approaches, and the power structures that govern the daily lives of the participants. In terms of power structures of traditional research approaches, postcolonial feminists criticise the privileging of Eurocentric knowledge and knowledge production, over local indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2013). Western researchers often import external methodologies that are unsuitable and unresponsive to a collective African world-view in which the community itself will influence and shape the method (Mkabela, 2005). Meanwhile, indigenous knowledge - often found in the form of storytelling, poetry, song, dance, music and other activities - is often undermined and ignored (Owusu-Ansah & Mji, 2013). Mkabela (2005) argues that research that is carried out in this way is seen as a tool of the colonizer to assert their power over the other. The fact that much research by Westerners is often regulated by Western institutions and is cut off from the critical scrutiny of research participants and others is another concern and Western researchers are accused of creating knowledge that expresses and supports their own interests and of extracting this knowledge and bringing it back to the West rather than being disseminated within the local community (Spivak, 1988; Mkabela, 2005). In conducting feminist research it is necessary to adopt an approach that addresses these criticisms. Feminist research generally identifies the necessity to go beyond more traditional and conventional research approaches (Olesen, 2005).

In the current study this involved adopting a rigorous but flexible approach that incorporated both innovative and traditional methods and provided the reflexive space necessary for participants to share their knowledge who are not used to discussing their experiences. This in turn helped to consider power structures that govern the everyday lives of the participants, which included considering why rural girls are one of the most excluded groups from secondary education, what are the factors that contribute to their exclusion and what the real-life impacts of this are at multiple levels, for example, within the community, at a national level as well as the global hegemonies that undermine and underpin the subjugation of women.

## 4.4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WITH PARTICIPATORY ELEMENTS

### 4.4.1. A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Set within the normative framework of Amartya Sen's capability approach and located within the critical feminist research paradigm, this study adopted an in-depth qualitative approach with participatory elements to explore the education and migration pathways of a group of rural girls in Southern Ethiopia. A qualitative approach was considered to be suitable because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex and real-life phenomenon (Creswell, 2014) and would provide the opportunity to make connection across time (past, present, future), space (rural, urban) and theme (education, gender, migration). In addition it allows for the exploration of the research questions within the real-life context in which they are situated. The qualitative methods used in this study will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

### 4.4.2. PARTICIPATORY ELEMENTS

Participatory research grew out of the work of Paulo Freire who stressed the idea that socially marginalised people should be involved in the production of knowledge (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Freire, 2000). The researcher acts as a facilitator who enables and encourages local people to express their own reality and the researcher learns from the perspectives of the participants (Frediani, 2007; Mkabela, 2005). Participatory research may encompass activities such as performance, art and storytelling combined with more conventional methods such as focus group discussion and interviews (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995). When conducting participatory research Freire (2000) argues that the researcher should not consider herself as the proprietor of history or as liberator of the oppressed, but should instead work with, rather than for, the participants and engage in a dialectical relationship with them. Such an approach helps to allay criticisms of postcolonial feminists who suggest that Western researchers should not hold the power to define (Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1988). Aligned with the critical feminist research approach this study incorporated participatory elements into its design with both approaches helping to privilege the perspectives of marginalised groups, placing them at the centre of the research. The linkages and crossovers between the capability approach, a feminist research paradigm and the participatory elements of the study are discussed in more detail below.

However, it should also be noted that participatory research is not a quick fix for crossing cultural boundaries. In the current study, it took considerable effort to both establish the research project and also significant time to negotiate and figure out the best way of applying this approach within the current research context. The initial field visits uncovered many unexpected challenges and these were incorporated into planning for the main stage of data collection including those of working across the boundaries of academia and the world of the participants, the need to build up trusting relationships with participants and

the additional time and resources needed to successfully employ such an approach and ensure that the research is genuine and non-extractive (Kindon, Pain and Kesby, 2007; Schurr & Segebart, 2012). Not only did it take more time to conduct the research, but also the general pace of life in Ethiopia was much more relaxed, which sometimes stood at odds with the demands of the tight time line of academic research. Finally, while participatory research seeks to transform the relationship between the researcher and the research participants, this does not mean that I am exempt from considering my role in relation to the research participants and this required constant reflection throughout the process.

#### 4.5. COMPLEMENTARITIES BETWEEN THE METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The commonalities and complementarities of the capability approach, the critical feminist research paradigm and the qualitative research approach with participatory elements are presented visually in Figure 4.2.

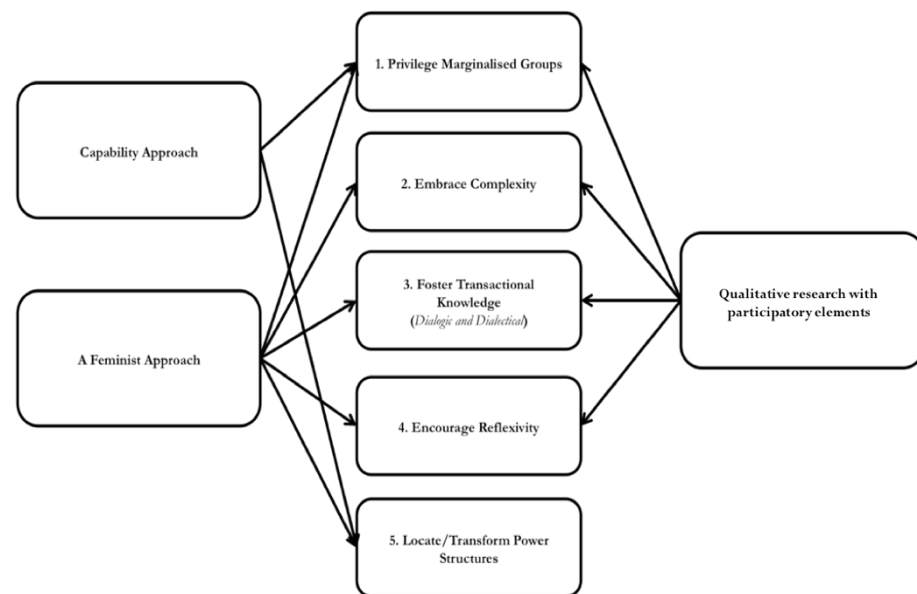


Figure 4.2. Methodology and Method

First, the experience of the individual is at the heart of the capability approach, the feminist research paradigm and the participatory research approaches. The feminist research paradigm and the participatory approaches are particularly concerned with the experiences of historically marginalised groups. In addition, both approaches seek to embrace complexity, privilege a transactional approach to knowledge and encourage reflexivity of both the researcher and the research participants. In addition to their commonalities, these three approaches can also help to address shortcomings of either approaches and are complementary. For example, participatory methods have sometimes been criticized for being too context specific and consequently for not paying sufficient attention to power

structures and underlying manifestations of poverty rather than the underlying causes of deprivations (Cooke and Kothari, 2001 as cited by Frediani, 2010). In this manner the critical feminist approach complements the participatory research approach by keeping in focus the wider structures that impinge upon individual experience and help to safeguard the original radical roots of participatory methods (Hickey and Mohan, 2004 as cited by Frediani, 2010). In this manner the theoretical framework of the capability approach, together with the feminist research paradigm will help to retain keep in focus the influence of wider power structures, both in the lives of the participants and in the research process itself (Frediani, 2010).

#### **4.6. CHAPTER FOUR SUMMARY**

This chapter set out the methodological approach of the research. Informed by Amartya Sen's capability approach this study adopts a critical feminist research approach that employs qualitative methods with participatory elements. The capability approach provides a more expansive approach to development and understanding education in terms of capabilities has the potential to provide a more in-depth understanding of the real inequalities and challenges that students face in terms of accessing and pursuing their education. In this way the framing the study within the capability approach has the potential to account for the missing link within the human capital reasoning by taking about of the how wider structural forces impact upon the lives of individuals who are constantly negotiating and navigating their way through these structures. The critical feminist approach helps to place the inequalities faced by the participants at the centre of this study embracing the complexity of their experiences, privileging their experiences, focusing on local understanding and helping to consider different power structures. The qualitative research approach with participatory elements helps to explore the research question in-depth and provides the opportunity to make connection across time, space and theme. Together all three elements of the research approach will help to take us closer to the lives and experiences of the participants at the heart of the study while also taking account of the social arrangements that impact their pathways, guided by a concern with equity and social justice. The specific methods used in this study will be outlined and discussed in Chapter Five.



## CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

Having outlined the theoretical tools of the capability approach and the critical feminist approach of the study in the previous chapter, this chapter will describe the main fieldwork. The chapter begins by describing the role of my research assistant Eyerusalem Alemu, who, in addition to providing assistance in translation, played an integral part in the data collection and was part of the *research team*. The dynamics of the research team are described and thought is given to the impact of our presumed respective status as *insider* and *visible outsider*. From here, the selection process used in the study is described including the selection of the research site, the two secondary schools and the twenty-seven research participants. The three phases of the main data collection that were carried out over the course of ten months in Ethiopia are detailed, including a pilot phase (October-December 2015), a main data collection phase (January-June 2016) and a follow-up phase (November-December 2016). The multiple methods used during these three phases are also outlined. The translation strategy, data analysis procedure and validity of the research are all considered. It is important to set out at the beginning of this chapter, that I recognise that many different approaches may have been taken in the current study. However, the approach taken in this study is the one that was judged to best meet the objectives of the study, within the constraints of a PhD study, while also ensuring it would be compatible with the underlying theoretical and philosophical framework. The ground up approach to this study adopted at the initial stages of the research study, continued throughout the main data collection and insights were integrated into the approach as the study progressed. While a systematic approach was adopted, the research design maintained a level of built-in flexibility and responded to challenges and incorporated new insights along the way. Attempts are made to reflect this approach in this chapter. The chapter will end by reflecting on the research process and some of the ethical considerations.

## 5.2. THE RESEARCH TEAM

### 5.2.1. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

One of the most significant challenges in the current study was the language barrier present between the researcher, the participants and other important stakeholders in the study. As described by authors such as Liamputtong (2008) language barriers between a researcher and participants can hinder effective communication and cultural differences and norms will most likely be present. While this was true in the current study, these challenges were further compounded by the fact that Ethiopia is a multi-lingual context where over 80 languages are spoken. At the beginning of the fieldwork, I naively assumed that the research participants would be able to communicate at a basic level through English, given that English is the official medium of instruction at secondary education level. In addition, I assumed that the participants would all be able to communicate well through Amharic. Amharic is taught at primary level, it is the official working language of the government and is widely spoken in urban centres. As such, it was envisaged that the language barriers in this study could be navigated with the aid of a research assistant who, whilst proficient in English and Amharic, would also have knowledge of the local language of the participants as a bonus. I would quickly learn that my assumptions did not reflect the reality on the ground.

I discovered during the fieldwork that many of the participants, particularly those who had only recently migrated to the city from the rural area, did not speak English at all and their understanding of Amharic was very limited. In addition, almost all the participants had very poor written skills. The necessity of finding a research assistant who was proficient in the local language Sidamigna, in Amharic (to communicate with stakeholders), and had a good level of English became apparent. In line with the advice collected during the preliminary fieldwork, it was important to identify a female research assistant who could help me to understand the context and culture to navigate the world of the participants (Greany, 2012; Wilding, Leventon, Favretto, & Dyer, 2012). Finding an individual who satisfied these requirements was not an easy task. Furthermore, while selecting the ‘right’ research assistant became a daunting and time-consuming process, it in no way solved the challenges associated with language barriers present in the research. It often brought many new and unanticipated challenges, which required continual navigation throughout the research project.

Considerable effort was invested in identifying a suitable research assistant. The criteria used to select the research assistant included her level of competence in Amharic, English and Sidamigna, her experience working as a research assistant/translator, her academic background and her positionality in relation to the research participants. It was imperative to hire a female research assistant to ensure her gender matched with the participants,

particularly given the lack of the experience that the participants would have in talking and describing their lives and experience (). In addition, it was also important to find a research assistant who could devote sufficient time to the study and would be available for the duration of the research process (Squires, 2009). This was challenging as often those individuals who had good language skills were employed in full time work or had young children and could not fully commit to the research. Multiple channels were used to select the research assistant for the data collection. This included contacting individuals in the university, local NGOs and other informal networks. I met with many candidates (14 individuals in total) to assess their suitability to the study, which turned out to be a very time-consuming process, as often individuals did not satisfy all the criteria.

### 5.2.2. SELECTED RESEARCH ASSISTANT

The selected research assistant was viewed as an integral part of the research team, who made a valuable contribution to the research throughout the data collection, rather than just someone who was hired for the purposes of language translation. Eyerusalem Alemu was the research assistant who was chosen. Eyerusalem is from the Sidama Zone of the SNNP Region and she was 24 years old at the time of the fieldwork. Eyerusalem speaks Amharic, Sidamigna and English. Given Eyerusalem's similar background to the participants, she was familiar with the geographical areas, the target population and their culture and the research issues. At the time of the research she was enrolled in a Masters programme in Hawassa University in Community Development, had previous research experience in the areas of climate change, gender and migration and had worked in many roles as a workshop facilitator with different NGOs. This was a significant advantage as this meant she was very attuned to the priorities of the current study. Eyerusalem also had a talent in being able to quickly build good will for the study amongst participants and stakeholders, and to encourage the participants to be open and honest. Nonetheless, before the research commenced, and throughout the fieldwork, Eyerusalem and I spent considerable time discussing the background objectives and questions of the study, the research methods, important ethical issues, the importance of direct translation<sup>7</sup> and the clarification of words and concepts, especially those related to sensitive topics undertaken. Eyerusalem and I also discussed the issues that arose and other aspects of the study daily. Over time we found that the key to having a good working relationship was to ensure that we both completely understood the schedule, tasks and objectives for each working day,

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<sup>7</sup> Translating for equivalence of meaning rather than literal translations.

even though this took some time to establish. The pilot phase of the data collection was also critically important for resolving many initial challenges.

A challenge that we encountered working together in the pilot stage of the data collection was the fact that the seven participants in the pilot study spoke three different mother tongues (Amharic, Gedeo and Sidamigna) and all the pilot study participants had very poor English. At the outset of the pilot research it was considered that this would not be too much of a problem, as Eyerusalem would communicate with the participants in Amharic<sup>8</sup> and Sidamigna. However, the pilot study revealed the complexity and difficulty of conducting participatory research in multiple languages. For the group methods (i.e. group discussion, participatory video) Eyerusalem was required to translate the instructions across three languages: from English into Amharic and then into Sidamigna. This was very time-consuming and in many instances, became confusing, both for the participants and for the researcher, increasing potential for information to get 'lost' along the way. Because of the challenges we faced and their impact on the execution of the data collection a strategic decision was taken to conduct the main data collection (Phase II) through one language only (Sidamigna) to facilitate easier translation and communication between the researcher and research participants.

Working together with Eyerusalem brought many advantages and benefitted the study in several ways. In addition to the task of translation, Eyerusalem helped to negotiate the physical and cultural realm of the participants, provided invaluable friendship and support through the study and added a new layer of perspective to the study (Greany, 2012; Liamputtong, 2008). I was also very lucky to be able to work with Eyerusalem through the duration of the three phases of the main data collection. This was a significant benefit, as many 'outside' researchers in Ethiopia are faced with the challenge of having to work with several different research assistants, and demonstrated Eyerusalem's commitment to the study. This helped to ensure consistency through the fieldwork and to maintain important relationships with the participants and stakeholders.

Nonetheless, Eyerusalem and I did experience some challenges when working together, particularly at the early stage of the fieldwork. First, there were a few occasions when Eyerusalem did not inform me of an important piece of information and it was only at a later stage that this information was identified. This was not something that Eyerusalem did intentionally but rather was a result of the very immediate and competing demands that required her attention throughout the course of the research. However, as the data collection progressed, this became less of an issue, particularly as I became more familiar

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<sup>8</sup> The student who spoke Gedeo also spoke very good Amharic.

with the language and culture. Secondly, while Eyerusalem could communicate orally in English, Amharic and Sidamigna, her written language skills were not as advanced. This had implications for the transcription of the data, which will be discussed in more detail below. Thirdly, there were sometimes delays in the fieldwork due to Eyerusalem's other commitments (e.g. study, family issues or personal illness). While this is understandable and should be expected, it still placed additional time constraints on the research. Nevertheless, these challenges were ones that could be negotiated and overcome and do not take away from the substantial contribution Eyerusalem made to the study.

### 5.3. PHASES OF MAIN DATA COLLECTION

Three phases of data collection were carried out over the course of ten months in Ethiopia. This section provides a broad overview of these three phases that are later discussed in more detail below. The three phases are presented visually in Figure 5.1.

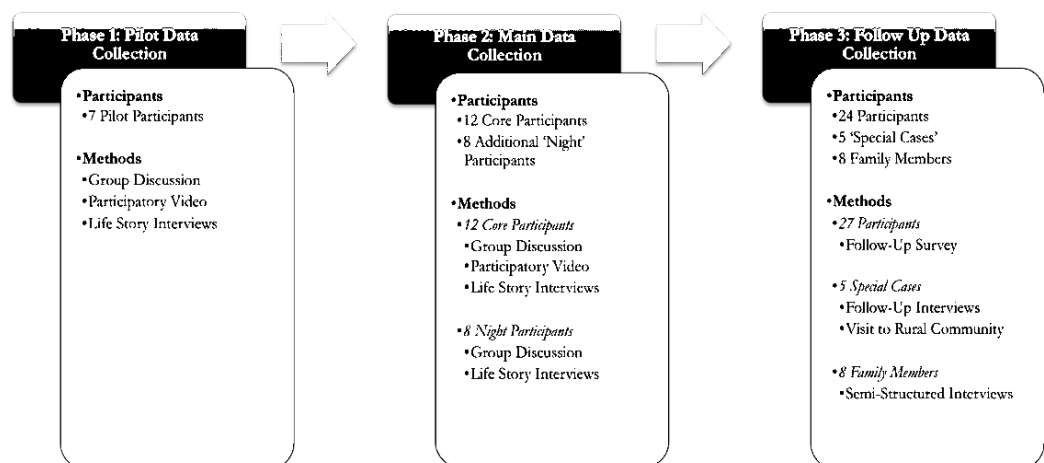


Figure 5.1. Phases of Data Collection

#### 5.3.1. PHASE I: PILOT DATA COLLECTION

**Overview:** Phase I was carried out for two months from October to December 2015.

**Aim:** The aim of the pilot data collection was to trial the research methods and identify any unexpected challenges or issues that may arise and to improve the research design. In addition, the research questions were also explored.

**Participants:** This phase included a *pilot* group of seven rural girls who migrated to Hawassa city. These participants were chosen from School One.

**Methods:** The participants took part in group discussions, participatory video and life story interviews.

**Key Findings:** Phase one of the data collection identified many procedural challenges and issues that helped to inform the procedure for Phase II. In addition, the empirical findings were included as part of the main data analysis.

### 5.3.2. PHASE II: MAIN DATA COLLECTION

**Overview:** Phase II was undertaken for six months from February-July 2016 and incorporated findings from Phase I.

**Aim:** The aim of the main data collection was to answer the research questions.

**Participants:** This phase of the study included a total of twenty participants - a *core group* of twelve participants and an additional group of eight *night-time students*.

**Methods:** The core group of participants took part in group discussions, participatory video and life story interviews. The additional group of night-time students took part in group discussion and life story interviews.

**Key Findings:** Phase II provided the main empirical data that was used to explore the research questions. This phase also highlighted the key role of social network members in the education and migration pathways of rural girls and this insight influenced the design of the Phase III of the data collection.

### 5.3.3. PHASE III: FOLLOW-UP DATA COLLECTION

**Overview:** Phase III was carried out for two months from November 2016 to January 2017.

**Aim:** The aim of the follow-up fieldwork was to track the progression of the students along their education pathways and to include the perspectives of key social network members.

**Participants:** For this phase five *special cases* were identified from the overall group of participants. Visits were made to the rural communities and family homes of these five participants. Ten social network members belonging to the six special cases were also included in this phase.

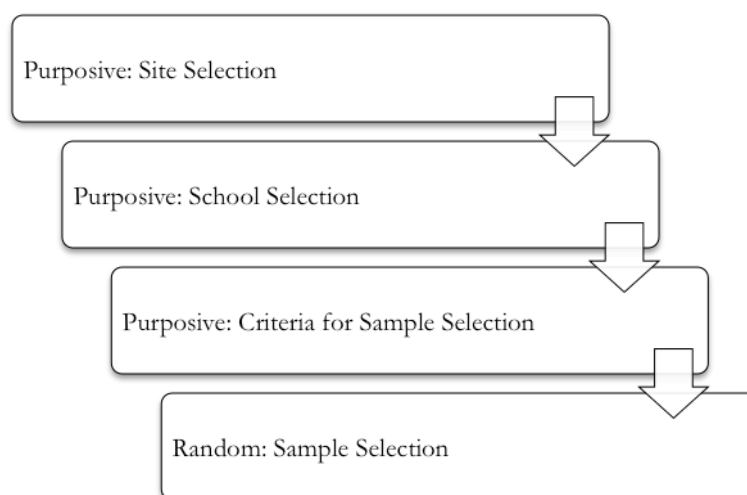
**Methods:** The 27 participants took part in a follow-up survey. Five *special cases* took part in follow-up interviews and visits were made to their rural communities and family homes. The five social network members took part in semi-structured interviews.

**Key Findings:** Phase III provided insight into the outcomes of rural girls as they progressed through their educational journeys. In addition, it provided valuable insight into the perspectives of key social network members of the special cases.

## 5.4. SAMPLE SELECTION

### 5.4.1. OVERVIEW

In this study I focused on a group of twenty-seven rural girls who had independently migrated to urban areas and had successfully enrolled in, and were attending two urban secondary schools in Hawassa city. A combination of purposive and random sampling was used in selecting the research participants and this is represented visually in Figure 5.2. below.



*Figure 5.2. Top Down Sampling Strategy*

### 5.4.2. SITE SELECTION

The participatory case study research was carried out in the Sidama zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) of Ethiopia, one of eight administrative regions in Ethiopia. Several criteria were used to select this zone as the site for the case study. The four main regions (Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Tigray) were identified as potential sites for the research based on the political stability of these regions<sup>9</sup> and the safety of conducting research in these area in comparison to the emerging regions (Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Somali) which are less politically stable. A comparison of the available statistical data across the four main regions was made to develop an understanding of the educational context in each region. In addition, the key informant interviews carried out during the preliminary fieldwork contributed to an understanding of the location most suitable for conducting the research. Based on this information from multiple sources, the Amhara and the Southern Region emerged as two

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<sup>9</sup> Information regarding the politically stability of the various regions in Ethiopia was obtained from the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (<https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/>) who advised against travel to many of the emerging regions. This information was checked on a regular basis and regular contact was also maintained with the Irish Embassy throughout the course of the fieldwork.

potential sites for the study. Logistical and practical issues were also taken into consideration such as the fact that the Southern Region is a target region for Irish Aid, and my supervisor and I had links to a local NGO located in this region. A scouting visit was made to the SNNP Region during the first preliminary field visits, as travelling to multiple regions was not feasible. Within the SNNP Region visits were made to many rural, semi-rural and urban schools in this region. After a period of careful consideration with my supervisor, this region was chosen as a suitable site for the research.

#### 5.4.3. SCHOOL SELECTION

Visits were made to the five government secondary schools in Hawassa city administration. Several criteria were used to select the two schools that were included in the research. This included the suitability of the schools in terms of the location of the school, the total number of pupils attending the school and the percentage of overall students that were coming from rural areas. In addition, the interest and willingness of the school to take part in the research was considered (see Appendix G). An overview of the information gathered from the schools is presented in Table 5.1. below.

*Table 5.1. Summary of Five Government Schools*

	School One	School Two	School Three	School Four	School Five
<b>Grades</b>	G9-12	G9-12	G9-12	G9-10	G9-10
<b>% Rural</b>	30-40% rural	90% rural	15% rural	65% rural (80% from homes)	100% but live with parents
<b>Main sending area</b>	Sidama and Wolayta	Sidama	Sidama	Sidama	Sidama
<b>Main Challenges for female students</b>	Domestic work burden, discrimination, forced marriage.	Economic problems, lack of support from families. Language barriers.	Cultural norms and expectations.	Domestic work burden, low academic base, and language barriers.	Domestic work burden.
<b>Location</b>	City.	Outer city.	City.	Just outside city	6km from city.

Based on this information, School One and School Two were selected as the two schools that would be included in the study. School Three was not chosen because it had the lowest percentage of rural students. School Four and School Five were also not considered suitable, as even though they had a high proportion of rural students, most students were still living with their families. As the study was concerned with the independent migration of rural girls to urban areas for secondary education, these schools were not considered to be suitable. Figure 5.3. locates these schools in Hawassa city.



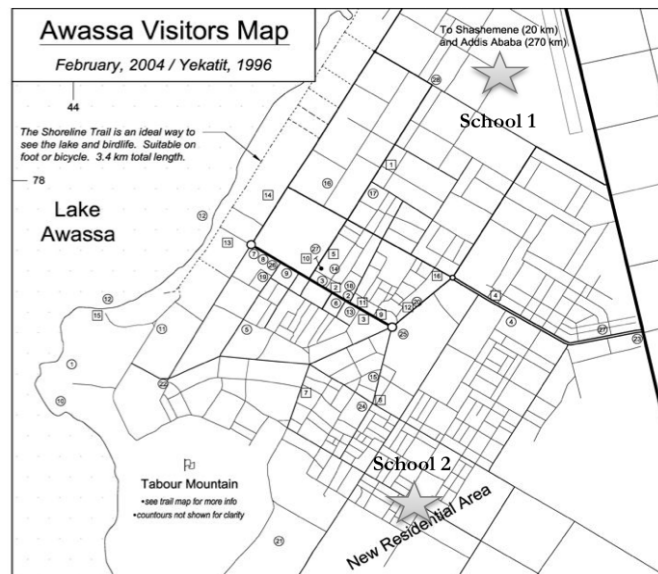


Figure 5.3. Selected Schools in Hawassa City

#### 5.4.4. CRITERIA FOR SAMPLE SELECTION

To ensure the selection of the participants accurately represented the sampling criteria, a brief screening questionnaire was administered to all female rural students enrolled in the two selected secondary schools to collect background information (see Appendix H). The school principal and the teachers helped to identify these students. Based on the information gathered, the selection of these participants for the main data collection was based on a rigorous sampling strategy that included both purposive and random sampling, to reflect the diversity of students and reflected the wider pattern of overall migration within the school<sup>10</sup>.

The sampling criteria used to create this list included the age of participants, their sending community, the length of time they had been living in Hawassa city (less than five years), their living situation (renting accommodation, living with relatives) and their grade of enrolment. In addition to these criteria, it was necessary to select all participants from either the morning or the afternoon shift to minimise disruption to the school and the students, as the research was to be carried out when the students were not attending school. Students who were living in Hawassa for six years or more or who were living with their parents were not included in the research. The overall sample of participants consisted of 27 participants. The 27 participants included 15 Grade Nine students and 12 Grade Ten students from the two secondary schools chosen. The 27 participants consisted of three sub-groups. In the first school, a group of seven *pilot* participants were selected. In the

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<sup>10</sup> Purposive sampling was used to create a list of suitable students and then if there was more than one student who satisfied the criteria, random selection was used to select from these students.

second school a *core group* of twelve students and an additional group of eight ‘night’ students were included. An overview of the 27 participants is outlined in Figure 5.4. below.

1. *Pilot Participants*: Seven rural girls were selected from the regular shift in School One.
2. *Core Participants*: Twelve rural girls were selected from the regular shift in School Two.
3. *Additional Participants*: Eight rural girls were selected from the night shift in School Two.
4. *Special Cases*: Five rural girls were selected from the core group of twelve participants.

*Social Network Members*: Each of the five special cases selected two social network members, resulting in a total of ten participants.

For the follow-up stage of data collection a group of five ‘special cases’ were selected from

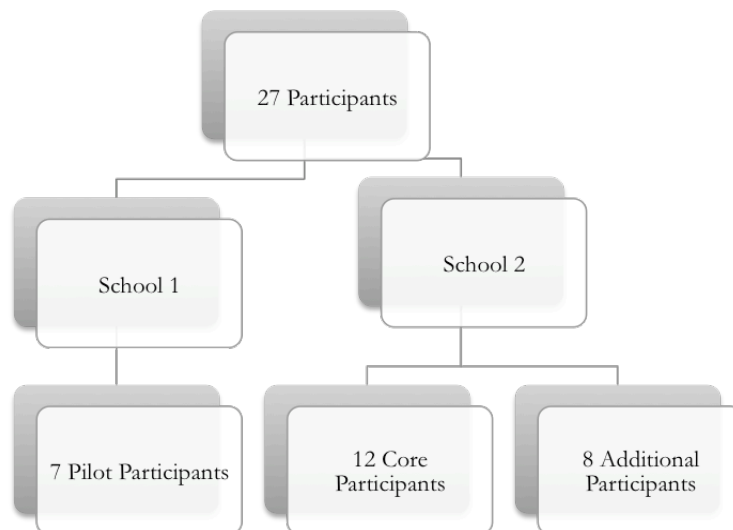


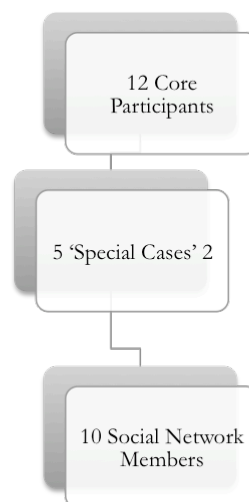
Figure 5.4. Overview of Twenty-Seven Participants

the ‘core participants’. These students were purposively selected to include students who had recently sat the Grade 10 National Exam<sup>11</sup>. The reason for selecting these students was because the Grade 10 national exam marks an important transition point in educational trajectories and it is necessary to pass this exam to move to the next level of secondary school. The intention was to capture the pathways of the participants beyond this critical point and the choices that they made based on whether they had or had not passed the exam. While this was a relatively short period of time to do a follow-up stage of data

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<sup>11</sup> A requirement to enter preparatory secondary school.

collection it was nonetheless a critical period. Follow-up interviews were conducted with these special cases to identify their present-day life circumstances. In addition, 10 social networks members linked to the *special cases* were included in this phase of the data collection. The five special cases and ten social network members are outlined visually in Figure 5.5. below.



*Figure 5.5. Five Special Cases and Ten Social Network Members*

#### 5.4.5. RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

Informed consent is a necessary requirement of research with participants. It requires that an individual is provided with all the necessary information that they need to make an informed decision about whether they wish to take part in the study (Coyne, 2010). Due to the language barriers present in the current study it was necessary to take additional steps to ensure that the participants understood all the information and what they were being invited to do. As such, each potential participant was approached individually and was provided with all the necessary information<sup>12</sup> before being invited to take part in the study. All the information was provided in both oral and written form and they were provided with the opportunity to discuss any question that they had. Efforts were made to check back that participants understood the concepts associated with informed consent (see Appendix J). The potential participants were given a period of 24 hours to consider their involvement in the research and I returned to the school the following day to see if they wished to take part. However, this was not as straightforward as it first appeared.

On many occasions, several students were absent on consecutive days. As the students

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<sup>12</sup> This included the nature of the research, what their involvement in the research would involve, why they were chosen, their right to withdraw, potential risks and benefits of their participation, issues of confidentiality, how their data will be stored and used and limits of confidentiality. It was also important to emphasize the limits of the research to be able to bring about change and that the project was research and not related to aid or intervention.

were purposively selected to maximize variation, it was not possible to pick a new student on the spot, and thus the sample inclusion criteria had to be revisited and a new student was approached the following day. After several visits, the list of students was revisited and alternative students were identified. Some students who had been briefed about the study said they did not want to participate, as their family would not allow them to take part<sup>13</sup> and for this reason these participants were not included in the study. In this case, the list was revisited and a new participant was selected. Due to the cultural context, it was anticipated that the participants might have been wary of putting their signatures on forms; their consent was verbally recorded that is stored but not transcribed (Abebe, 2009; Morrow, 2013; Hart, 2013; Kjørholt, 2013). The process of consent for the duration of the fieldwork was as follows (see Appendix J):

- Informed consent was sought at the start of the fieldwork and at the beginning of each session/activity (Morrow, 2013).
- Written consent was sought for any visual material that was to be used for dissemination purposes including the participatory video and several photographs.
- For all selected participants who were under the age of 18 guardian consent was obtained. As the participants were not living with their parents, guardian consent was sought from individuals identified by participants included, siblings, aunts, uncles and grandparents.

#### 5.4.6. FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

Financial compensation for participants in research is a complex issue that raised many questions (Morrow, 2013). At the outset of the main data collection it was decided that the participants would not receive financial compensation for taking part in the research. Instead the participants would be invited for lunch every day before the fieldwork commences and their transportation costs would also be covered. The Research Ethics Approval Committee in the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin also recommended this.

However, throughout the course of the fieldwork, the issue of financial compensation re-emerged on numerous occasions, not only in our interactions with the research participants, but also with other stakeholders such as teachers and school principals. It became clear that in general there was a ‘culture of expectation’ in Ethiopia that involvement in research is rewarded financially<sup>14</sup>. For this reason, the participants continued to raise the issue of

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<sup>13</sup> This was mostly due to the heavy work burden and responsibilities of the students.

<sup>14</sup> Discussions with other Ethiopian and European researchers and NGO workers regarding this issue have confirmed that it is common practice in Ethiopia to provide compensation for taking part in research activities.

financial compensation for their participation in the research, notwithstanding our best efforts to be clear about the lack of financial remuneration from the outset. For example, one of the participants remarked in their interview that they were contributing to my PhD thesis and they were *'not receiving anything in return'* (Vega). Despite my efforts to reduce the power differentials between the participants and myself, it was clear that the participants still perceived a power differential in what they were getting from the study. I no doubt recognised the complexity of this issue and it was something that I gave much consideration to following such encounters, while also consulting the literature on the vast range of perspectives on this issue. While there are no clear guidelines on financial compensation given to research participants, it has been suggested by other researchers (e.g. Morrow, 2012) that the decision to use compensation should be project specific and incorporate local realities and cultural contexts. For example, in the Young Lives study, an international study of childhood poverty in four countries, including Ethiopia, payment of research participants reflects the cultural context in terms of the value placed on people's time, their willingness to undertake research, the reality of poverty and not having to miss out on important work to take part in research. In Ethiopia specifically, children are paid for their participation in research and are encouraged to spend the money they receive on school materials (Morrow, 2012).

Due to the prominence of this issue during the pilot research and the impact that it was having on the study, it was decided that a different strategy was needed for the main data collection. Financial compensation was provided for the main participants for their participation in the research, rather than bringing them for lunch and covering their transport costs. It was hoped that doing so would reduce the amount of time that the participants were devoting to the research each day and that they would also feel reciprocated for their involvement in the research and that their contribution was valued. It was also hoped that this would help to minimise the exclusion of those who have heavy work responsibilities either inside or outside of the home. In addition to providing financial compensation for the participants, financial compensation was also provided for a teacher in the second school who helped to facilitate the research and contributed a significant amount of his time to the research project outside of his normal working duties.

To ensure the compensation was ethical, and the participants were still intrinsically motivated to participate, I adopted a specific strategy for the payment and the participants. First the compensation was proportionate to the time involved in the research project and a different payment was to be provided for young people (20 ETB per day) and the teacher (50 ETB per day). Second, the financial compensation was not used to persuade the research participants to take part in the research, but to help facilitate their continued engagement in the study in line with good research practice (Morrow, 2012). The participants were only told that they would receive compensation for taking part in the

research after fully informed consent was obtained, to minimise the coercive influence of financial compensation. Third participants were told that the payments were to compensate for their time and effort to avoid the idea that they were earning money by participating in the study (Morrow, 2012). Fourth, the participants were continually reminded of the voluntary nature of the research and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without losing out on their compensation.

## **5.5. PARTICIPANTS**

### **5.5.1. OVERVIEW OF MAIN PARTICIPANTS**

This section will provide an overview of the twenty-seven participants who took part in the study at the point of the main data collection. It includes their age, their rural sending communities, the grade and shift that they were enrolled in at the start of the main data collection and some background family characteristics. Table 5.2. provides an overview of the characteristics of the participants.

#### **AGE**

The age range of participants was between fourteen and twenty old at the point of the main data collection. In Ethiopia, the expected age of entry into Grade Nine is 14-15 years old and the expected age of entry into Grade Ten is 15-16 years old, which means that the majority (63%) of the participants were overage for their respective grade. Throughout the course of the fieldwork, it emerged, that some of the participants were in fact older than they had indicated, as demonstrated by the inconsistencies the age they reported as shown in Table 5.2. For example, one student told us that she was seventeen at the stage of the main data collection, and sixteen at the stage of the follow-up data collection. Eyerusalem (RA) and I believed that the participants providing us with inaccurate information based on their age was because they may have been embarrassed that they were much older than the normal age expected for these grades.

#### **SENDING COMMUNITY**

The twenty-seven participants came from fourteen different sending communities in Ethiopia<sup>15</sup>. Several participants came from the same rural sending community. For example, four participants came from Shebedino, three participants came from Malga and three participants came from Wondo Tika. The sending communities of the participants are presented visually in Figure 5.6. As seen from Figure 5.6 most of the participants came

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<sup>15</sup> The students were selected to reflect the wider trend of origin amongst the student populations in the selected secondary schools.

from within the Sidama Zone. Two participants came from other zones within the Southern Region (Wolayta and Gedeo) while one participant came from the Amhara region.

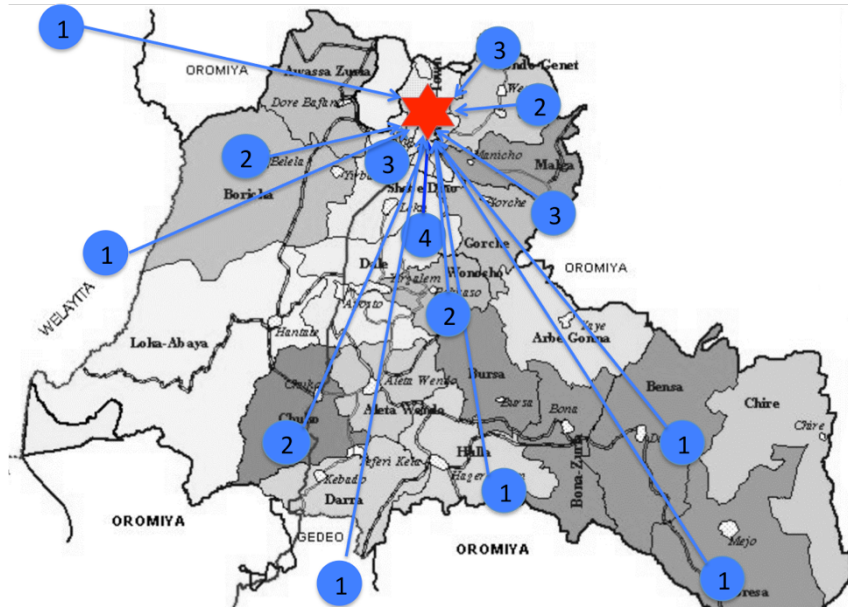


Figure 5.6. Participants Sending Communities

Table 5.2. Overview of Participants

Participant	Subgroup	Grade	Rural Area	Age		Parents Income Level	Mother Ed.	Father Ed.	Mother Occ.	Father Occ.	Siblings
				(Main)	(Follow)						
<b>Beza</b>	Core	G10	Shebedino	17	18	Medium	No Education	Passed Away	Farmer/Housewife	Passed Away	7 siblings
<b>Rediet</b>	Core	G9	Malga	15	18	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Grace</b>	Core	G10	Boricha	18	19	Medium	No Education	Grade 9	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	8 siblings
<b>Bujuge</b>	Core	G10	Malga	16	18	Medium	Passed Away	-	Passed Away	Farmer	3 siblings
<b>Martha</b>	Core	G10	Tula	18	19	Medium	-	Grade 9	Health Ext. Worker	Policeman	5 siblings
<b>Hannah</b>	Core	G9	Boricha	19	-	Medium	-	-	-	-	3 siblings
<b>Kidist</b>	Core	G9	Tula	20	20	Medium	-	Grade 2	-	Farmer	8 siblings
<b>Melal</b>	Core	G9	Tula	15	16	Low-Medium	Grade 6	Passed Away	Farmer/Housewife	Passed Away	3 Siblings
<b>Beletch</b>	Core	G10	Shebedino	-	-	Medium	No Education	No Education	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	4 Siblings
<b>Meskerem</b>	Core	G9	Malga	16	17	Medium	No Education	No Education	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	6 siblings
<b>Sara</b>	Core	G9b	Wondo Genet	18	-	Medium-High	Grade 10	Grade 8	Housewife	Businessman	5 siblings
<b>Afewerk</b>	Core	G10a	Shebedino	15	16	Medium-High	No Education	Grade 3	Housewife	Businessman	8 siblings
<b>Meron</b>	Additional	G10b	Wolayta	19	19	Low-Medium	No Education	Passed Away	Farmer/Housewife	Passed Away	4 siblings
<b>Alem</b>	Additional	G9b	Aleta Chucko	19	20	Low-Medium	-	-	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	-
<b>Rahel</b>	Additional	G9b	Aleta Chucko	18	18	Medium	-	-	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	6 siblings
<b>Samira</b>	Additional	G9a	Wondo Genet	17	18	Low-Medium	No Education	No Education	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	6 siblings
<b>Abeba</b>	Additional	G9a	Yirgalem	19	19	Low-Medium	Grade 1	Passed Away	Farmer/Housewife	Passed Away	8 siblings
<b>Hiwot</b>	Additional	G9b	Aroresa	15	16	Medium	-	-	-	-	5 siblings
<b>Beimnet</b>	Additional	G9	Yirgalem	18	19	Medium	Grade 4	Grade 2	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	4 Siblings
<b>Tsega</b>	Additional	G9	Hagere Selam	20	21	Medium	No Education	No Education	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	7 siblings



<b>Emeliya</b>	Pilot	G9	Wondo Tika	16	16	Medium	No Education	No Education	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	3 siblings
<b>Dina</b>	Pilot	G10	Wondo Tika	17	18*	Medium	No Education	No Education	Farmer/Housewife	Farmer	3 siblings
<b>Vega</b>	Pilot	G9	Gedeo	16	17	Medium-High	Grade 6	Grade 7	Cook /Housemaid	Civil Servant	3 siblings
<b>Emebet</b>	Pilot	G9	Bensa	18	20	Medium-High	Grade 6	Grade 9	Businesswoman	Businessman	8 siblings
<b>Yannet</b>	Pilot	G9	Shebedino	14	-	Medium	No Education	Grade 8	Housewife	Civil Servant	12 siblings
<b>Hilina</b>	Pilot	G9	Wondo Tika	19	18	Medium	-	-	Housewife	Driver	4 Siblings
<b>Abeba</b>	Pilot	G9	Amhara	17	16	Medium	Grade 5	Grade 8	Businesswoman	Farmer	4 Siblings

## FAMILY INCOME

A breakdown of the demographic characteristics of the students across the different subgroups is provided in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: *Subgroups of Participants*

	7 Pilot Participants	12 Core Participants	8 Additional Participants
<b>Rural Location</b>	3 Wondo Tika 1 Gedeo 1 Bensa 1 Shebedino 1 Amhara	3 Tula 3 Shebedino 3 Malga 2 Boricha 1 Wondo Genet	1 Wolayta 2 Aleta Chucko 1 Wondo Genet 2 Yirgalem 1 Aroresa 1 Hager Selam
<b>Age range</b>	14 – 19 years old	15-20 years old	16-21 years old
<b>Mean age</b>	17 years old	17 years old	18 years old
<b>Grade</b>	6 in Grade 10 1 in Grade 9	6 in Grade 9 6 in Grade 10	2 in Grade 9a, 4 in Grade 9b 1 in Grade 10a, 1 in Grade 10b
<b>Family income</b>	- 5 medium 2 medium-high	1 low-medium 9 medium 2 medium-high	4 low-medium 4 medium -
<b>Decision to migrate</b>	1 to Learn Amharic 6 for Education	6 for Education 2 to Learn Amharic 4 to Escape Rural Life	3 Economic Problems 5 Gain Employment (& continue education) 1 Searching for a Better Life
<b>Time in Hawassa</b>	2.6 years (average)	2.4 years (average)	2.3 years (average)
<b>Outcomes</b>	1 dropped out (married) 5 continued education (1 married) 1 failed Grade 10	6 continuing their education 1 entered TTC in urban area 1 gain employment in industrial camp in urban area 3 returned to rural area	4 Continued Education 1 Transitioned from Night student to day student 1 Failed grade 10 1 n/a (Tsega)

The participants in the study were asked to self-identify their family income status as ‘low’, ‘medium’ or ‘high’. Due to the difficulties in measuring the economic status of individuals and families in Ethiopia as outlined by the stakeholders consulted during the preliminary field visits, this was a suitable strategy for determining the income level of the participants. However, it should be noted that the self-assessment of their income level is relative to others in their rural community. Furthermore, it should be noted that many of the participants indicated that while in the rural area they may be of ‘medium’ income status, in relation to urban families they considered themselves to be poor. For example, Martha (Tula) tells us that in her village her family are in a *‘medium position, but if you want to compare with his brothers (who live in the urban area) my dad is very poor’*. Most of the students (18) identified themselves as coming from ‘medium’ income level families. Having an ‘iron-corrugated roof’ instead of a ‘traditional mud house’ was one of the most significant indicators of a family’s medium income status according to the participants. Of those who came from ‘medium’ income level, all their fathers were either farmers or government employees. They

considered themselves to be from medium income level families as they were not extremely poor or did not have to ‘*search for food*’ (Tsega). Four of the students identified their families as ‘medium-high’ income. Of those who identified themselves as ‘medium-high’ income, three of the participants’ fathers were businessmen and one was a civil servant.

Five participants self-identified themselves as low-medium income level. Three of the participants who identified themselves as ‘low-medium’ had fathers who had passed away, while the remaining two participants’ fathers were farmers. Abeba, one of the night students who considered her family to be of low-medium income status discusses how, before her father passed away, her family did not have financial difficulties.

*‘Actually, I was too small at the time when he passed away. I saw his picture, like I don’t remember perfectly what he was doing or what he looks like, but my mother she told me all the time. She told me he was a hard worker. He had like different lands in different place, so we have lots of cattle. We don’t have money problem at the time, we didn’t at the time’ (Life Story 17, Abeba).*

We see the vulnerability of families to shocks and the reliance of women and children on the income of male family members. In cases where participants’ fathers had passed away, this not only affected their economic resources but also impacted upon the family’s social standing within the community. Another participant spoke of how her father would squander the resources of the family and the other family members would be left with very little to survive.

*‘My father, he is a drunkard, and all the time, he takes everything from the house and he sells it, for example, cow, cattle in the house, he sells it. So, because he is a drunkard, we are becoming poor now’ (Beimnet).*

Another factor identified by the participants as impacting the economic resources available to the families was the fact that many of the fathers had more than one wife. In Sidama culture, polygamy is common and seven fathers had two wives and one father had three wives). The participants described the prevalence of polygamy mostly due to instances where the wife did not produce sons to inherit the land of the father and therefore the father would seek a new wife. Where the father had more than one wife, the income of the father was usually divided amongst the different families and siblings, not always equally. This impacted the resources that individual family members had access to. For example, Emeliya discusses how her father ‘*is not supporting us or thinking about us because he has another wife, and he just broke up with my mother and he is living in another area*’.

The discussion of the income status of the participants alludes to some of the gender inequalities in rural areas in terms of women's access to employment opportunities and their control over resources within the household. Broadly speaking the income level of the family is largely dependent on the occupation and income of the father. Furthermore, we see how the income level of the families of the participants does not accurately represent the access that individual family members have to resources within the family.

Evident from the participants in this study is the fact that most students who manage to access secondary education are from 'medium' to 'medium-high' level income families. This has also been noted by other authors such as Dom (2017) who describe how in many rural communities, those of low-income groups are more disadvantaged than other rural community members in accessing education.

#### SHIFT AND GRADE

In this study, the seven pilot participants (Phase I) and the twelve core participants (Phase II) were all attending the regular day shift in their respective schools. Of the students attending the regular day shift, seven of the participants were in Grade Ten and eleven participants were in Grade Nine at the time of the main fieldwork. As outlined above, in this study it became evident that there were subtle differences between the *regular students* and the *night students*. In addition to the differences in the income level of the participants, the night shift students are generally older than the day shift students. We also see that the night shift students have indicated that their decision to migrate is predominantly for economic reasons and in search of employment, whereas the regular shift students usually indicated that they migrated predominantly for education purposes.

#### 5.5.2. OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBERS

As outlined above, five *special cases* were selected from the core group of twelve participants and interviews were conducted with these participants at the follow-up stage of the fieldwork (Phase III) to understand their situations in the new academic year 2016/2017 (2009 E.C.). The special cases selected had all recently taken the Grade Ten exam the summer prior to the follow-up fieldwork. In addition, each of the special cases was asked to select two social network members who had been particularly influential or supportive in their education and migration journeys, choosing one social network member from their rural community and one social network member living in Hawassa. Full control was given to the participants about who they wished to include. The social network members chosen by the participants included one sister, two brothers, two fathers, two mothers and three peers. An overview of social network members selected is presented visually in Figure 5.7.

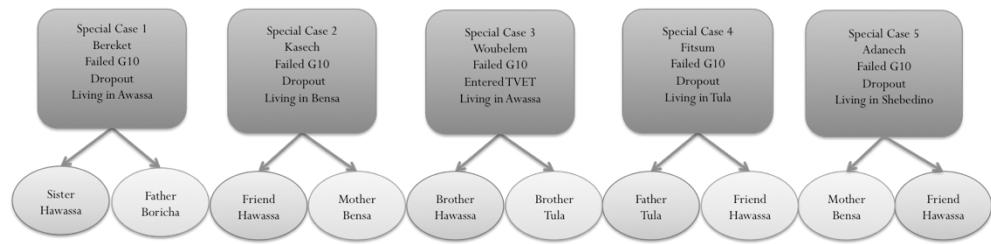


Figure 5.7. Social Network Members

An overview of the ten social network members is provided in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Social Network Members

Name	Age	M/F	Rel. to. Special Case	Ed.	Living	Occupation
Saba	22	F	Grace's sister	G10	Hawassa	Housewife
Solomon	38	M	Grace's Father	G9	Boricha	Farmer
Fassil	38	M	Kidist's brother	G10	Tula	Farmer & Guard
Mulu	-	M	Kidist's brother	G10	Hawassa	Businessperson
Zahra	20	F	Beza's friend	University	Hawassa	Student
Hosanna	48	F	Beza's mother	No ed.	Shebedino	Housewife
Sebele	-	F	Emebet's friend	TTC	Hawassa	Student
Zena	50	F	Emebet's mother	G6	Bensa	Businessperson
Aster	19	F	Martha's friend	TTC	Hawassa	Student
Abel	40	M	Martha's father	G10	Tula	Farmer

**Age:** The age range of the social network members was from 19 to 50 with an average age of 34. However, many of the parents were not sure of their exact age. For example, one mother Zena had to consult her husband to figure out how old she was and how long she had been married<sup>16</sup>.

**Sending Community:** The social network members included both family members (7) and peers (3). The family members lived in four different rural communities - Boricha (2), Tula (3), Shebedino (1) and Bensa (1) - and I visited each of these four communities as part of the follow-up data collection. Two of the family network members were now living in Hawassa city, while the remaining four family members were living in their rural community. The peers came from three different sending communities, Wondo Genet, Hager Selam and Habela Wondo. All were now living in Hawassa.

<sup>16</sup> As many of the social network members were only familiar with the Sidama calendar rather than the Ethiopian calendar or the Gregorian calendar this became confusing for them to work out.

**Education Achieved:** The highest level of education attained by any of the family members was Grade 10. Two brothers, one sister and one father had reached Grade 10. One mother was not formally educated. All the seven family members had dropped out of education at various stages, mostly due to the lack of financial resources or because they had started a family, and they expressed great regret for not having the opportunity to continue their education. All the family members supported the education of the participants<sup>17</sup>. All the peer members who were selected by the special cases had passed their Grade 10 exams and were either attending Teacher Training College (TTC) or university. The participants identified their friends as role models who gave them good advice about their education and provided support in urban areas<sup>18</sup>.

**Occupation:** Two mothers were housewives. The third mother (Zena) owned her own restaurant business in Bensa. The sister was also a housewife. The two fathers were farmers, while one brother was a farmer and worked part time as a guard in Hawassa city. Another brother was working as a businessman in the production and exporting of chat.

## 5.6. MULTIPLE METHODS

### 5.6.1. OVERVIEW

As outlined, an in-depth qualitative research approach using participatory elements was employed in this study. A strength of this study was the use of multiple methods which allowed for multiple sources of evidence.. A combination of innovative and traditional methods was used including group discussions, participatory video and informal observations (see Figure 5.8. below). While participatory elements were employed, it was also understand that no method is inherently participatory but rather it is through their application that become participatory (Boyden and Ennew, 1987). This was a very important aspect of the current study and it is important to note that it was not possible to simply take a participatory approach and apply it in this context, but rather the selection of the ‘right’ participatory method and its appropriate application in this particular context was not only important, but also required significant investment, negotiation and learning.

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<sup>17</sup> This group of family members are not representative of the family members of all the participants as we will see that many family members do not support the education of the participants.

<sup>18</sup> While it is not possible to draw conclusions about these young women who were pursuing their education beyond secondary education, it was interesting to note that the three peer members had much better language skills than the participants in this study, speaking very good/fluent Amharic and some English.

The use of multiple methods benefitted the current study in a number of ways. They helped to provide “thick descriptions” of the lives of the participants and provided multiple sources of evidence through which my understanding of the lives of the participants was deepened. This was particularly important in the context of Ethiopia where the cultural ‘rules’ can lead to individuals not always indicating their true meaning. The use of multiple methods provided the opportunity for dialogue amongst the participants and between the participants and the research team. This complements the dialogic and dialectical process of knowledge production espoused by feminist research approaches.

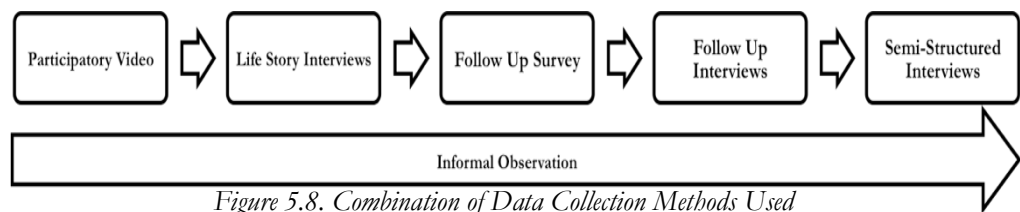
Another important feature of the current research approach was the inclusion of both group and individual data collection methods.. This helped to respond to the different needs and preferences of individuals, whereby some participants were happy discussing their issues in group settings, while others preferred to discuss their experience alone (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010; Liebenberg, 2009; Mitchell, 2008). The group data collection helped to build trust and rapport with participants before beginning individual data collection and created a safe space where participants could share their knowledge. Individual modes of data collection were important for exploring more personal issues that participants did not wish to share in a group setting, once a good sense of trust and rapport had been established.

#### 5.6.2. PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

Participatory video can be defined as a set of techniques to facilitate a group of individuals to come together, reflect upon an issue, or set of issues, that are important to them and then make their own video to represent their experiences and opinions on such issues (Lunch & Lunch, 2006). While originally devised as an advocacy tool, in recent years researchers have started to take advantage of this participatory video process to help to engage participants in a study and reflect on research issues (Mitchell, 2008; Mitchell & De Lange, 2011). As a research tool, participatory video is as much a process as a product and can be used in a number of ways with varying degrees of collaboration and participation (Mitchell & De Lange, 2011). In the current study, the pilot phase of data collection was important in helping to identify the best way that this method could be used in the current context, including the *level* of participation that was most appropriate. While this process has the potential to be accused of being Western, I believe that it values and respects African ways of knowing as it allows participants to come together in an informal manner and it is compatible with many different forms of expression, such as performance, art and storytelling, which are sometimes undermined and ignored by Western researchers (Mkabela, 2005).

Consistent with other participatory approaches, when using a participatory video approach, the researcher acts as a facilitator who enables and encourages the participants to express

their own reality while also learning from the participants (Frediani, 2007; Mkabela, 2005; Mitchell, 2008). This approach has been used successfully in a range of other developing country contexts – for example in Uganda with a group of women to represent stories about their lives in relation to sexual health (Waite & Conn, 2011) and in South Africa with young people from two townships near Cape Town to produce a HIV and Aids focused video documentary. Moreover, in Ethiopia, there are many instances of NGOs using participatory video, to create dialogue between beneficiaries, service providers, stakeholders and government officials and communicate project results to funders. The local NGO, Action for Self-Reliance Organisation had successfully used this approach in several of their assistance projects and this is where the initial idea of the potential of this approach came from.



*Figure 5.8. Combination of Data Collection Methods Used*

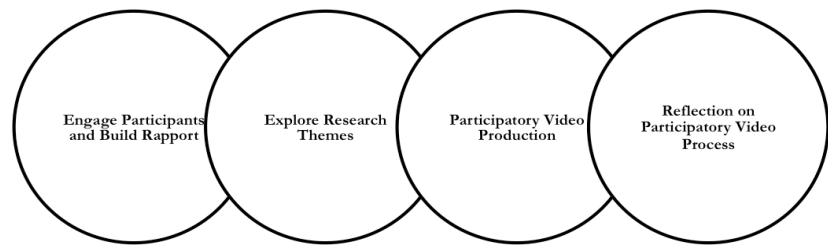
### 5.6.3. PARTICIPATORY VIDEO PROCESS

In the current study, the participatory video process helped to place the participants at the centre of the research process and positioned them as the real experts on their own lives. Many of the participants commented throughout the study about how they had never had the opportunity to discuss issues covered by the research prior to this. Participating in this process helped them to understand and to reflect upon their opinions on such issues or matters. A series of four sequential stages were followed as part of the participatory video process as follows (see Appendix K):

1. Engaging participants, building rapport and learning technical skills for using the video.
2. Exploring the research themes through a series of activities revolving around the video camera.
3. Participatory video production.
4. Reflection on the participatory video process.

The participatory video process was carried out in the grounds of the school and was facilitated by one of the teachers. This process is outlined in Figure 5.9. and is described in more detail below.





*Figure 5.9. Participatory Video Process*

#### ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS AND BUILD RAPPORT

The early stages of the research began with the participants learning the technical skills necessary to use the video camera, through a series of games and activities. This process was important for helping to set the tone and atmosphere of the research. A culture of ‘learning through mistakes’ was encouraged whereby the idea of there being no right or wrong answer was firmly established and continuous positive feedback was given. For each activity, the researcher and research assistant would provide instructions and examples where necessary. Then the participants would be allowed to carry out the activity with minimum intervention from the research team, whilst ensuring the participation of everyone. After each activity, the participants would reflect upon what they had learned, what they found difficult and what they could improve. This was a very significant stage in the research process especially for those who were not used to sharing their experiences or opinions (Waite & Conn, 2011). It provided a safe space to reflect upon the issues and gain the confidence to share their stories with others. I believe that this greatly contributed to the willingness of the participants to later share and discuss their stories with me, in addition to helping to make the participants feel valued and respected. Many participants later noted how their participation in the participatory video process gave them the confidence to speak out in class and answer questions, which they had been afraid of doing in the past. They also were surprised that I ‘trusted them enough’ to hold the camera. They appreciated this sign of respect and enjoyed the fact that I showed them rather than told them what to do, encouraging them to make, and learn from, their mistakes as they went along. It encouraged a sense of reciprocity whereby I was teaching the participants the technical skills that they needed to make their video while they were sharing their knowledge, experiences and stories with me, which they later indicated as a significant benefit of taking part in the research. Through these processes I observed how the students gained a sense of ownership over the research project and worked together as a team to achieve their objectives.

#### EXPLORE THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The broad research topics were explored through a range of creative and visual methods and activities such as group discussions, drawings, debates (e.g. education is important for

achieving a good life), interviewing each other on camera, statements on camera regarding certain issues and drama. Group discussion were used at the early stages of the data collection and they helped to generate a negotiated understanding around the broad topics and issues under investigation <sup>19</sup> and helped to identify where agreements and disagreements between the participants lay on particular issues. Potential shortcomings of this method have been identified as the tendency for one individual to dominate the group (Kreuger & Casey, 2014), however this was not found to be the case and the research assistant and I made efforts to include the opinions of all the participants in the group. Another elicitation method that was very successful in the current study was the use of participatory drama. This technique was used at later stages of the data collection after the participants had spent time discussing various topic and issues and wished to represent these topics through the medium of drama. This approach is discussed in more detail below. However, it is also important to note that some of the elicitation tools that were trialled in the pilot study not work well in this context e.g. drawing. Nonetheless this highlights the benefits of using the participatory video approach as it was flexible and could be used with a combination of different methods.

#### VIDEO PRODUCTION

After an in-depth exploration of the research issues the research participants then came together to represent their experiences through the video. Mitchell and DeLange (2011) outline how the participatory video process provides participants with the opportunity to be involved in the active construction of knowledge moving away from data elicitation to the co-production of knowledge. This was certainly true in the current study and participants constructed their stories through a number of steps. First, the participants brainstormed on the different challenges of rural life and the benefits they received by coming to Hawassa (see Table 5.5).

*Table 5.5. Benefits of Urban Life vs. Challenges of Rural Life*

<b>Benefits of Urban Life</b>	<b>Challenges of Rural Life</b>
Rural girl marry based on their own choice	Rural girls may be married by force.
Rural girls can improve her life through education.	Lack of education for rural girls.
Observation of a better life	Heavy workload, which impact on education.
Better education, better achievement.	Parental attitudes towards education.
Equality between males and females.	Mothers keep girls 'at home'.

Second, they discussed and debated the issues that they wished to represent in the video and the ways in which they wish to do so, agreeing upon a video drama. After voting on

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<sup>19</sup> E.g. education, gender equality and differences between rural and urban living.

these important issues the participants decided that they wanted to make a video about life in rural areas that they titled the *'The Rural Bad Life'*. The participants were encouraged to plan their story on a 'storyboard'<sup>20</sup>, to visually organise and plan the video that they would produce and to identify the roles of different individuals in the group (Mitchell, DeLange & Molestane, 2011). However, after a brief 20-minute discussion and a very brief outline of the video on the storyboard (see Table 5.6) the participants indicated that they had finished preparing and were ready to set out the next day to record the drama. I felt somewhat nervous they had not spent 'enough' time preparing, and that we were not following the 'traditional format'.

*Table 5.6. Storyboard*

<b>Title: The rural bad life</b>
Scene 1: The girl is stopped going to school
Scene 2: She is upset she cannot go to school and decides to get married.
Scene 3: After marriage, her life does not improve.
Scene 4: Her husband mistreats her.
Scene 5: She does not have any decision-making power in the household.
Scene 6: She is upset and commits suicide.

Nonetheless, despite my perceived lack of planning by the participants, the video that they produced provided a rich depiction of rural life through a cohesive storyline, engaging and humorous dialogue and the vibrant visual imagery. I wondered after whether if I had pressured the participants to 'plan' their video more, if the video still would have been so successful. I think that it may have confused and worked against their own strategies and approach. This reasserted the need for a negotiated approach to the data collection and how research methods often do not translate directly to the local context and but rather required a compromise between intention and reality, between what has been planned in the office versus what is possible in the field (Gilligan, Castro, Vanistendael & Warburton, 2014).

#### ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

The final video followed a 'no editing approach' (Mitchell and de Lange, 2011). This means that the video that the participants filmed is represented on the final video and I did not edit their footage other than putting it together and adding subtitles to the video. The dialogue from the final video was translated and transcribed together with the research

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<sup>20</sup> A series of panels where the sequence of sketches/drawings outline the storyline planned for a film.

assistant. Thematic analysis<sup>21</sup> was used to identify the main themes that emerged from the participatory video drama and these themes informed the life story interview. The participatory video also provided a reference point for some of the participants during the life story interviews. Each participant was given a copy of the video to allow them to show it to their family and friends. While many of the participants reported showing the video to friends and family in the urban area, they were not able to show it to family members or friends in the rural area because there was no electricity. This was a shortcoming of this approach.

#### 5.6.4. LIFE STORY INTERVIEWS

Life story interviews were the main mode of data collection. In the current study, issues that emerged at earlier stages of the fieldwork were those that were explored during the life story interviews (see Appendix L). Haglund (2004) describes life story interviews as the active remembering and reconstructing of participants' life stories. This includes the events they consider to be particularly influential in their life, how they influenced their current life situation and how they affect their future aspirations. In the current study, life story interviews provided the opportunity to retrospectively consider the education and migration pathways of the participants and to explore their current life in Hawassa city, as well as their future pathways. In this way, they helped to link the lives of participants across time and location, connecting past to present to future and helping to make connections between different aspects of their lives providing a glimpse into the complexity and multitude of influences in their lives (Locke & Lloyd-Sherlock, 2011; Goodson and Sikes 2001). Placing the life story interviews strategically at the end of the data collection helped to allow for sufficient time to build trusting relationships between the research team and the research participants. This meant that participants were comfortable with us and were more open to telling their stories. It also meant that the issues explored in life story interviews included those that were raised at the early stages of the data collection through the participatory video process, as well as those based on my observations of certain aspects of participants' lives. In addition, I found that by this stage of the fieldwork I was very familiar with Eyerusalem and the different ways in which she translated words and phrases, and vice versa. This greatly facilitated the interviews and highlighted the importance of maintaining the same research assistant throughout the course of the fieldwork. The participants chose the locations of the life story interviews, which usually took place in a local café or restaurant, or sometimes beside the lake depending on their preference.

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<sup>21</sup> Described in more detail in Section 5.8.2.

During the initial life story interviews with the pilot study participants a more open-ended style of interviewing was trialled. Participants were asked broad questions and given space to respond to these questions e.g. *'Tell me about your life in your rural community'*. However, this approach did not work very well as the participants were not comfortable with talking openly about their experiences and would constantly seek clarification and guidance about what they should discuss. This is perhaps reflective of the male dominated culture in which the participants live where the perspectives of females are not greatly valued and they subsequently have little experience in voicing their opinions or talking about their experiences. Contrasting the interviews with the female participants in this study with other male participants (i.e. key informant interviews, social network members), male participants were much more forthcoming with information and would discuss issues at length compared with the less forthcoming and redacted answers of the girls and women in the study. However, the willingness of the participants to share information with us also varied largely in relation to the individual personality of the participants. Attempts were made to keep the interviews as informal as possible and while a research guide supported the interviews based on the themes that emerged during the participatory video. However, in most cases efforts were made to follow the flow of the conversation and issues raised by the participants rather than following the sequence of the questions in the interview guide. This approach helped to balance the need for guidance by the participants while also allowing room for unexpected topics to emerge.

#### 5.6.5. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBERS)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten social network members (see Appendix M). This included seven family members (two fathers, two mothers, three siblings) and three peers. Five social network members from rural areas and five social network members from Hawassa city took part. Visits were made to the rural communities to interview the social network members (see Box 5.1 in Chapter Five). This helped to provide rich tacit knowledge about the rural communities in which the participants came from.

The decision to include social network members in the research was based on the emerging finding from the main data collection that indicated the importance of social network members in the lives and pathways of the participants. The purpose of social network interviews was to gain an insight into the values, opinions and beliefs of key members of participants' social networks and to understand the role they played in the lives of the 'special cases'. This included their perspectives on issues such as education (*Do you think education is important?*), gender equality (*At what age do you think girls/women should be married in Ethiopia?*) and migration (*What are the differences between urban and rural locations?*). The social

network members also discussed their relationships to the participants and the role they played in the lives of the participants. In terms of the social network members who lived in rural areas, the interviews were conducted in their homes, while for social network members in urban areas the interviews were conducted in a location that suited them, usually a local café or restaurant.

#### 5.6.6. INFORMAL OBSERVATION

Boyden and Ennew (1987) describe observation as the foundation of all scientific work. In this study, informal observation was a key part of the study, which continued throughout the research and helped to inform the data collection and analysis. My ongoing informal observation throughout the fieldwork helped to triangulate the emerging findings, serving at times to confirm my early understandings of the contexts and the lives of the participants. At other times, my new observations challenged or questioned what I thought I had learned or understood, and this prompted me to look deeper or reconsider what I thought I knew. I tried to capture these flashes of insight as much as possible and record them in a research diary, however these do not happen systematically, but rather sporadically, reflecting the way these informal observations shaped my thoughts and understanding. In addition, the insights and understandings that I gained throughout the research process were greatly facilitated by informal conversation with many different people.

### **Box 5.1: Visit to Beza's Family Home**

Beza met us in Shebedino town where we identified the local group of young men with motorcycles who acted as local taxi drivers and bargained with one of them to take us to Beza's home paying 15 ETB for a one-way journey. This resulted in a very bumpy hour-long journey 'cross country' to Beza's home which took us within approximately 1 kilometer of Beza's house. From here we walked the remaining distance to her family home. This journey from Shebedino town is the one that Beza would have had to take every day to and from school as she went to attend secondary school in Shebedino woreda.

The area that Beza lived in was remote with very few facilities, but at the same time was very beautiful and covered in dense greenery. What was most striking for me upon arriving at Beza's home was to see how visibly different Beza's appearance was to that of her family, and how she represented an 'urban girl' in contrast to her rural family. While many of the participants had discussed in the interviews how their appearances had changed since they arrived in Hawassa city, it was a much different experience seeing this change first hand.

When we arrived at Beza's house, the family were preparing for her sister's wedding ceremony to be held the following day. Beza's sister had been married one year ago. However she had arranged her own marriage, which was looked upon unfavourably by the community, and now her family were welcoming her back to the house by holding this ceremony for her. We were greeted by all the family members and guided to the main room, which was covered in onions that were being prepared for the wedding ceremony. Here we sat on a wooden bench, the only object of furniture in the room. Two male relatives of Beza appeared and sat with us, while Beza and her mother engaged in the long process of making Kojo (the traditional Sidama food) and coffee. These male relatives (later were identified as Beza's uncle and cousin) quizzed us about the research and our underlying motivations. While they spoke in good humour, it was evident that they were also slightly suspicious of our objectives and motivations.

Eventually Beza and her mother appeared with the Kojo and two bottles of coca cola, which they had somehow procured. While the extent of hospitality and preparations that many of the families went to when we visited their homes was

at times uncomfortable for us, this was typical of Ethiopian culture and in addition, many of the participants told us of how they felt honoured for us to visit their homes and thus we graciously accepted their generosity. We ate together with the male relatives, while Beza and her mother refused to eat instead refilling our glasses and topping up our plates - a common scene in Ethiopia. When we had finished eating they served us coffee and we chatted for some more time with Beza's uncle and cousin. Eventually, as time was passing we asked if we could interview Beza's mother outside in the garden, a polite way of trying to seek some privacy from the male relatives, while at the same time not wishing to insult their hospitality.

However, as we sat outside with Hosanna the male relative came outside and sat approximately two meters away from us, appearing to converse amongst each other but clearly there with the intention of monitoring our interview with Beza's mother. The interview with Hosanna was very difficult and she provided us with very short, often one-word answers even when asked to elaborate on certain issues. For example, in response to our question about gender equality in her rural community, Hosanna told us that there is gender equality in her community because men and women have equal rights. However, at the same time as she was providing this answer we were experiencing first-hand the very oppressive male dominated culture. Thus, we found ourselves in a very difficult dilemma. We could have stopped the interview and asked the male relatives for more privacy, however this was difficult when they were pretending not to be interested in our interview and conversing amongst themselves. Secondly, we were not sure of the impact that asking for more privacy would have, as Hosanna was a very subdued woman. Conversely, we could end up insulting them resulting in them either asking us to leave or perhaps having unintended consequences for Beza or Hosanna when we did leave.



### 5.6.7. FOLLOW-UP FIELDWORK

Follow-up fieldwork was carried out five months after the main fieldwork has taken place, which was also in the next academic year. This offered an opportunity to track the selected outcomes of a number of participants across time, particularly those who had recently taken the Grade Ten exam.

Of the twenty-seven participants who took part in the main fieldwork, it was possible to track twenty of the participants at the follow-up stage of data collection. Of the three students (Beletch, Hannah, Yannet) who we were unable to track, we were able to gather some information about their current circumstances from their respective social networks in Hawassa. According to this information, two of these students had failed their Grade Ten examination and had returned to the rural area. The third student had dropped out of Grade Nine to enter into marriage and had returned to her rural community. The remaining twenty-four participants took part in a follow-up survey. The five special cases took part in a follow-up interview and some individuals from their respective social network members were invited to take part. The survey collected basic information about the current status of the participants such as whether students were still enrolled in school, their current living situation and whether or not they had entered into marriage in the previous year. The pathways of the participants at the stage of the follow-up fieldwork are outlined visually in Figure 5.10. below.

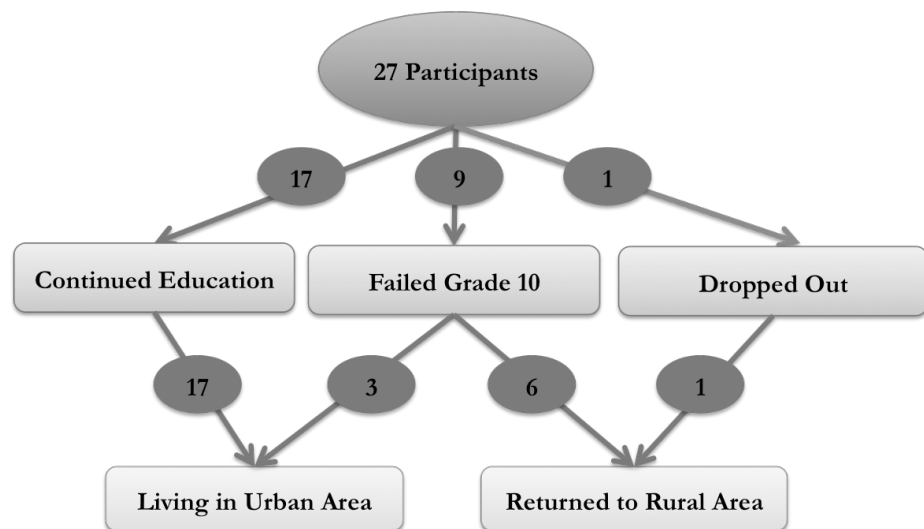


Figure 5.10. Selected Outcomes of the Participants at Follow-Up Fieldwork

### 5.7. TRANSLATION STRATEGY

As indicated above, the involvement of Eyerusalem (the research assistant) had many benefits and helped to navigate some of the challenges associated with the language barriers between the researcher, the participants and other stakeholders. Nonetheless, working

together with the research assistant also brought new challenges, one of the most significant of which was adopting a translation and transcription strategy that captured the lives and experiences of the participants in an authentic manner. During the data collection process, the translation strategy used was one where I would ask a question in English and Eyerusalem would translate it to either Amharic or Sidamigna. The participant would answer the question and then the research assistant would translate the response back into English. As such the primary translation occurred during the interview itself. All the interviews were recorded using audio equipment. In addition, both Eyerusalem and I would write a short summary of the interview and would discuss the interview together at the end of the day, offering the opportunity for clarification of anything that was confusing or unclear and the opportunity to reflect upon the interviews in general. When translating the responses of the participants, Eyerusalem was advised to represent as closely as possible the meaning of what the participant said and not to add her own interpretations, while at the same time not translating things literally. Eyerusalem was also advised that she should check with the participants if she was unsure about the meaning and to ensure the participant had sufficient time to answer the question and not to rush them or finish their sentences. It is also important to recognise the constraints that Eyerusalem faced in translating. Sidamigna has much fewer words than Amharic, while Amharic has much fewer words than English. This required flexibility in terms of translating the interviews and understanding by the researcher that sometimes a long and lengthy response by a participant might be communicated quite succinctly in English<sup>22</sup>.

While the translation process used during the data collection was challenging but relatively straightforward, the issue of transcribing the interviews brought with it further challenges. Eyerusalem was not confident writing in English or Sidamigna due to the different script used from her mother tongue (Amharic Fidel). In addition, her computer literacy was poor and it took her a very long time to type out anything in either Amharic or English. At first, I tested a strategy of using another individual from the university to transcribe the interviews into English<sup>23</sup>. While for the main data collection it was imperative to hire a female research assistant, I considered that this was not so much of an issue for transcribing the data, as the translator would not be interacting with the participants. However, this approach was not successful. Not only was this process very expensive, but reading back over his transcriptions I was very disappointed, as I did not feel that the translator had

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<sup>22</sup> For example, a complex topic might be communicated quite succinctly in English but would require a lengthy translation and several clarifications in Sidamigna.

<sup>23</sup> This person was a male who worked in the university as a language instructor and had a very good level of written and spoken English, Amharic and Sidamigna.

captured the essence of the interview and that his interpretations were somewhat different from what the participant was trying to communicate. This was possibly due to his gender and the fact that he was unfamiliar with the research participants. Abandoning this strategy, the following strategy was used for the various types of data that were collected.

- ***Participatory Video (incl. Group Discussions):*** Eyerusalem and I translated the focus group discussions together. We listened back over the interview and Eyerusalem translated the responses into English while I transcribed this translation. This was a very fruitful process and provided the opportunity to consult on any aspects that I was not certain about or phrases or expressions that may have been ambiguous.
- ***Life Story Interviews:*** I listened back to the interviews and transcribed the English part of the interview. I also triangulated this with the summary of the interview provided by Eyerusalem and myself. Eyerusalem translated several interviews separately, listening back over the Amharic/Sidamigna part of the interview and then this was checked with the interview that I had transcribed. After a number of interviews had proceeded in this way I was happy that we were sufficiently capturing the meaning of the participant's response and I transcribed the remainder of the interviews.

This strategy was considered to be the best approach in the current setting as gaining conceptual equivalence was considered to be more important than having a direct translation of what was said. As we spent considerable time with all the research participants, we had insight into the participants' background and story which facilitated and the translation and transcription process. This process also helped to build intimate knowledge of the data (Bazeley, 2013).

## **5.8. DATA ANALYSIS**

### **5.8.1. OVERVIEW**

As set out, research study was underpinned by a feminist research paradigm, which also helped to inform the data analysis process. Two complementary and overlapping approaches; thematic analysis and the building of case summaries, frame the data analysis strategy in this study. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clark, 2006). As it is an approach that is independent of theory and epistemology and therefore is compatible with different theoretical frameworks, it was considered to be a suitable approach for analysing the data in this study and provided a systematic but flexible approach, consistent with the methodology and research design. Although I had previously used a constructivist

grounded theory in my MSc research I considered thematic analysis, while related to grounded theory, to be more flexible and therefore more suitable to the needs of the research. Throughout the course of the data analysis it was important to retain focus on the key aims of the study which were to privilege the experiences of a group of rural girls, to identify the specific inequalities that they face and to address the invisibility and distortion of their experiences while at the same time helping to shed light on the social, cultural, economic and political factors that impact their individual and collective experiences.

### 5.8.2. DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY

The data analysis procedure started at the beginning of the fieldwork and lasted throughout the data collection. Once the data collection was complete a focused stage of data analysis occurred at the end of the fieldwork lasting throughout the write up of the thesis. Multiple cases were included and multiple sources of data collection were employed, resulting in a large volume of data. An advantage of this large volume of data from multiple sources was to gain in-depth insights into the lives and experiences of the pathways. A challenge was in the management of this data. To help to organise, manage and analyse this large volume of data the transcribed data was entered into NVivo for Mac (Version 11.4.0). The basic steps of data analysis included coding the data, producing case summaries and memoing<sup>24</sup>. These processes did not always occur in a linear fashion but sometimes overlapped and many iterative stages of analysis took place. This procedure is outlined below and an overview of the data analysis process is presented visually in Figure 5.11.

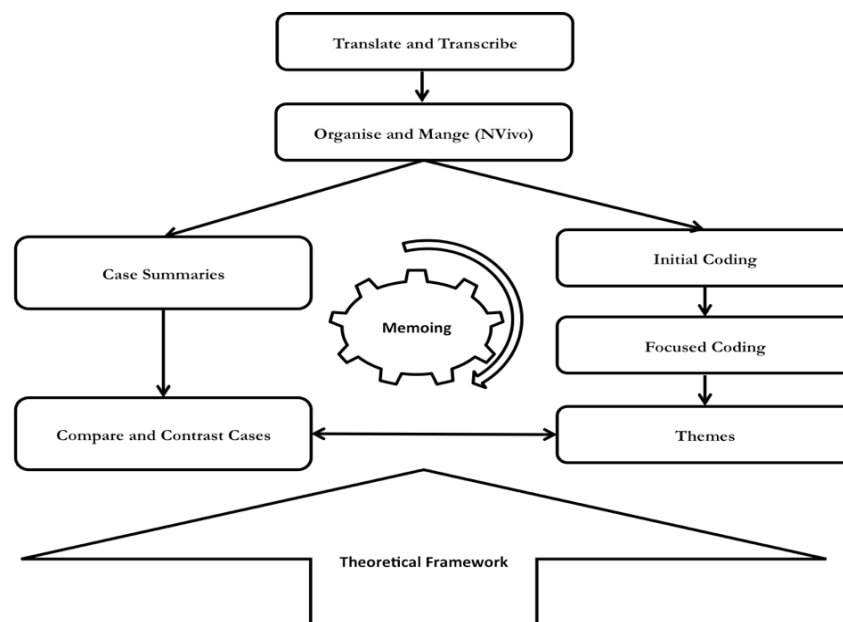


Figure 5.11. Data Analysis Process

<sup>24</sup> Recording observations and learnings from the data, which last throughout the fieldwork and data analysis.

### 5.8.3. CODING PROCESS

The data analysis strategy began with initial coding, followed by focused coding, which were then organised into themes. As Braun and Clark (2002) describe, ‘themes’ capture something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. This process was sufficiently flexible to allow for the emergence of new information. An example of the theme ‘Aspirations and Values’ and the corresponding codes is presented in Table 5.7. and a full list of the themes and codes can be found in Appendix O.

Table 5.7. Example of theme and corresponding codes

Theme	Codes
Aspirations and Values	Imagined future
	Motivation for education
	Life if they did not migrate
	Advice to another rural girl
	Rural Girls who Stay

The generation of case summaries was another key step in the data analysis strategy. The case summaries were built primarily from the life story interviews with the individual participants. However, where relevant, information from other methods of data collection (e.g. group discussions, visits to rural communities) was included. For the *special cases* the data that emerged from the interviews with their social network was to corroborate and extend the information in the case summaries. The generation of case summaries helped to condense the large volume of data (Eisenhardt, 1989). Once summaries had been compiled for all the participants, these case summaries were then compared and contrasted across the cases. The themes that emerged from the coding strategy described above were used to make comparisons across cases. This was a fruitful process as it allowed for the emergence of patterns in the data and highlighted commonalities and differences within and between subgroups of participants. As Eisenhardt (1989) suggests, cross case analysis forces researchers to go beyond initial impressions using structured and diverse lenses on the data. Similarly, the juxtaposition of cases that appear to be similar can break simplistic frames while the search for similarities between seemingly different pairs can lead to a more sophisticated understanding. Throughout these different steps memoing was used to help to record thinking about the emerging analysis and interpretation.

### 5.8.4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As highlighted by Jackson and Mazzei (2011), it is important to note that data interpretation and analysis do not happen through mechanistic coding as these reductive strategies do not capture or critique the complexities of social life. Rather these are processes to facilitate

data interpretation and analysis. While the data analysis initially began as quite an inductive process, as the analysis progressed a more ‘abductive strategy’ was followed, whereby the analysis involved an iterative or dialectical interplay between existing theoretical understanding and empirical data (Bazeley, 2013). Literature that informed the analysis included insights from the capability approach, critical feminist theory and also a wide range of empirical studies including conflicting and similar literature to stimulate thinking about the emerging findings. This type of approach is one espoused by the feminist research paradigm. Conflicting literature is important as it helps to increase confidence in the findings and it presents an opportunity for researchers to be more creative than they might otherwise by providing a deeper insight into the emergent theory and the conflicting literature (Eisenhardt, 1989). Similar literature helps to tie together underlying similarities in phenomena that are not usually associated with each other and may enhance the internal validity, generalisability and theoretical level of theory building from case study research (Eisenhardt, 1989). This process helped to think about the findings in different ways, from alternative perspectives.

Baxter and Jack (2008) suggest that the researcher should return to the research questions when reporting the data so as not to get caught up in the huge amount of data and other potentially interesting findings that emerge. While the three findings chapters in this thesis broadly follow the outline of the three research questions it is important to note that the data did not always fit neatly under these headings. It was often not possible to separate the experiences of the participants into their ‘rural’ experiences and their ‘urban’ experiences. For example, participant’s experiences in rural areas were described retrospectively and new knowledge that they had acquired in the urban areas coloured and influenced their descriptions of rural areas. Education quality in rural areas always discussed in relation to the education quality in rural areas. Similarly, their experiences in the city were largely influenced by their ‘rural identity’. For example, gender equality in urban areas was contrasted with gender inequality in rural areas. Nonetheless, this refusal of the data to be easily classified highlights and confirms the transactional nature of the data collection and analysis. As Jackson and Mazzei (2011) suggest it cannot be assumed that the data represented the ‘authentic voice’ of the participation but rather as something that has already been filtered, processed and interpreted by the participants themselves, who choose to tell their stories in a particular way.

#### 5.8.5. SATURATION, RELIABILITY, VALIDITY, GENERALISABILITY

According to Creswell (2014) there are many strategies that a researcher can adopt to ensure validity in qualitative research. These include eight primary strategies: 1) triangulation 2) member checking, 3) rich, thick description, 4) clarify the bias the research brings 5) present

negative or discrepant data 6) spend a prolonged time in the field to develop an understanding of what is being studied 7) use peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the findings, 8) use an external auditor to review the research project. This builds on the earlier discussion of Guba (1981) who states that the least we should expect in establishing trustworthy data in new paradigm research is triangulation, reflexivity, and member checks.

Taken together, these strategies improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory and contribute to the emergence of tentative themes, concepts and relationships between variables (Eisenhardt, 1989). In the current, study I undertook a number of these strategies including using multiple sources of data, reflexivity, rich thick description and spending a long time in the field. In addition, a number of presentations of the initial research findings were organised in Hawassa University, in the Embassy of Ireland in Addis Ababa and in Trinity College Dublin<sup>25</sup>. These three presentations were also attended by my supervisor Prof. Robbie Gilligan, Prof. Tesfaye Semela (Local Research Partner) and Dr. Alula Pankhurst (Academic Advisory Panel). The purpose of these presentations was twofold. First, it sought to disseminate some of the early findings of the research and to also recognise the support provided by many stakeholders for the study. Second, it was hoped that presenting and discussing the initial findings with important stakeholders would help to clarify the findings, and provide feedback and insight, increasing the validity of the findings. The presentations provided interesting and important insights, for example, they helped to identify words or concepts that needed more clarification, and also, they helped to think about interconnections within the data. These three presentations were greatly beneficial in facilitating the processes of data analysis. The question of generalisability emerges quite often in qualitative research. The findings here can in a sense be generalised in the sense that they offer important insights on key aspects and challenges of the education system in Ethiopia. They challenge the idea that a purely quantitative approach can offer sufficient insight into the experiences and challenges that individuals face. These are aspects that will be discussed in greater detail in following chapters.

## **5.9. ETHICAL ISSUES**

A range of ethical issues have been discussed throughout the course of this chapter, e.g. including gaining local approval for the study, seeking the informed consent of the participants in addition to guardian consent and language barriers. Additional issues

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<sup>25</sup> These presentations were made possible by an award from the Irish Research Council New Foundations Scheme.

concerning the safety of the participants and issues of privacy and confidentiality are discussed in Appendix P.

#### **5.10. CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY**

The main objective of this chapter was to outline the research approach taken to understanding the education and migration pathways of a group of rural girls living in Hawassa city in Southern Ethiopia. The sample selection process, strategies for establishing the research and the research team were outlined. Attempts were made to capture the complexity of the research design across the three phases of data collection and the multiple methods used, including their rationale, advantages and disadvantages. Finally, the translation and data analysis strategy were set out and any remaining ethical issues were discussed. The following three chapters will outline the findings from the study which will set out a detailed description of the lives and experiences of the participants that emerged through the fieldwork.



## CHAPTER SIX: 'THE RURAL BAD LIFE'

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the first of three findings chapters that presents a selection of the main findings from the research study. The findings chapters will chart the experiences and pathways of the participants in this study in and through education and beyond, across the wider rural and urban contexts in which they live their lives and will be broadly centred around the three main research questions of the study. In addition, they will show the multiple factors and processes at play in the lives of the rural girls in this study while also recognising that it is neither easy nor desirable to separate their experiences into distinct components and as such there will be many crossovers and complementarities between sections and chapters. The main strength of this thesis is the fine-grained and detailed data that it provides and in presenting this data efforts are made to converse with the literature. The final chapter of these will attempt to bring together the insights generated across these three chapters.

The title of this chapter 'The Rural Bad Life' comes from the title that the participants gave to the participatory video that they produced, and this was also something that participants commonly referred to throughout the interviews and research. Considering the first research question, '*What are the challenges that rural girls face in their sending communities in terms of accessing and pursuing their secondary education?*' this chapter considers the specific inequalities and challenges facing rural girls in this study in relation to their education and general well-being. As explored in Chapter Three, these specific inequalities are routinely the manifestations of gender norms and expectations that structure the lives of rural girls which are discussed in this chapter around the themes of the heavy domestic work burden and expected entry into marriage. The barriers and challenges that rural students face in their education that are both common to male and females, such as the poor quality of infrastructure and facilities, will be discussed in Chapter Eight where comparisons are made with the perceived quality of education in rural and urban areas. The data explored in this chapter comes primarily from the life story interviews with the twenty-seven participants at the main stage of the data collection. This is complemented by data from a number of other sources including findings from the participatory video drama produced by the participants, information gathered from a number of visits made by the research team (researcher and research assistant) to rural communities in the Sidama Zone and also information from the social network interviews with family members. The participatory video drama '*The Rural Bad Life*' is available in Appendix R may also help to set the context for this chapter. The chapter opens with two brief snapshots of Boricha woreda and Shebedino woreda - two of the fourteen woredas from which the participants in this study come from – in an attempt to provide a contextualised view of the dynamic factors and

processes at play in rural communities. They are intended to highlight the many challenges facing rural girls in these rural communities and how they impact upon their education. The chapter will then turn to the themes of the heavy domestic work burden and expected entry into marriage. Following this chapter the second findings chapter will consider the factors and processes underlying the participation migration decisions and pathways.

#### 6.1.1. SPECIAL CASE ONE: GRACE, BORICHA WOREDA

##### ***Boricha Woreda***

Boricha woreda is located roughly 30km outside Hawassa with a population of around 250,000 people. Two of the participants in this study, Grace and Hannah, come from Boricha woreda. Grace was one of the special cases in this study, and we interviewed Grace's father Solomon who was living in Boricha and her sister Yemisrach who was living in Hawassa. Yemisrach had migrated to Hawassa for education prior to Grace, but had married dropped out of her education. As part of the fieldwork we (the research team) made multiple visits to Boricha woreda, including a visit to Grace's home accompanied by Grace. On other occasions we also spoke with the woreda education bureau and visited two secondary schools in this area (Balela and Yirba secondary schools). Boricha is a drought prone area and during periods of drought many people rely on food aid for their survival. Yirba is the main town in Boricha and it has good facilities in terms of roads and available infrastructure. Progress is slow outside of Yirba town especially when contrasted to the rapid development visible in urban areas. Grace's father Solomon describes how over the course of his life he has witnessed gradual improvements in infrastructure and facilities in this areas, including increased access to running water and electricity. He remarks that these improvements in infrastructure and resources have led to improvements are associated with improvements in people's health and well-being.

Looking back on their lives in Boricha, Grace, Hannah and Yemisrach mostly remember the many challenges that they faced, particularly the heavy domestic work burden. Like many rural girls and women in Ethiopia, they describe how they had to compensate for the lack of resources in their sending community. Grace tells us how '*...in Boricha there is no mill-house and there is a water problem, there is no water so we need to travel a long distance to fetch water and also a very long distance in order to get mill house. It's very difficult*'. Their work activities were burdensome and very time-consuming, impacting negatively on their education in many ways and in turn hampering their overall well-being. The slow pace of rural life is something that the participants in this study viewed negatively. They believed that the lack of progress in the community was due to a lack of diversification and opportunities in the rural areas which in turn contributed to the apathy of community members, '*the rural people they don't have a future plan*' (Yemisrach).

### ***Community Attitudes***

In terms of the attitudes of community members towards education, a mixed picture was presented. In one of the secondary schools (Balela) the principal spoke of how community attitudes towards education were improving and parents were now more motivated to send their children to school. He described the increasing cultural diversity in the area and as the population is diversifying leading to the introduction and exchange of knowledge and ideas. However, from the perspectives of Grace, Hannah and Yemisrach) these changes are not sufficient as there is still a negative attitude towards girls' education in this rural community and the community still prefers to send boys to school. As Grace explains, girls' education is considered as a *'loss of investment'* and from the age of fifteen years old, girls in the community are expected to stop their education and enter into marriage. Hannah described how this in turn has a real impact on the potential lives that rural girls believe are possible to lead. Unexpectedly, the participants outline further that, even though there is pressure from the community to enter into marriage, sometime girls themselves *'choose'* to enter into marriage as they see education as a *'waste of their time'* due to the fact that there are few or no employment opportunities for those who complete their education. It seems that in a number of ways there is a continued struggle between education and traditional pathways in rural communities.

### ***Grace's Family***

When we arrived at Grace's family home, her father Solomon and her mothers and siblings greeted us warmly. The house has an iron-corrugated roof and consists of three-four rooms indicating that the family are of medium-income level. In the main room of the house, the walls are covered with posters Solomon received from various NGO trainings in the community, which he is very proud of. He explains to us that his attitudes to many things have been changed as a result of these trainings including hygiene and sanitation, gender equality, education and early marriage. In terms of decision-making in the household Solomon emphasises that the decisions and also household chores are shared equally between Solomon and his wife: he takes care of the farm while his wife looks after the domestic chores, assisted by their daughters. Grace's mother is not educated and her father was educated to Grade Nine, before dropping out of school. Solomon expresses great regret at not having had the opportunity to complete his education, and he believes that this is the reason he has not able to improve his life. As such, he wishes for his children to be educated to compensate for what he has lost. He tells us that *'education is everything'* and *'it is not just important to earn money, but it is important to get knowledge and to develop your personality'*. At odds with the negative these attitudes present in the community, he is not in favour of Grace entering into marriage until she has completed her education. Solomon thinks that

it is equally important for girls to gain financial independence and to be mature before they get married. Solomon has faced some criticism from other community members for not agreeing to allow his daughter to be married, but in other ways he has gained respect for sending his daughters to Hawassa.

### ***Education***

One of the biggest challenges facing students in accessing their secondary education in Boricha is the lack of available secondary schools. At the time of the main data collection there were four general secondary schools in Boricha (Grade Nine-10) and one general and preparatory secondary school (Grade Nine-12) <sup>26</sup>. Moreover, these schools are predominately located in the towns and do not sufficiently cater for the population. According to one principal, as a result of the shortages of available secondary school a number of students rent accommodation close to the schools as their home are too far to travel every day, indicating that migration is happening not only from rural to urban location but also from rural to rural location. A second challenge identified in Boricha woreda by students, teachers and by government officials, is the significant language barriers between students and teachers. As there is a shortage of appropriately qualified teachers in the SNNP Region, many teachers currently employed are from the Amhara region and cannot speak the local language Sidamigna. This means that students and teachers often struggle to communicate.

#### **6.1.2. SPECIAL CASE TWO: BEZA, SHEBEDINO WOREDA**

##### ***Shebedino Woreda***

Leku is the main town of Shebedino woreda and is located 25km outside of Hawassa or 50 minutes by bus. Shebedino is considered the most populous woreda in the Sidama Zone, with a population of approximately 300,000 people. Four of the participants in this study came from Shebedino woreda – Afewerk, Yemisrach, Genet and Beza. Beza was one of the special cases in this study and we also spoke to Beza's mother Hosanna. During additional trips to Shebedino, we visited the woreda education bureau and two secondary schools in this area (Dila Afara and Habela Lida secondary schools). In Shebedino, the main source of income is coffee and chat. In general, many people indicated that while Shebedino did not face the same types of problems as Boricha in terms of susceptibility to climate change, attitudes are more conservative in this area.

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<sup>26</sup> This is in comparison to approximately 54 primary schools (A.A. 2013/4).

### ***Community Attitudes***

Gender inequalities in the community were said to have a negative impact on rural girls' education access, progression and achievement. The teachers in Dila Afara described how '*...from the beginning society does not care about girls*' and that '*according to the Sidama people, female and males are not treated in the same way*'. Both Beza and Yemisrach indicate that in Shebedino women have no decision-making power in the community. Afewerk explains that the superior position of males in the community is a result of their primary role as income generators and the fact they were the sole inheritors within families. While there are many opportunities for males to earn income in the community, either through the production and sale of chat or by engaging in trade activities, '*...for the girls they will stay at home, they will do the home activities*' (Afewerk).

Confirming the stories told by the participants, the teachers described the heavy work burden that the participants face as one of the biggest challenges for female students. In Dila Afara secondary school the teachers described how rural female students have a heavy workload during the day, which impacted their education, while at night-time there is no electricity, so they cannot study. As a result of these challenges, female academic achievement in these schools is indicated to be much lower than that of male students. It was generally agreed that in this community mothers are particularly influential in terms of their daughters' education. However, as many mothers are not formally educated, they prefer to keep their daughter at home believing that their daughters should enter into marriage rather than pursue their education. In this community female students are expected to enter into marriage from the age of fifteen.

### ***Beza's Family***

Beza comes from a big family and her mother Hosanna is the second of her father's two wives, reflecting how polygamy is common in this areas. Beza's father recently passed away and now his two wives are living together in the one house. Hosanna is a subdued woman who did not have very much to say. She tells us that there is gender equality in her community because men and women have equal rights, however this is at odds with the very oppressive and male dominated atmosphere that we experienced in Beza's home (see Box 5.1 in Chapter Five). Hosanna tells us that she was not educated, as in the past people did not value education. However she tells us that nowadays the community has a good attitude towards education. Hosanna values education as she believes it provides the opportunity to acquire knowledge and subsequently to improve one's life. Hosanna tells us that in the past her husband (Beza's Father) supported Beza's education financially but since he passed away they are supporting her, even though it is difficult explaining '*I don't want to make her stay in the house because my chance already gone, so I want to educate her*'. She wishes

for Beza ‘...to live a good life and continue in her education after’. She contrasts the differences in the quality of education in rural and urban areas, discussing how in the urban area there is better quality available, due to the language barriers present here in the rural area. Hosanna tells us that language is important for communicating with others. In addition, she thinks that the urban schools have better facilities and also have access to electricity.

### ***Education***

Similar to Boricha woreda, one of the main challenges for rural girls’ secondary education in Shebedino is the lack of available secondary schools in this area. At the time of the main fieldwork there were four general secondary schools (Grade Nine-Ten) in Shebedino and no preparatory secondary schools (Grade 10-11)<sup>27</sup>. Due to the shortage in secondary schools one principal (Dila Afara) told us that many students travel up to one hour on foot each day to reach the school and as a result many students are routinely late. In addition to the lack of available schools in Shebedino woreda, the lack of education facilities was also highlighted as a significant challenge in this area. The teachers in the schools visited, drew attention to the insufficient numbers of classrooms, chairs, books and other materials, as well as a shortage of basic resources such as running water and electricity. They described how it was not uncommon to find 75-80 students in one classroom, as opposed to the recommended ratio of 45:1. The shortage of resources in these schools was said to make teaching very challenging, placing a significant strain on the existing resources and impacting the quality of education that is possible. The teachers in these schools emphasised how there were significant inequalities between rural and urban schools, referring to the ‘*technology based*’ schools in urban areas where they have access to ‘*mass media, laboratories and technical materials*’. Before rural students even enter into the classroom, they are already at a disadvantage to their urban counterparts.

Significant language barriers between students and teachers were also prevalent in the schools visited in Shebedino. In Habela Lida, almost all of teachers (90%) were said to come from the Amhara region, and could not speak Sidamigna making it impossible for students and teacher to communicate effectively as the students did not speak Amharic. While the principal in Habela Lida thinks that it would be nice if the education was taught through Sidamigna, he acknowledges that this would bring other challenges in the future such as the inability of students to get a job outside of Shebedino when they are finished school. In Dila Afara the principal thinks that while students may learn better through their mother tongue, it would be better if all education were through English. The comments

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<sup>27</sup> In contrast to approximately 39 primary schools available (A.A. 2013/4).

from these two principals highlight the tensions surrounding the sensitive issue of language of instruction in Ethiopia's education system and draws attention to the need for significant consideration to be given to this issue.

### 6.1.3. "THE RURAL BAD LIFE" - PARTICIPATORY VIDEO DRAMA

This video drama is focused on the life of Derartu, a fictional rural girl based on the experiences of the participants in this study. Other characters in the drama include Derartu's mother, father and brother Dengiso. The video opens with Derartu's mother cleaning the house while her father is sitting down, and he is criticising his wife for not having enough work done. From the beginning of the video we are introduced to the gendered division of labour in rural communities and the subordinate status of women. Throughout the video we witness unrelenting and difficult domestic chores that Derartu is engaged in. As the mother continues to clean the house the father raises the subject of the approaching deadline for registering their two children in the school, his son (Dengiso) and daughter (Derartu). However the mother responds in shock and disbelief, asking the father who will help her in the house if Derartu goes to school. She indicates that the father can register their son but affirms that women do not need to learn and that '*only men need to be educated*'.

The son and daughter return to the house. Dengiso (son) asks his parents when he will be registered in the school. The father asks him how he will register him when he does not have enough money to feed him. Derartu also indicates that she wishes to go to school. However her parents tell her that they can only register their son because they do not have enough money, indicating the potential trade-offs that family have to make when resources are scarce. Dengiso tries to convince his parents to register both him and his sister in the school. However the mother responds and tells her son and daughter that girls do not need to be educated. Derartu becomes very upset. Dengiso tells his father that he needs exercise books, but his father tells him that he does not have enough money to buy exercise books and clothes, again highlighting the constrained economic resources available for families in rural communities.

Dengiso is registered in the school and starts to attend class while Derartu remains in the home completing activities such as fetching water, preparing food and cleaning the house. When Dengiso returns from school he starts to tease his sister that she is not educated. While Dengiso was initially supportive of Derartu's education, his shift in attitude towards his sister perhaps suggests how inequalities are created, reinforced and widened through education. Derartu is ordered by her parents to prepare food for her brother and to take off his shoes. The mother notes the changed behaviour of her son and asks him son why he is acting differently. Dengiso tells his mother '*Oh my god, you see, you are not educated, so you*

*know nothing...and without education your daughter will now also know nothing*'. This once again highlights the gaps between these who are educated and those who are not educated.

Later on, while the family is at home a male member of the community comes to visit and asks to speak to Derartu. Derartu's family, particularly her father and brother, must give permission for Derartu to speak with him, demonstrating how restricted girls' movements are in their communities. Outside the house, the male community member asks Derartu why she is not enrolled in the school. Derartu tells him that her parents will not allow her to attend school and want to keep her in the home. The male member of the community tries to convince Derartu to enter into marriage with him, telling Derartu that if she marries him he will *'send her to school'* and *'buy her clothes'* and therefore it is *'better for her to be married'*. They then decide to get married. In the background we see Derartu's mother and father attempting to spy on this conversation, again referencing the constant surveillance of rural girls in their communities. When Derartu returns to the home, her father chastises her for speaking to the 'durrie' (delinquent) *'what were you doing with the 'durrie' guy? Do you want to be a 'durrie' too?'*, her mother tells her that she will embarrass them in front of the community and Dengiso starts to kick her. Communicated here are the strict social norms and conventions that rural girls must adhere to and the severe repercussions that they face if they do not conform to these expectations. Derartu enters into marriage, which her brother Dengiso blames on their parents for *'keeping her from the school'*.

Despite the promises that Derartu's husband made before they entered into marriage, we see how the 'bad life' continues for Derartu after being married. In the house of her husband Derartu is seen to continue to engage in a heavy work burden. Her husband enters the home and asks Derartu what she has been doing all day telling her *'you don't have any other jobs to do other than take care of me'*, echoing the opening scene with Derartu's mother and father, again signalling the inter-generational transfer and perpetuation of gender inequalities. Derartu's husband becomes physically aggressive towards Derartu and their daughter. He starts to insult her telling her that he saved her from her parents and no one would marry her if she were still there. *'I don't need you telling me what you have done in the house, I just need you to serve me...from now on I will have the right to marry to another girl'*. The husband tells Derartu to leave the house by the time he comes back. The video ends with Derartu committing suicide. While this is a dramatic ending, this reinforces the idea of the lack of opportunities available for girls and young women in their community.

#### 6.1.4. SUMMARY

Considering these two sending communities side by side, we see the inequalities that are common across these two communities and those that are unique to each particular community. In each of these communities, rural girls are shown to be uniquely disadvantaged due to the intersection of challenges across location and gender and to occupy a subordinate position. The subordinate status of girls and women is both a cause



and a consequence of the lack of unequal economic resources and opportunities. The video drama produced by the participants, titled '*The Rural Bad Life*', complements and extends our understanding of these issues. Although, the video drama provides a fictionalised account of life in a rural community, it provides us with a representation of their lived realities through the eyes of the participants themselves. It takes us inside their homes, presenting a partial account of their experiences within their families and the inequalities that they face, including the economic challenges faced by the families, the heavy domestic work burden of rural girls and expectation for marriage all of which are presented in a very vivid way. We also see how inequalities intersect and reinforce each other to produce multiple disadvantages in the lives of rural girls. For example, the interaction of economic constraints faced by the family and the privileged status of males, means that preference is given to the education of their son and not their daughter. The video drama also captures the inter-generational transfer of gender norms and expectations and we see how often mothers are those who are reinforcing these norms for their daughters. These issues will be explored in more detail in the remainder of this chapter. An important caveat in this chapter is the fact that the accounts provided by the participants of their rural communities are retrospective accounts, and have been interpreted and filtered through the experiences of girls in the urban areas (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011). Nonetheless, it is hoped that these accounts will provide an in-depth picture of the sending communities of the participants. It seeks to offer a unique insight into the factors and processes that contribute to rural girls' decision to migration to urban secondary schools from their own perspectives.

## 6.2. HEAVY DOMESTIC WORK BURDEN

### 6.2.1. CONTINUOUS AND REPETITIVE WORKLOAD

In the case summaries presented above we heard of how, in the Sidama culture an established hierarchy is in place and *'from the beginning society does not care about girls'* and *'males and females are not treated in the same way'*. Pervasive gender norms and expectations which set out the subordinate status of the females in the community structure their lives and experiences both within the family and in the community. In particular, the heavy, onerous and repetitive work burden that the participants face in their rural communities, was described as one of the biggest challenges to their education and talked about by the participants at length. As represented in Table 6.1., the rural girls in this study have many tasks that they had to complete on a daily basis including fetching water, cleaning the house, preparing food, collecting firewood, washing clothes and preparing food for the whole family. These tasks began the moment that the participants woke up and lasted throughout the day, with the participants describing how they only found respite only when they went to sleep at night. Rahel describes how if she were to return to the rural community, she would no longer be able to complete the chores that she used to do.

*'For example I live here and if I went there now, I would not be able to fetch water now. I don't have the ability to handle the bottles of the water because it's too heavy for me now. But in the past I just accepted, I have to do it. But now I can't do that' (Rahel).*

The participation did not have control over how they used their time and Bujuge describes how the only brief let-up that she had from these endless tasks was when she went to school.

*'In the morning I clean the animal's dung, I prepare *kojo* (cultural food) for the whole family as a breakfast, fetching water and...then we will go to the school then after we come back we make coffee. Then I prepare dinner and these activities are routine, but sometimes if I have free time, I think about studying. But they (parents) prefer if I don't study and prefer to assign me another task, so I start to engage with that task rather than focus on my study' (Bujuge).*

Similarly, Grace (Boricha) describes how her tasks started as soon as she woke up in the morning.

*'In the morning when I wake up if there is water ok, if there is no water I go to fetch water. Then I make coffee, then I prepare breakfast and all the neighbours come together and drink coffee. When they leave our house I start to clean the house, then I have to prepare lunch, so I have to cook *spice* (sauce) for our lunch. Then I prepare the *spice*. Then also I make *Kojo* after we eat the lunch again. Then I bring firewood and after I bring the firewood I take a rest. Then again if the time is gone, in turn I start to cook for dinner' (Grace).*

These findings highlight just how severe the work burden is that rural girls in this study face and how it structured every aspect of their life including their education.

The findings from this study underline how the demanding work responsibilities of the participants were exacerbated and augmented by the fact that rural girls and women must compensate for the lack of basic resources and infrastructure in these communities such as running water and electricity. As discussed in Chapter Two the gendered work burden that rural girls face is not only gendered but also spatial (Forsberg, 2001; Mulugeta, 2004). This was highlighted by Grace, Hannah and Yemisrach in the case summaries at the beginning of this chapter and by many others in this study. For Hewan it would take her approximately one and a half hours to fetch water every day, while Grace (Boricha) would have to travel long distances to reach the mill house in addition to fetching water in addition to all the other tasks that they had to complete. This is also referenced by Afewerk;

*'The other one is the distance of the mill-house, when my mum she sends me to the mill-house, there is a high temperature during that time of the day so I would get tired and it would make me feel bad. The other one is cleaning animals poop, because it is a routine activity every day so it makes me feel bad. Every time you clean that. Every morning you clean that. Every day you have it so it's also a difficult thing' (Afewerk)*

The responsibility for making up for this gap in access to basic resources and infrastructure in rural areas largely falls upon girls and women in these communities, as also found in other research (e.g. Porter, 2013), demonstrating the inequalities across rural and urban location in terms of access to basic resources in general including running water, electricity and roads.

### 6.2.2. GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOUR

Domestic work activities were the sole responsibility of female family members while their brothers or male family members were not responsible for any domestic activities in the household and were *'free to engage in any activity, whatever they like'* while they were *'responsible to accomplish the home activities'* (Kidist). Hilina describes how

*'...males are responsible for the outside work, especially in the farming activities. For example, planting, harvesting, doing different activities on the farm. But for women, she is mostly responsible for the domestic work, especially cooking, preparing food for the males who are working in the farm area, and taking the food to them, it is their responsibility' (Hilina)*

Females faced a double work burden engaging in farm activities in addition to significant chores in the home as discussed by Hewan *'...females do males work, but all males do not usually work females job, only a very few'* (Hewan). The gendered division of labour is rigidly set in place and women must accept this and *'keep silent'*. This is a phrase that arose many times in conversation with the participants. It captures the idea that someone should not voice their

opinion, particularly their disagreement or discomfort with a situation and is linked to the idea that there is a rigid hierarchy in place and this should not be disturbed.

Only two participants (Sara and Hiwot) did not have a heavy work burden in the rural areas. One of these participants, Sara was from a *'medium-to-high income'* family and the other participant was from a *'medium income'* family.

*'My only responsibility is learning all the time. They don't allow me to waste my time with my friends or other places. But I'm free for my study and if I ask them to perform tutorial in the school they allow me all the time. I don't have any problem'* (Sara).

In contrast to the other girls in the study, Sara would not spend more than 1.5 hours on domestic work and did not experience any stress in the rural area because her parents allowed her to focus on her education. However, even though Sara was not under a heavy work burden she still indicated that her family *'don't treat us equally'* giving more support to her brother for his education, demonstrating the embedded natures of gender inequalities in rural areas. Even in families who are slightly better off, where there is a reduced work burden for the female family members, males are still favoured.

While both mothers and daughter alike faced a heavy work burden in the rural community, the findings from this study demonstrate how it is often the female family members who delegate these gendered responsibilities to their daughters. Hannah tells us that the mother that was represented in the video drama was modelled on her step-mother, who she lived with in the rural area. Her step-mother made her complete many tasks in the house tasks that were *'...difficult and not appropriate for my age, like fetching water, making home activities and different activities and she was not good'*, but her step-mother would not make her step-siblings do any of these tasks, and therefore the entire work burden of the household was Hannah responsibility.

*'She would get me to wake up early in the morning at 5am then she would order me to produce food for her children, to fetch water with a 20 litre canister, she made me carry heavy stuff like lots of wood and maize for the mill-house to bring to the mill-house and then bring back to home. And also to produce kojo - there is called Gamacho - the bottom part of the Enset - it's very heavy to carry - she orders me to carry it up the hill, because the environment is uncomfortable slope (billy) so she ordered me to do all these things - everyday'* (Hannah)

Hannah describes how failure to complete her chores could result in violence and harsh punishment from her step-mother, as was also reflected in the participatory video drama. Rediet who lived with her grandparents in the rural areas told us how her grandmother made her complete many tasks and would regularly stop her going to school, *'...when I was*

*there it was all about work, all over the day its work so I don't have the free time to enjoy or for rest' (Rediet).*

The fact that rural girls were often kept from school to complete domestic work activities was discussed by many other participants. Rahel would only attend school *'three times a week because I don't have the time'* and Tsega spoke of how she often missed class due to her domestic work burden. Even for girls who do access education in rural areas the heavy work burden they face means they have little time to devote to their studies. As was found to be the case in Mulugeta's (2004) those who were successful would have to make considerable sacrifices and many of her participants recalled how they would often forgo sleep or food in order to be able to just keep up with their school work, which was a constant struggle. Similarly, in this study Beza describes how, to mitigate the challenges she faced, she would often go to school without having anything to eat because of the heavy workload she has to complete before school.

### 6.2.3. MENTAL BURDEN

Other researchers have found the heavy work burden that many girls face means that they arrived at school exhausted and unable to mentally engage with the academic work while their interest in education may diminish (Admassie, 2002/2003; Porter et al., 2011). This was also found in this study and in addition to be exhausted upon reaching school it was also found that girls also carried the mental load of domestic work whilst in school. Due to this they described being distracted and unable to concentrate in class as they would be thinking about the chores that they must complete.

*'In the rural area, it is all about performing domestic activities. Every day, you don't think about other activities because you don't have time to think about other things. Even about education, homework, exercise books, everything' (Rediet)*

Tsega tells us that even though she has escaped the heavy work burden of her household by coming to Hawassa, she is still psychologically affected by the stress and of the tasks she had to complete. It seems that the time costs of domestic work continue beyond the actual task complete and the responsibilities they had to complete constantly weighed on their minds.

Mulugeta (2004) suggests that the reason that parents, and mothers in particular, would overburden their children was mostly due to the fact that they did not understand what it took to succeed in education. We see evidence of this in the stories of the participants who describe how even though their parents allowed them to attend school, their lack of understanding of education meant that they did not reduce their work burden making it difficult for the participants in this study to do their homework or to attend tutorials in the

afternoon. As such they were ‘...falling behind other students because I had all these other activities to do’ (Grace). Genet describes the effect of her parents being uneducated on the amount of domestic chores she had to complete.

*When I was in Shebedino it was difficult for me to study or focus on my education because my parents are not educated, so they don't allow me to study. Every time after supporting my parents fetching water, cleaning the house, cooking food, after all these activities even if I have free time they don't allow me (to study) because they don't know the benefit of the education’.*

If she had time to do her homework or study in the rural area she is often too tired and will just go to sleep.

*Even if I have the interest to study my exercise book and homework and different activities, in the day I have so many activities in the house preparing coffee, making the food, fetching water so all these things make me tired and I forget to study and just go to sleep’.*

While it may be the case that parents simply do not understand what it takes to succeed in education, another possible is that this is a strategy of mothers to prepare their daughter for marriage. This is most clearly captured by Emebet’s mother Zena in relation to her own experience when she was younger.

*When we were children our parents they arranged our marriage and my mother she taught me every activity in the house, so everybody appreciates me and wants to get engaged in marriage because I know everything. Our parents were so strict regarding these home activities, they taught us how to tie animals, to take care of the house, how to make kojo, how to make different things. Then all the community wanted to have a wife from our house. Then finally, when I reached Grade Five everybody was proposing to me’, (Zena).*

On one hand it may be that families are more concerned with upholding and strengthening the traditional roles of women rather than supporting their education, and possible entry into paid employment while on the other it may be that families are making strategic decisions about their daughters future given the limited opportunities that are available.

Table 6.1. Participants' Daily Routine in Rural Areas

Participants' Daily Routine in Rural Areas	
<b>Life Story 01</b>	Wake up clean the house prepare breakfast, make coffee go to school, return from school fetch water, complete other activities, make dinner for the family.
<b>Life Story 02</b>	Make coffee, prepare breakfast, prepare food, prepare lunch, fetch water, clean the animals, clean the house, cook the dinner.
<b>Life Story 03</b>	Making coffee, fetching water, cleaning the house, taking care of cattle, preparing koko going to school, fetch firewood.
<b>Life Story 04</b>	Clean the animals' house, fetch water, prepare food, go to the school, make coffee, prepare coffee, and study if it is possible.
<b>Life Story 05</b>	Fetch water, prepare coffee, go to the market, go to school, make lunch, fetch water, fetch firewood, look after the cattle, prepare food.
<b>Life Story 06</b>	Prepare food, fetch water, fetch wood, go to the mill house, and produce koko.
<b>Life Story 07</b>	Prepare food, fetch water, clean the house, go to school.
<b>Life Story 08</b>	Make breakfast, clean the house, go to school, go to the market, sell coffee, prepare food.
<b>Life Story 09</b>	Clean the house, make coffee, cook lunch, go to school, prepare lunch for the family, make coffee, clean the house, and make dinner.
<b>Life Story 10</b>	Make coffee, fetch water, go to school, go to the market, make dinner.
<b>Life Story 11</b>	Eat breakfast and go to school, each lunch and then study with friends or spend time relaxing.
<b>Life Story 12</b>	Prepare breakfast for the family, fetch water, go to the mill house, go to the market.
<b>Life Story 13</b>	Clean house, make coffee, fetch water, fetch firewood, prepare food, clean up after the animals.
<b>Life Story 14</b>	Clean the animals' house, fetching water, prepare food for the whole family, prepare coffee, prepare lunch, go to school, work after dinner.
<b>Life Story 15</b>	Prepare breakfast, prepare coffee, prepare lunch, fetch water, and prepare koko. Prepare dinner.
<b>Life Story 16</b>	Clean the house, cook food, go to school, come back from school, rest and study, make coffee, cook.

<b>Life Story 17</b>	Clean the house, make coffee, go to school, go home, play with friends, prepare lunch, fetch water, wash clothes, go to the market.
<b>Life Story 18</b>	No responsibilities, only learning.
<b>Life Story 19</b>	Clean animals house, clean house, prepare food, prepare coffee, go to school, prepare lunch, go to work in the field, prepare kojo, prepare dinner.
<b>Life Story 20</b>	Work on the farm, got to school, help in the home.
<b>Life Story 21</b>	Work on the farm, do domestic activities, make coffee, prepare coffee.
<b>Life Story 22</b>	Farming activities, clean the house of the cattle, prepare breakfast, prepare coffee, go to school.
<b>Life Story 23</b>	Help parents doing activities. Make breakfast, go to school, carry out activities, bake injera, eat lunch.
<b>Life Story 24</b>	Clean the house, make coffee, prepare food, prepare dinner, study.
<b>Life Story 25</b>	Clean house, make coffee, go to school.
<b>Life story 26</b>	Clean the house, walk to school.
<b>Life Story 27</b>	Clean house, wash clothes, make food, fetch water, work on the farm.



### 6.3. EXPECTATIONS FOR MARRIAGE

#### 6.3.1. UNEQUAL ACCESS TO RESOURCES

In spite of the significant contribution and workload of the participants as has been described thus far, we learn that the participants not only do not receive any rewards for the work that they complete but their access to resources within the household is restricted and ‘...even the simplest things’ were unequal such as the food that males and females were allowed to eat, ‘...you give the best part, the good part for men, and they (females) eat the other part’ (Melal). If there was a shortage of food the female members of the family would not eat anything.

*For example, me and my mum, we prepare food for the whole family. But if there is not enough food, we just give the food to the boys, for my brother and my father and we don’t eat anything...We are not even equal in food’ (Kidist).*

They did also not receive any money to buy clothes or other things that they needed.

*In the other way also, sometimes if he wants to buy clothes for us, he (father) will buy him (son) for 500 Birr and he only will give me 50 Birr. Even he (father) will advise me to buy used clothes. But for my brother, he just gives him lots of money’ (Kidist).*

In general females have no economic power and must rely on male members of the family for everything. Samira describes how in her sending community women cannot earn money and must rely on the male members of their family for financial support. If female members of the community try to engage in economic activities, they face criticism from the community and the community will tell them ‘you are a female you have to keep silent. You should not reject the community’s understanding...you have to use what the money that is given by the male’ (Samira). As male communities members had the earning power, they were free to spend their time as they wished.

*But they don’t do anything, they just work around the rural area, they enjoy with their friends, they make money by selling chat. They have the control over the money. If they sell chat they use the money without any interference from their parents, and they have more rights. But me I just prepare the food’ (Rediet).*

In addition, only male members of the family could receive inheritance. Hilina recounted, how in her community, ‘...if one boys gets married, his father will give him half of cattle, half of his sheep, half of his goats, half of his donkeys, whatever he has, he will share for his boy. But for girls, he will not give anything; she will just go out of the home (Hilina). In contrast, girls did not receive any inheritance as they are considered to ‘belong’ to the family of their prospective husband and to give them inheritance would mean that the resources were going outside the family. This means that females enter into marriage on very unequal footing, which in turn can be said to have consequences for inequalities between marriage partners. Because of their lack of

economic power they have little or no decision-making power and Hewan tells us that in her rural community, ‘...they don’t consider that male and female are equal. They consider that males are superior and females are inferior and males have knowledge that females they don’t have any knowledge’ (Hewan).

However, while many of the participants spoke of these inequalities in basic resources, there is also some evidence of changes occurring. Beza describes how her father shared his inheritance equally amongst his children before he passed away.

*For example, my dad in our village it is not expected to give inheritance for girls. But my dad, when we were children, we planted enset and other things. He saw our activities, so when he was dying he talked to the people and for all his children, he said ‘all of you boys and girls, you have to share the inheritance equally because all of you are equal for me’ (Beza).*

Similarly, there was also some evidence of women starting to become educated and engage in business, which in turn was helping to change the attitudes towards women in the community.

*But now every girl is participating in different businesses, and they have income, they are also becoming educated. So the people have changed their mind. Because she is already capable of helping herself, and girls do not need the other people’s support’ (Rabel).*

Once again we see how economic inequalities and gender norms and inequalities are inextricably linked, but also how even though gender norms and expectations appear at first rigid and fixed, they are open to change.

Based on the findings presented thus far, we come to realise is how in these communities a reinforcing cycle gender inequality is present made up inequalities in access to education and employment opportunities which are produced by, and reproduce unequal gender norms and expectations. In addition, it is often the case that these cycles of gender inequalities are perpetuated and upheld by female members of these rural communities including female members of the family and in some ways rural girls themselves. However, understanding that these gender norms and expectations are also open to change means that female member of these rural communities also have an important role to play in breaking these unequal norms and traditions, and we see change of this happening in the stories and accounts of the participants in this study.

### 6.3.2. THE ONLY OPTION

As discussed in Chapter Two, in Ethiopia the age of entry into secondary education often coincides with the expected age of entry into marriage in rural areas (Del Franco, 2010; Smith, Stone & Kahando, 2012). This was certainly true for the rural girls in this study who

spoke of how from the age of 'fifteen up to eighteen' (Meskerem) girls and young women are expected to stop their education and enter into marriage. Many of the participants indicated that they would be married and would have children if they were still living in the rural area.

*'(Laughing) If I was still there, I would be the mother of kids. There is no other history. The only thing that you do is you got married because they hired you like marriage recruitment when you are a child they recruit you and they can marry you' (Abeba).*

In rural areas girls have very little or no control over their decisions affecting their own lives and often their pathways are chosen for them. Beimnet explains how in her village '...if you ask for a girl my age, you cannot find one because everybody has been married'. She explains how she herself escaped entry into marriage by migrating to Hawassa avoiding a similar fate to her two sisters who were 'tricked' into marriage by their mother, '...when I was in Grade Eight, my mother she was forcing me to get married. There were thirteen boys who came to our house and they gave her (mother) 1000 birr'.

In exploring why practices of early marriage persist in the rural communities of the participant in this study, the findings are consistent with those of others studies who have pointed out the fact that often marriage expectations persist due to the fact that they are seen to secure the economic futures of girls, given that there are few or no earning opportunities for girls in these communities and it is often presumed that girls will have a better life with their husbands (Chuta & Morrow, 2015; Boyden, Pankhurst & Tafere, 2012). This was represented very clearly in the participatory video drama that was produced by the participants where Derartu was convinced by a male in her community to enter into marriage with promises that he would provide her with financial support and support for her education. The lack of earning opportunities for females in their rural communities was a significant concern for many of the participants in this study. They described how even if rural girls in their community entered into secondary education, their opportunities after secondary education were limited. As such, those female students who manage to finish their secondary education would still be expected to enter into marriage on completion of their education. For this reason, questions are being asked about the value of education and in many cases marriage is seen as a more secure option that carries less risk. Rahel explains that in her community (Bensa) the preference for girls to enter into marriage is because 'girls are not benefitting from this education'. In addition, the participants explained how many of their rural peers were 'choosing' to enter into marriage as they did not see the benefit of secondary education given that marriage was their final destination.

*'It means in the rural area, there are no options. Because in the rural area there are no other jobs, its only farmers, all are that. If you fail to continue your education that (marriage) is the only option' (Hannah).*

While often the dominant narrative in the literature is that rural girls are forced or tricked into early marriage - and in many cases this is true - it does not capture the full story as marriage may also be something that girls choose for themselves in the midst of limited opportunities. While it was suggested that families and communities in rural areas perhaps do not understand the value of education or what it takes to succeed in education, another explanation is that families are in fact making strategic decisions to enable their daughters to succeed in the only secure way known to them, namely their entry into marriage. While this is not an argument in favour of early marriage, it highlights how ensuring access to education in rural communities is not enough to address the continued practice of early marriage, but it is necessary to ensure that there are economic opportunities available to rural girls after and outside of formal education. Furthermore, based on this evidence we come to realise how the decision of the rural girls in this study to abandon the pathway set out for them by their rural community carries significant weight and represents a considerable risk, which may have implications for their lives both in the present and in the future.

### 6.3.3. INSULTS, RUMOURS AND BACKBITES

Chapter Two discusses the importance of the concept of *yilunta* in Ethiopian society and how it captures the unwritten rules that set out the roles expected of males and females. While a number of studies have discussed this concept in relation to children and young people in Ethiopia, the implications of this concept for the secondary education of rural girls has not been considered in such detail. Furthermore, the findings from this study not only have demonstrated the operation of *yilunta* in the rural communities of the girls in this study, but they also highlight how expectations for marriage in rural communities are reinforced through insults, backbites and rumours. The use of such modes of discourse to influence and shape the behaviour of females was also captured by Hussein, (2009) in relation to the use of proverbs in Ethiopia although he did not directly link this to the concept of *yilunta*. In the current study we see the use of insults, rumours and backbites most clearly in relation to pressure on rural girls in this study to enter into early marriage. A specific window of opportunity for girls' entry into marriage exists in these community and for those who *pass* or are close to passing the expected age of entry into marriage, the members of the community would try to *push* rural girls into marriage by telling them that they were '*becoming too old*' (*Melal*). One of the teachers in Balela Secondary school in Shebedino also spoke of how in the Sidama culture if a girl is not married by the age of 18 there are lots of proverbs, '*the girl is compared to a mule if she is not married*'.

Through these modes of discourse, family and community members are constructing the behaviour that they expect of rural girls, which in turn influences what they believe they

are capable of achieving or not capable of achieving. Sara describes how the rural community ‘psychologically attack’ girls and try to influence their trajectories into marriage. Insults, criticism, public humiliation, finger pointing or corporal punishment are the most common mechanisms of instilling appropriate behaviour and a sense of ‘*yilunta*’.

*‘They don’t see them equally, for example; in the rural area most of the time they don’t insult their male children. They use different more psychological words for girls than males. I think this is to make them afraid of people and it’s to remind them that they are female, and they are not capable of doing everything’ (Sara).*

Rural girls internalise the attitudes of the community and their families and this restricts what they believe they can be and can do. The participants in this study spoke of how if a girl in the rural community of the expected age of marriage remains idle in the house then the community will gossip about her.

*‘Their expectation is mostly that women should engage in marriage. For example if you are learning and have not gotten married, they will say...they use insults or back bites like that they say that “Look at her friend she got married”. “Learning? What does that bring? It didn’t bring her anything and now she is left in her parent’s house”...So they prefer to criticise those who are staying in the education rather than get married’ (Hannah).*

As portrayed in the participatory video drama and discussed more by the participants was how girls and women are not free to move about the community as the ‘community’s gaze’ (Vega) is always upon them and this constant monitoring and surveillance is used to regulate the behaviour of females. This was also found in the literature by Stavropoulou and Gupta-Archer (2017) who describes how girls’ movements are controlled and monitored.

Alem also talks about how the community use insults to restrict the movements of girls, ‘they also consider us ‘Durrie’ (delinquent<sup>28</sup>) and they insult us; ‘Durrie (delinquent), get in the house; I don’t want to see you outside the house’, they say like this (Alem). While girls and women may be permitted to go to church or to go to the market, if they are late the community will gossip about them, ‘...they say that she is late because she has a bad act – she will be with a guy under the trees or some other place. She is deviating from the community. So they consider that we don’t even have the right to choose our friend’ (Kidist). In addition to restricted movement in the community, Kidist indicates that rural girls do not have the freedom to wear what they wish. She describes how if a rural girl changes her clothes the community ‘think I am wearing these clothes because I am searching for a new boyfriend or it’s because I’m becoming a durrie (delinquent)’. We see how almost every aspect of the behaviour of rural girls is heavily regulated in their rural community.

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Durrie’ is an elusive but ubiquitously used word in Ethiopia, ‘delinquent’ is my own translation.

Kidist describes how it was these strict gender norms and expectations and harsh monitoring that was the reason why she migrated to Hawassa.

*First I decided not for education, but rather for like running away from the bad voices, of the people, their insults, their different bad things. It's only to escape from that bad voice of the neighbourhood...but now, when I go back to the rural area, they respect me. Even not to insult or back biting me, they respect me. But now it's my decision to focus on my education, in the time it was not. It was just to escape from the social influence' (Kidist).*

To step outside the expected norms in their communities is to bring shame and disappointed on their families, which has an extremely powerful effect on their lives. In the current study as it seems that the participants have been able to overcome this fear to a certain degree in shunning marriage and moving to the city, however they still fear the repercussion if they are to fail in their education and be forced to return to the rural community, as will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

Fear of falling victim to insults, rumours and backbites is something which not only rural girls try to avoid but also their families may be targeted by the community's censorship based on the behaviour and actions of the rural girls in this study. The desire to avoid being the centre of this type of criticism meant that in some cases parents were reluctant to support the education of their daughters as it was going against what was expected of them in their community. For example, Genet describes how her father was fearful of the repercussions of harsh criticism from the community;

*'...if you go there, you will be a Grade Eight student and if you fail the community will laugh at me because they will say whether or not she continues her education nobody wants her for marriage so why did you send her. He was afraid of the community's criticism' (Genet).*

Here we see how Genet's decision to continue her secondary education and refusal to conform to the community's expectation that she will enter into marriage brings with it the risk of damaging the good name of the family, as captured by many authors (e.g. Alemu, 2008; Heinonen, 2011; Stavropoulou & Gupta-Archer, 2017). However in other cases we see examples of parents who are prepared to criticism from members in the community in order to support the education of their daughters as seen in the case of Grace and her father Solomon described at the beginning of this chapter.

#### 6.4. CHAPTER SIX SUMMARY

This first findings chapter has explored the lives and experiences of the participants in their rural sending communities in Ethiopia. It has considered the specific challenges that they face, not only in terms of accessing, pursuing and benefiting from education, but also in every conceivable way. The gendered division of labour and expectations for early and unwanted marriage are shown to perhaps be some of the biggest challenge for these rural girls in their education pathways and the effects of these gendered inequalities are seen across the 14 different woredas of the participants. While these are not new revelations given that the presence of these barriers has been know, the findings from this study have demonstrated the extent to which they have a considerable and continual impact on the everyday lives of the rural girls in this study. Additionally, the findings have helped to explain some of the reasons *why* and *how* these restrictive gender norms, attitudes and expectations are maintained and reinforced and have revealed both the ideological and instrument (economic) underpinnings of these practices.

Similar to other studies (Abebe and Kjørholt, 2009; Orkin, 2012; Van Blerk, 2008), the stories of the participants in this study expose the highly gendered divisions of labour in rural communities. Rural girls emphasise how they are locked out of paid employment and into domestic work which involves onerous and repetitive work that negatively impacts their education and well-being. Domestic work activities were found to not only require a continuous amount of time as discussed by Orkin (2012), but were also shown to be relentless, starting from early morning to when the participants went to sleep with little let up from these tasks other than when the participants were in school. These activities hampered regular school attendance and progression of the girls in this study, and they also meant that learning was constant struggle. The need for girls in the home impacted how their parents (particularly mothers) valued their education, who would often keep them at home from school to relieve their mothers' work burden. Work responsibilities were usually not reduced while they were attending school but rather girls had to find ways to fit their education in and around their workload, which in many cases requires considerable sacrifices just to be able to keep up with others. The weight of this constant struggle is shown to have implications not only for the participants' education but also for their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

From the findings in this study we see how the heavy and onerous work burden is not only gendered but also spatial given that the work burden of the participants is significant increased and intensified as a result of inaccessibility to basic resources and infrastructure in these communities which the participants often had to compensate for. While this has been discussed by Porter et al. (2013) in relation to the *transport gap* that girls and women must fill, the findings of this study have shown how in these rural sending communities it

is much more than access to transport that is inadequate but access to the most basic resources such as running water and electricity, This is illustrative of the wider inequalities between rural and urban areas in Ethiopia whereby growth and development are concentrated in urban areas, and provides some evidence of how inequalities reproduce and reinforce one another.

As we have seen in Chapter Three, Ethiopia has one of the highest rate of early marriage, and while this practice is said to be declining, it seems that in rural areas of the participants in this study it is still widespread. A clear window of marriage is indicated by the participants in this study with expectations that girls will enter into marriage beginning usually around the age of 15 years old, confirming the findings of other studies (e.g. Erulkar, 2013). At the time of this study, many of the participants had already passed the median age of marriage in Ethiopia (17.1 years, CSA, 2016). While this is a positive finding, at the same time, pursuing education is shown to have a number of ramifications and the rural girls in this study are seen as going against traditional norms. If they are not married by the age of 18 they are considered to be too old and their personal character, and also the character of their families, is brought into question as has also been demonstrated by other studies (e.g. Alemu, 2008; Dagne, 2008; Mjaaland, 2016; Stavropoulou & Gupta-Archer, 2017). It is in this way that education and marriage are often incompatible in these communities. The participants in this study are were aware that if they were not continuing their secondly education they had already entered into marriage by now given that there were no other opportunities for them in rural communities. This would mean that they would be entering into an unequal arrangement with limited economic capacity, which in turn would mean that they had limited decision-making power and would continue to face the rigid norms and expectations of their rural communities. While it can be said that by continuing their education they are breaking (or at least delaying) this cycle of inequality, we nevertheless start to wonder what would happen to them if they are not successful in their education as it may be difficult for them to secure a 'good marriage' if they return to their rural communities.

In considering *why* these unequal gender norms and expectations prevail, it seems that there are both ideological and instrumental factors underpinning their power. The ideological roots of gender norms and expectations are effectively captured by the concept of *yilunta*, which was described in Chapter Three. While a number of authors have considered this concept and its influence in Ethiopian society, it has not been captured in such detail from the perspective of adolescent girls, nor has the impact that it has on rural girls' education been considered to such an extent. The findings in this study reveal is how the influence of *yilunta* becomes even greater at the time of adolescence for girls, restricting almost every aspect of their lives such as their movements in the community, what they wear, what they eat and who they talk to and in particular the gendered division of labour and expectations



for early and unwanted marriage, in addition to limiting their education. This shame-based concept has been shown to have a powerful influence in determining not only the behaviour and choices of rural girls themselves, but also that of their families, and fear of and exposure to the insults, rumours and backbites of the community was shown to have a powerful effect on their behaviour and choices.

We clearly see how the submissive nature that is expected of Ethiopian women, as described by Heinonen (2011), is not something that is naturally acquired but is rather that is instilled on a day to day basis and is continually reinforced through everyday encounters. At the same time we see how beliefs of what is right or wrong in these communities are based on traditional norms and expectations, and although have particular hegemony in these rural communities they are not unchangeable. For girls in this study, and in many cases their families, conceptions of *growing up well* for girls are no longer associated (exclusively) with the acquisition of domestic skills and entry into marriage (Chuta, 2013), but is increasingly associated with pursuing education and gaining independence. In this manner, the findings have shown how the same processes underlying these restrictive practices are the very sites where these practices can be changed (Mjaaland, 2016). For example, in contrast to Mjaaland's (2016) study where we heard of the government official who took his daughter out of school for marriage, we see many of the parents - especially fathers - in this study stand up against these same restrictive practices, regardless of the repercussions they face and no longer care *what people would say* (Chuta, 2013). We understand that the need for these gender norms and expectations to be upheld and reinforced also points to their malleability and potential openings to disrupt these norms and expectations. The refusal to uphold these cultural norms and expectations is most compellingly captured by the decision of rural girls to pursue their education and migrate to Hawassa city, which will be focus of the discussion in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: SEARCHING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

### 7.1. INTRODUCTION

Having considered the lives of rural girls in this study in their respective sending communities before they migrate, this chapter turns to the aspirations of these rural girls and strategies they employ as they strive for better futures. The second research question, *'What are the factors and processes that contribute to rural girls' migration to urban areas for secondary education?'* is explored in this chapter. At the heart of this study, and in particular this chapter, is the considerable agency of the participants who seek out better lives for themselves and their families and this agency shines through their stories. While the inequalities and challenges that rural girls faced in their respective sending communities were emphasised in the previous chapter, in line with the critical feminist approach of the study this chapter will remind us that rural girls not only vulnerable but also have considerable resilience and skills which they employ in an effort to take charge of their own futures and pathways. While the challenges that they face should in no way be ignored, we must also acknowledge and take account of their strengths and also the rich insights that they have to share about their lives. Similarly, recognising also that 'rural girls' are not a homogeneous group, the complexities and contradictions in their lives are underlined the diversity of their experiences and how their pathways both converge and diverge in many interesting and important ways is outlined. Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter begins with the presentation of two case summaries which seek to present a nuanced and detailed look at the formation of their aspirations and the strategies that they employ to achieve them. The chapter then turns to the broader group of participants to consider the processes of high educational aspirations are formed in this context. The role of those who influence their aspirations and subsequent pathways is also considered including both family members and wider social networks. The data analysed in this chapter comes predominantly from the life story interviews with the twenty-seven participants at the main stage of the fieldwork and also from interviews with family members. It is important to note that the interviews with the participant took place *after* they had migrated and the factors that participants indicated as influencing their migration are discussed retrospectively. The lives and experiences of rural girls in the city will be later discussed in Chapter Seven.

### 7.1.1. SPECIAL CASE 3: EMEBET, BENSA WOREDA

#### ***Rural Life***

Emebet was one of five 'special cases' included in this study. She was eighteen years old at the time of the main data collection. Emebet comes Bensa woreda, approximately 150km outside Hawassa or three hours by bus. Emebet described her family as medium-high income level. She is the oldest of her eight siblings and life for Emebet in the rural area was structured around the domestic tasks that she had to complete in the house including cleansing the house, making coffee, preparing food. Her father has a second wife and in total Emebet has 12 siblings and step-siblings. Emebet's mother Zena runs a restaurant in and her father runs a pension. Emebet's mother was educated to Grade Six and her father was educated to Grade Nine. From our discussion with Emebet and her mother Zena, it seems that Zena holds the majority of the decision-making power when it comes to her children, which may be due to her economic independence from her husband.

Emebet lives in an industrious and wealthy coffee-producing zone and she tells us that it is easy to make money in this location. In many of the coffee-producing zones such as Bensa, the participants would speak of how during the coffee production season when people earned a lot of money entry into marriage - including forced marriage and abduction - would significantly increase because males would then be able to afford the wedding ceremony. Zena tells us that in the past there was not a good attitude towards education, but this has changed which has also changed people's attitudes to marriage. Zena explains *'when the people start to learn, they have increased their knowledge, and they start to change everything'*. Emebet too tells us that in Bensa the community expect girls to get married after the age of 18. However she describes how nowadays girls themselves prefer to get married under the ages of 15-18 years old because there are *'no other options'*. Emebet did not like living in Bensa because of the lack of resources such as electricity and an available mobile network. She also described the physical difficulty of moving about in Bensa when there is a lot of rain as it becomes muddy and it is difficult to walk.

#### ***The Decision to Migrate***

Emebet tells us that she came to Hawassa searching for a better education and to decision escape the threat of being forced into marriage by the community. Even though her family did not want her to enter into marriage she still felt at risk. She was also attracted to the glamorous lifestyle of Hawassa, telling us that *'I heard good rumours about Hawassa. That it makes girls beautiful'*. Emebet explains that her mother made the decision for her to come to Hawassa, *'my mother she helped me a lot. Because she was very interested when she saw the girls who came to Hawassa, they were learning Amharic and other languages, so she was very eager to see me like them and learning different languages'*. Emebet's father was not involved in this. Zena arranged with

her sister (Emebet's aunt) to allow Emebet to come and live with her. Both Zena and Emebet indicate that Emebet's migration would not have been possible otherwise because they would not have had the financial resources to send Emebet to Hawassa.

Zena explains the reason why she is such a strong advocate for Emebet's education telling us that when she was young she was forced to stop her education and enter into marriage early. Now, Zena sees other people whom she went to school with who are in a 'good position' and she regrets not being educated telling us that '*...if (she) was educated she would not have this kind of house...*', believing that she would be in a better position. As a result of her experiences Zena does not want her daughters '*to have this kind of life in the future*' and wishes for them to be educated to university level and to get a job. Most importantly she wishes for them to be financially independent, '*I want them to educate themselves and to become college students, then after to get a job. I don't want them to become dependent on their husbands, because it's so difficult for them if they became dependent on their husbands*'. In the future Emebet herself wishes to join preparatory school (G11-12) and then to continue to university, and she considers the age of twenty-four as an appropriate age to enter into marriage, but most of all she does not wish to return to Bensa.

#### 7.1.2. STUDENT: BEIMNET, DALE WOREDA

##### ***Rural Life***

Before migrating to Hawassa, Beimnet lived in Dale woreda with her family, including her five siblings and her mother and father. Although Beimnet describes her family as being of '*middle-income status*' she tells us that her father was a '*drunkard*' and would waste the family's resource, '*my father, he is a drunkard, and all the time, he takes everything from the house, and he sells it, for example, cow, cattle in the house, he sells it. So because he is a drunkard, we are becoming poor now*'. For Beimnet, life in Yirgalem was structured around the domestic work activities that she had to complete such as making coffee, preparing food and looking after the animals. As a result her school attendance was poor, and she would often be absent from school to help her mother complete the domestic chores. Beimnet tells us that early marriage is common in her community and similar to the wider community, Beimnet tells us that her parents did not have a good attitude towards education. Due to the economic challenges faced by the family, Beimnet's parents were pressuring her to drop out of school, '*they rather advise me to engage in trade activities in the rural area and get money and help myself*'.

##### ***The Decision to Migrate***

Beimnet migrated to Hawassa to escape the threat of forced marriage, and she now lives with her uncle and his wife and their three children, where she works as a domestic servant in their home from early morning to night, attending night class for two hours in the evening. Her uncle and his wife look after her basic needs by providing her with accommodation and food, but she tells us that they do not facilitate her other needs, such as buying her clothes or providing her with money to visit her rural community. Originally, Beimnet had not intended to continue her education, indicating that *'first of all, education was not my intention, it was just to escape from that (marriage)'*. However people she met in Hawassa encouraged her to enrol in secondary school, *'the people found out that I'm a grade eight student and that I have passed Grade Eight, 'You are now in a good situation, you have to continue your education', the neighbourhood people here in Hawassa'*. Beimnet is now attending the first cycle of Grade Nine as a night shift student, but tells us that she would prefer to be a regular day student. Based on her achievement in school, Beimnet has been told by others that if she works hard she has the potential to become a doctor. She tells us that her ambitions are to enter into university and to be able to support herself.

### 7.1.3. SUMMARY

The case summaries of Emebet and Beimnet capture the aspirations and strategies that rural girls employ as they search for better futures. Although Emebet and Beimnet have different starting points, different motivations for migration and have access to different resources, they are both seeking a better future than the lives that were mapped out for them in rural area. Emebet wishes to continue her education and seeks a more glamorous lifestyle, while for Beimnet she was forced to migrate to escape early marriage and only later decided to continue her education. Nevertheless, education has become a strategy for both Emebet and Beimnet in achieving a better life in the future, and they have now set their sights on reaching university. In contrast to simplistic understandings of the process of migration sometimes offered by quantitative survey data whereby the reason migration is captured by a single motivating factor, the findings from the current study have demonstrated how decision-making for migration is not straightforward but rather is a complex process that developed over time. We also see the influence of family members and relatives on the pathways of Emebet and Beimnet in different ways. While in some ways Beimnet was pushed out of her rural community by relatives who were trying to force her to enter into marriage, both Emebet and Beimnet are assisted by their relatives already living in Hawassa to migrate, indicating that their migration would not have been possible if it were not for this assistance. Drawing on the themes that have emerged from these case studies, the remainder of this chapter will discuss the value that rural girls and their families place on education in helping them to achieve a better life in the future, and the strategies that they adopt in order to help them realise these aspirations. The case summaries of

Emebet and Beimnet demonstrate how migration is more accurately conceptualised as a process, involving the culmination of a myriad of factors that interacted in a diversity of ways. Table 7.1. provides an outline of the different processes of migration of the different participants in this study which provides an overview of migration pathways, while the following sections will explore these processes in finer detail.

## 7.2. ASPIRATIONS

### 7.2.1. VALUE OF EDUCATION

Unsurprisingly (given the nature of the study) the majority of the participants in this study indicated that their primary reason for migrating to Hawassa was to pursue their education. Education was a pathway to improving their life and to achieve their goals, whereas not having education was something that was considered negatively. All of the girls in the study spoke of their aspirations for a *'better life in the future'* both for themselves and for their families and education and migration were seen as instrumental for achieving these goals. In contrast to their expected entry into marriage prescribed for them by their rural community, they wish to continue their secondary education to preparatory level (Grade 11-12) and then enter into university.

*'In the future my plan is, if God says and if I have a good result in the national exam, I want to join Grade 11 preparatory school, then after if I finish preparatory school, if God says I want to join university and after all who knows maybe I will have a good life in the future' (Beza).*

Participants spoke of acquiring knowledge through education, which in turn would help them to gain employment and have a better life in the future. All the participants without exception, indicated that if they were still living in their rural community they would have stopped their education and would have entered into early marriage and subsequently motherhood. For example, Beza tells us that if she stayed in her village, *'...last year I would have already gotten married and this year I would have a baby'*. The participants believe that education will provide them with a way to escape, or at least delay, their expected entry into marriage and will provide them with the opportunity to secure a better future.

Education was viewed as involving in a number of stages, with various exit points. First participants wished to complete general secondary education. Following completion of general secondary education some participants wished to enter into preparatory secondary education. Following this some wished to join university. They also had alternative strategies in place should this first approach fail, such as entering into TVT/TCT or starting a small business. However the ultimate goal of the majority of the participants was to enter into employment, to earn money and to become economically secure in order to be able to achieve a *'good life'* in the future both for themselves and for their families. Building on the findings presented in the previous chapter, what these findings highlight is the central importance that the participants place on securing financial independence for themselves so that they do not have to rely on males. Vega tells us that she wishes to have her own income and *'to live a better life'* and to be *'...free from the life of dependence'*, claiming that there is no limit to education. Beza described how she *'...wants to learn and then after I am educated I want to be a government employee or to get money'* and *'I will be very happy if I get money after I become educated'*. First and foremost, the participants value for helping them to attain financial

independence and subsequently greater equality and control over their own lives. However in some ways this also raises concern as the preferences of the participants their futures are linked to modern urban carers and modern ways of living, which in many ways are incompatible with the lives they left behind them. For this reason we must also ask what will become of them if they are unsuccessful in education and whether education is in some ways also serving to distance these rural girls from their communities and (Marshall, 2016; Abebe, 2008).

### 7.3. NEGOTIATING AGENCY

#### 7.3.1. DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

In order to pursue their educational aspirations, migration was a necessity for some and a choice for others. For a number of participants (Beza, Hilina, Martha), there was no secondary school close to their home and this led them to migrate to the urban area.

*I decided to come (to Hawassa) because in Hawassa there is good education. For example, in Shebedino we don't have any secondary school near to our house. So I came here when I was in Grade 8, so I have learned here in Grade 8, Grade 9 and Grade 10' (Beza).*

For others (Hannah, Sara, Emebet), even though there was a school near their home, they believed there would be more opportunities and a better quality education available to them in the urban area which often became known through encounters with others.

*My sister as I told you, she was raised here in her aunt's house, so she became wonderful and a good student and finally she became a teacher. So that motivated me to come to Awassa. Starting from that time, even though there is a secondary school and secondary schools in our village, I decided to come here because we have opportunities here as you see' (Hannah).*

While there is some disagreement in the literature concerning who it is that can or wishes to migrate with some evidence suggested that only the well-resourced migrate (Ansell & van Blerk, 2005) and other evidence findings that it is the poor who migrate (Yaqub, 2009) what the findings in the current study highlight is that both those from low and medium income families migrate for education, but there are some observable differences in the patterns of the pathways of those who identified themselves as being from either low- or medium- income families. Often those who identified themselves as being from low-income families indicated that they had migrated for more immediate needs, namely the need to secure employment and support themselves (Meron, Alem, Hewan, Tsega).

*The income that we get from the farm is hand-to-mouth, it's not very satisfactory. So I decided to work and to get money in order to buy new clothes for me and in order to facilitate what I need to buy different things'.*



Another night student, Hewan, spoke of the economic difficulties she faced. Her father had also passed away and as a result her mother had the sole responsibility of providing for the needs of her children.

*'When we sit in the house and when she saw us our mother, she (mother) feels bad because she feels like she can't do anything for us. She worries all the time when she sees our faces. She worries all the time when we don't have enough food to eat. So then we discussed together with her sisters and brothers finally we decided that it's better to go away to away, not to see her stressed face, so they just left that place.'*

In Hawassa, they were all enrolled in the night shift and were engaged in different work activities during the day. However the quality of education that they received was said to be much lower than the day shift students as described by Meron, '*...as it is night shift student, night shift class, there may not be light sometimes, there may not be teachers. There are not enough teachers, they have shortage of teachers - here and also in Wolayta Sodo it's the same*<sup>29</sup>. In addition to not having electricity some of the time, the night shift students also did not have access to the textbooks that regular day students have access to, and they did not have access to school facilities such as the library, as it was usually is closed at the time of the night shift. Hiwot believed that teachers were not motivated when they were teaching the night students, while Abebe suggest that the teachers do not have enough time to explain the subject matter sufficiently.

*'You know it's difficult to say I'm getting a good education because it's the night shift. I don't know about the day shift students but for the night shift it's not, it's this much. For example the teachers they came, they write English, we don't know English but without translating when the time is up they just leave. The next day they do the same thing, so we are not understanding everything' (Hewan).*

Some evidence of a pattern emerged with those from poorer backgrounds migrating to fulfil immediate needs and entering into less favourable situations when they reach urban areas.

However, what was also interesting was that not only did these different groups have different pathways but their aspirations were also different, perhaps reflecting their experiences. In general, the aspirations of the night students were much more conservative than the regular day shift participants. Their aspirations including completing Grade 10,

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<sup>29</sup> Planned power cuts in Hawassa city, to reduce the load on the grid, often occur during the time of the night shift - I often experienced these planned and sometimes unplanned power cuts that occurred at least once or twice a week. Businesses, hotels and households of wealthier families would usually rely on a backup generator during such power outages.

and entering into Technical and Vocational Training (TVT), with one of the night students indicating that she wish to complete Grade 12, the highest amongst all the group. This was in contrast to the other participants who aspired to university level education in most cases. Those that wished to join TVT did not think that they had the capacity to continue their education into preparatory education, which also reflects the understanding in Ethiopia that TVT is a second grade options. Similarly, Hewan tells us that she will join the Teacher Training College (TTC) because *'the training centre will need low capacity students'*. Samira tells us *'If I pass the exam, I don't have a plan to join preparatory, I want to join TVT or TTC...I am not capable for preparatory'*. The findings here suggests that the aspirations of these night participants have become adapted to their circumstances, they have made a judgment about what they believe is possible given their circumstances and have adjusted their aspirations accordingly.

### 7.3.2. DECIDING TO MIGRATE

As the majority of participants in this study had not been to Hawassa before they migrated, it was interesting to explore how their understanding of a better life in Hawassa developed. It was found that in many cases access to knowledge of a better life in urban areas was achieved through the information they gathered from their respective social networks including their siblings, parents or other relatives who had information or personal experience of urban areas and urban lifestyles. Many of those who had said that they had made the decision to migrate themselves, indicated that others in their social networks influenced their decision to migrate in some way. While others describe receiving advice from those in their social networks about where they should migrate to.

*'First my interest was to enter into Tulsa secondary school, but the students from here advised us, or gave us information that education is better here in Awassa so then I decided to come here' (Beza).*

In addition, many of the participants spoke of how other students in their communities who had migrated to Hawassa, influenced their migration.

*'I know some girls or boys who are learning in the urban area and when I see them if I were there I would become like them so I think that in the urban area there are different opportunities so if I study hard and work hard I can have a good future' (Genet).*

When the participants saw other people from their rural communities who had migrated successfully to the urban area it initiates them to migrate and pursue their education, even if there are multiple dissenting voices from the community or their parents.

In addition to immediate family members, three of the participants in the study indicated that an extended family member living in Hawassa encouraged them to migrate (Alem,

Samira, Hiwot). Three of the night shift participants described how an extended family member had invited to come to live with them in Hawassa where they would support them in their domestic activities and in return the relatives would support their education. Often these relatives would have their own family with young children. Samira describes how her uncle's wife asked her to come to Hawassa, promising her that she would help her with her education if she supported her in the home.

*'She (uncles' wife) came to the village, and she told us that she had a problem and she needs someone to help, and she told me that she will teach me and she will give me everything and she would allow me to live with her. Because she needed me, because she needed someone to support her at the time. Then because I had so many problems there, my parents are poor, so I accepted her idea and my parents also accepted that' (Samira).*

This was also the case for Hiwot who indicated that she had not considered moving to Hawassa until her uncle suggested it to her. Alem also tells us how her cousin convinced her to come to Hawassa promising her that if she *'worked during the daytime'* then she could *'learn at the night shift'*.

The findings in the current study indicate the considerable agency of participants in migrating to Hawassa but also highlight the important role of family members and other relatives in contributing to and facilitating processes of migration. Many of the participants indicated that they made the decision to migrate. Some participants indicated that they made this decision alone (Hilina, Hannah, Sara, Meron), while others explained that they made the decision to migrate and this was made in consensus and agreement with their family members (Yannet, Grace). However, other participants (Vega, Hewan, Genet, Beimnet, Tsega) indicated that their parents did not support their decision to migrate, and they had to spend time convincing their parents to allow them to migrate.

*'At the beginning, I decided to come here, and then I convinced my mom. At that time, my dad was not willing to send me here. After that I persuaded both of my parents, I came to Hawassa' (Vega).*

Here we see how Vega had to negotiate with her parents to support her migration, but they eventually agreed with her decision. In other cases, the decision to migrate was made by or driven by family members and while sometimes the participants indicated that this was initially against their wishes, in time they came to appreciate their parents' decision and were happy they had migrated (Martha).

Afewerk describes how males members of her family decided to send he to Hawassa., *'...they told me that if I came here I can change my language, and get a good knowledge because there in the rural area the teachers are not well qualified. So they know that the teachers here in the urban area are*

*better than when they told me such kinds of things. They decided and I just came here' (Afewerk).*  
Meskerem also describes indicates how her brother made the decision for her to migrate.

*'When we were children, he promised to us bring us here, and he also learned here at the college. He was here, so he knows girls who have changed their life learning here, having good clothes, having good bags and different things, so he also wished to see us like them so that's why he brought us here' (Meskerem).*

The family members of the participants have witnessed other girls doing well for themselves and they want this for their daughters. While some may make a judgement that what is communicated here is in some ways superficial, what it symbolised is much deeper than this. What is interesting to note here is that while the father and brothers of the participants are facilitating the process of migration of their daughters/sisters, it is still often the case that male members of the family retain decision-making power over the family. In the case of Buzuneh, whose father had passed away, it was her mother who influenced her decision to migrate. Similar to others she too was influenced by the return migration of other young people in her community and decided that Melal would '*...never be better unless I send you to the urban area*'. Melal's mother believed that in the city she could pursue her education and also improve herself in other ways, demonstrating how access to new information makes it possible for participants and their family members to start to conceive of alternative ways of being.

There is no doubt that the rural girls in this study have demonstrated considerable agency in migrating to Hawassa and entering into urban secondary schools it seems that decision-making is often shared process between migrant girls and their parents. As Yaqub (2009) suggests it is perhaps more appropriate to conceptualise children's control over their migration on a continuum with parents influencing these decisions in various ways and degrees. The decision to migrate involved negotiations, deceptions and resistance: For participants who made the decision to migrate themselves, they sometime had to convince their parents to allow them to migrate, or to migrate against their wishes. For other participants, their parents made the decision for them to migrate, sometime in agreement with the participants and sometimes against the wishes of the participant. Nonetheless, the findings from this study demonstrate that the freedom rural girls have to exert their agency is not straightforward and sometimes involves negotiations, deceptions and resistance with family members (Kabeer, 1999).

## **7.4. NAVIGATIONAL CAPACITY**

### **7.4.1. COMPENSATING FOR LOSS**

The findings of this study highlight the important role of family members in the formation of the participants' aspirations and subsequent decision-making. Family members not only provide participants with information that was important for the formation of these aspirations, but they were also a motivating and driving force for these aspirations. For example, many of the participants also told of how they wished to support their parents and families in the future. Melal tells us that if her mother '*...feels comfortable with her life I would be very happy...*'. Similarly, Emebet tells us that she would like her family to come to live with her in Hawassa. Yannet tells us that she wishes to become a doctor and help her community, neighbours and family. Dina maps out a very specific career, whereby she plans to become a doctor and help her mother.

*In the future I want to be a good student and also I want to be a doctor, after I am going to be a doctor, I want to get 8000-9000 birr per month salary, and I want to support my mum by everything, and without putting my mum in trouble by asking her for money or asking her to bring me clothes and other things, by supporting her by becoming a matured person, and by facilitating everything by her I want to live by thanking my God giving such life, to have a good future (Dina).*

It was not only that they were seeking a better future for themselves, but also for their family members.

An interesting pattern to emerge among the family members of the special cases in this study was how they saw the education and migration of their daughter/sister as a way to compensate for what they had lost by not having the opportunity to continue or complete their own education. They conveyed regret over not having the opportunity to continue their education to the level that they wished and believed this had contributed to the '*bad life*' they living now. They spoke of various reasons for not being able to continue their education including entering into marriage (Abel, Yannet, Zena, Fassil, Abel), economic problems (Mulu) and political issues (Solomon). For this reason they wished to support their participants to achieve the highest level of education they could.

*I have a lot of regret because I was an excellent student in the school. So if I had not dropped out of the school, I know that I might have a good job now and I might be in a good position. So in order to compensate for this, I want to educate my children, to provide them with a good education, so they have a job in the future... I have already lost that chance, so I will see the fruits of my education in their future' (Solomon).*

Similarly, Abel, Martha's father, described how although he reached Grade 10, he did not take the exam, and he dropped out as he was just focused on getting married. Abel thinks that if he had of continued his education, he would be in the same position as his friends who were in school with him. However, because he did not finish his education there is '*a difference in life like the sky and the earth*'. As a result he now wishes to support the education

of his children to fulfil *'what he lost'*. He believes that if his children are educated then they can support themselves. He indicates that education is especially important for girls and young women as it helps them to recognise things as good and bad and to support themselves and avoid early marriage.

*'Education has so many benefits, you can't count them simply. We are now struggling to teach our children, because we want to compensate what we lost in our life. Because they will have like a good future if they are educated they can get jobs and they can support themselves'* (Abel).

In many ways it could be said that the parents recognise that education not only confers advantage but also serves to reinforce disadvantage and for this very reason they wanted the participants to have the opportunity to pursue and benefit from education in which they invest highly in.

#### 7.4.2. CHANGING ASPIRATIONS

Finally, the evidence also demonstrates how the aspirations of the participants change over time when they reach the urban areas. Similar to the case summary of Beimnet presented above, while Genet indicated that she initially migrated to escape marriage once she was in the urban area she decided to pursue her education, *'I realized that if I am in the urban area I have more time to study and also I will have a better life in the future'*. She describes how other students from the rural community who had improved their lives, so she thought *'if I study hard and work hard I can have a good future'*. As she gains access to new information and knowledge and observes new ways of being in the rural area, her aspirations become more developed and complex. This was also observed amongst other participants who describe how as they started to observe other students in the urban area they too become more motivated to *'be like them'*. For example, Emeliya tells us that only since coming to the urban area has she started to think about her education or her future.

*'I have changed a lot of things. For example, when I was there I didn't care about studying or looking after my exercise books or anything. But here, I think about the future. I am thinking about my future life, I am try to study, I am recognising everything about living here, so it's good'* (Emeliya).

This is also described by Hannah:

*'But now I am seeing and I am observing different people here, working in petty trade and when after a month or after a year, when they have developed and they have shops. So when I see them I decide that even though (if) my education is not successful, I will work in petty trade and I can become a different person'* (Hannah).

Dina discusses how it is better to be in the urban area because she is *'improving (her) life by looking at the others so it is better than the rural one'*. While Rediet tells us that the reason that she is now more motivated to pursue her education and has aspirations for her future is from

observing others in the urban area in contrasts this to the rural area where there is little access to new information. Similar to the findings of DeFranco (2010) this perhaps demonstrates how girls who are enrolled in education start to have increased self-confidence and self-esteem as they start to take control over their lives and develop more complex and differentiated aspirations for their futures.

Table 7.1. Overview of Participant's Processes of Migration

Participant	Whose decision?	Reason For Migration	Imagined Future	Outcomes
<b>Beza</b>	Participant	Education	University, have a good future	Failed G10, returned to rural area, intending to repeat G10
<b>Rediet</b>	Parents	Education	Study until she gains employment	Continued Education
<b>Grace</b>	Participant	Escape Marriage	University	Failed Grade 10, living in urban areas, searching for job.
<b>Bujuge</b>	Brother	Education	Study until she gains employment	Continued Education
<b>Martha</b>	Father	Education	University - teacher, help her family	Failed Grade 10, returned to rural area, searching for job.
<b>Hannah</b>	Participant	Education	Continue education, start business, support family	-
<b>Kidist</b>	Brother	Escape Rural Life	University, life in Addis	Failed Grade 10, living in urban area, entered into TTC.
<b>Melal</b>	Mother	Education	University	Continued Education
<b>Genet</b>	Participant	Escape Marriage	University - doctor	-
<b>Meskerem</b>	Brother	Education	Improved her life, office work	Continued Education
<b>Sara</b>	Participant	Education	Continued education, health care professional	-
<b>Afewerk</b>	Brother/Father	Learn Amharic	Continue education, make her parents happy	Continued Education
<b>Meron</b>	Participant	Economic Reasons	Grade 10, engage in business	Continued Education
<b>Alem</b>	Relative	Education	Gain employment	Continued Education
<b>Emebet</b>	Participant	Economic Reasons	Join college and get a job	Failed Grade 10, living in urban areas, searching for job.
<b>Samira</b>	Relative	Economic Reasons	Gain employment, help her family	Transitioned from night student to day student



<b>Hewan</b>	Brother	Economic Reasons	TVT	Continued Education
<b>Ityalem</b>	Relative	To support relative	Grade 12, health worker	Continued Education
<b>Beimnet</b>	Participant	Escape Marriage	Finish grade 10, open a business	Continued Education
<b>Tsega</b>	Participant	Education	Continue education, support others	-
<b>Emeliya</b>	Parents	Education	University, Government employee	Continued Education
<b>Dina</b>	Mother	Education	University - doctor, support parents	Continued Education, married
<b>Vega</b>	Participant	Education	University	Continued Education
<b>Emebet</b>	Mother	Education	University	Failed Grade 10, returned to rural area,.
<b>Yannet</b>	Participant	Learn Amharic	University - doctor	Dropped out, returned to rural area, married
<b>Hilina</b>	Participant	Education	Education - pilot, gain employment	Continued education, living in urban area, married
<b>Abeba</b>	Parents	To support relative	Continue education, gain employment	Continued Education

## 7.5. CHAPTER SEVEN SUMMARY

The departure of young people from their rural communities in search of better opportunities for education, employment and independence in urban centres is not unique to Ethiopia, but rather is increasingly common in a number of developing country contexts (Boyden, 2013; Crivello, 2011; Greany, 2012; Murray, 2012; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014; Punch, 2007; Rao, 2010). Similar to many studies cited in Chapter Two, the findings presented in this chapter have demonstrated the high educational aspirations of this group of rural girls and how they are willing to make considerable sacrifices by investing in education (Crivello, 2011; Johnson-Hanks, 2006; Boyden, 2013; Pankhurst, Dom and Bevan, 2017; Ansell, 2004; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014). Given not only the different contexts that these girls have to traverse, but also the conflicting expectations that are placed upon them, the idea of aspirations as a navigational capacity (Appadurai, 2004) was found to have considerable resonance with the findings in this study. We see how the girls in this study navigate and negotiate between the traditional, restrictive and unequal rural context (described in Chapter Six) and the promise of a better life and future through education. They are in many ways are contesting the lives that have been mapped out for them in their rural communities and are forging different pathways for themselves through the means that are available to them. This is particularly significant given that rural girls are generally expected to *keep silent* and accept their circumstances. However, while the education and migration of these girls may be a way to contest unequal gender norms and expectations (Appadurai, 2004) we are yet uncertain whether they have the capacity to change these cultural norms and practices.

In terms of making the decision to migrate, the findings have shown how migration decisions are complex and involved a number of competing motivations. While all the 27 participants were enrolled in secondary school at the time of the main data collection, a diversity of pathways led them to their current situation and education was not always their primary motivation for migrating. For those who migrated primarily for education, for some participants this was a necessity as there was no secondary school available in their rural location. For others, this decision was a choice and even though there was a secondary school available in their community, they believe a better quality education and more opportunities awaited them in urban areas. Furthermore, depending on the differential access to economic and social resources, some evidence of different patterns in the pathways that lead rural girls to the city, whereby those who have access to better social and economic resources enter into more comfortable living arrangements in the city while others who do not have the same access to these resources enter into more precarious situations. It seems not that it is not that only a specific portion of the population can migrate, as suggested by Ansell and van Blerk (2005), but rather that the different starting

points, and different access to resources that girls have, will require alternative strategies to achieve their goals.

In particular, the findings from this study have shown the importance of family members and wider networks in the lives of rural girls. While this influence may be negative for some, in general family members were shown to have a positive role in the lives and decision of the participants, and we see how family and social networks influence their aspirations and decision-making. Information and knowledge, important for education and migration decisions, becomes available to the participants primarily through family members and also through encounters with others in their rural communities. As competing ways of being and doing become available to the participants they are able to critically reflect on what is taken for granted in their rural lives and conceptualise a new way of living in urban areas and in turn, plan to improve their life and well-being in the present and future by migrating to the rural area (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009a; de Haas et al., 2009; Walker & Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007). Understanding processes of how information and knowledge influences the attitudes and behavior of those living in rural communities is important not only for understanding the pathways of rural girls in this study, but also provides some indications for how it might be possible to address negative attitudes towards education and gender equality in these rural locations.

Finally, the findings in this study have shown that decisions to migrate often involves *negotiated inter-dependence* whereby migration and education allow rural girls to gain a level of independence but at the same time mean that they are not abandoning their family ties (Whitehead, Hashim & Iversen 2005; Punch 2002; Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013; Yaqub, 2009). In addition, they suggest the presence of expected reciprocity between these girls and their family members as there is often an expectation that girls will contribute to their families in the future if they are successful in their education. This is an interesting finding given that traditionally when rural girls enter into marriage ties to their families are usually cut off as a married girl is considered to be the property of her husband. This could perhaps suggest that education is also changing not only the futures that rural girls conceptualise for themselves but also relationships between rural girls and their families. Having considered the formation of the aspirations of the participants and considered their processes of decisions for education and migration, the next chapter will consider the lives of rural girls in the city.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: BECOMING URBAN/UNCERTAIN FUTURES

### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

This final findings chapter meets the participants in the *present* and considers their current lives and experiences in Hawassa city at the time of the main data collection. The third research question is addressed: *‘What are the individual and shared experiences of rural girls in urban areas inside and outside of school?’*. The previous two chapters have charted the education and migration pathways of the rural girls across time and location. Beginning the story in the rural girls’ sending communities, the specific challenges and inequalities faced by these rural girls were outlined in Chapter Five, while in Chapter Six the aspirations and agency of the participants and the various strategies that they employ in seeking better futures were explored. While the previous two chapters provided a retrospective account of rural girls experiences, this chapter considers the current lives and experiences of rural girls in the city. It first and foremost focuses on their educational experiences in the urban secondary schools in which they have enrolled. Attention is given to the quality of education that they receive from the perspectives of the participants and the impact that they believe this has had on their learning and achievement, while also considering the differences between students who are attending the regular (day) shift and those who are attending the night shift. Charting the education pathways of these rural girls over time the chapter will then turn to the academic outcomes of the participants at the stage of the follow-up fieldwork, focusing on the experiences of the *special cases*, all of whom had recently sat the national Grade 10 examination and subsequently failed, as will be shown in this chapter. In light of this, this chapter will consider the opportunities available to these girls post-secondary education and the implications that this has for their lives. Finally, the chapter will end considering some of the additional benefits that the participants believe their migration has brought in addition to providing the opportunity to continue their education. This chapter will be followed by the discussion and conclusion in the final chapter that will draw together some of the insights from these three findings chapters.

### 8.1.1. SPECIAL CASE 4: KIDIST, WONDO GENET

#### ***The Decision to Migrate***

Kidist comes from a rural area Wondo Genet. She is the youngest of eight siblings and both her parents are farmers. Kidist's two brothers, Fassil and Mulu, also took part in this study. Kidist tells us that her parents together with her older brothers made the decision for her to migrate. Mulu her brother describes the influence of their father, '*...it's our father who decided to send her (Kidist) to Hawassa. Our father is very strong he advises everybody to educate ourselves, to support ourselves*'. Kidist tells us that she was happy her family sent her to Hawassa because she was able to escape the '*bad voices*' of the community. She had had also previously seen other members of her communities benefit from migration, '*...we see that the students who came from urban area, when I was in the rural area, they have good clothes; they are good in hygiene and different things. When we see them we just think, what if I have that chance*'. Kidist first moved from her rural community in Wondo Genet to her brother's (Fassil) house in Tula and then later onto Hawassa. Now that she is attending secondary school in Hawassa she wishes to focus her attention on her education, and she has aspirations to go to university. She tells us that if she was still in the rural area then she would have already been married and would have children. Her brother Mulu tells us that it was '*obvious*' that Kidist would come to Hawassa because there is no secondary school in her community.

#### ***Urban Life***

In Hawassa Kidist rents a room with her sister, which is paid for by their father. Nevertheless, even though her family are supporting her financially she is still struggling, '*...my parents, they support me for the education, but for us it is not enough. Even most of the time, we don't eat our breakfast or our lunch, because of shortage of money*'. Nevertheless, Kidist is prepared to face this challenge, as she believes that she will have a better life in the future. When Kidist first arrived in Hawassa she felt very lonely and also felt intimidated by the urban people, especially as she could not speak Amharic, '*when I was here for the first time, I was afraid to look at the Ambara people - when they start to speak Amharigna I run away from them because I can't speak it and I am afraid of what they are saying*'. However she is now very proud that she is learning Amharic, as it allows her to speak and communicate with people outside of her rural community. In addition, she tells us that in the urban area her physical appearance has improved in comparison to the rural areas where the tasks they completed were dirty and unhygienic and negatively impacted their personal hygiene and appearance.

Kidist tells us that there is a big difference between the quality of education that is available in the rural and the urban areas. She describes how in the urban area there are better

facilities and better quality teachers. She also feels that the teachers treat the students with more respect in the urban areas. Although Kidist was ranked first in her class in the rural area, her rank has decreased since she came to Hawassa. In the rural area, *'regarding knowledge, I had an empty mind'*, but in Hawassa *'I know that I get knowledge, but my performance is not as good. I am not achieving number one or number two, but my knowledge is greater than that one'*. She also indicates that her educational aspirations have increased and she did not contemplate going to university before she came to Hawassa. Kidist receives good support from her two brothers, especially Mulu who lives in Hawassa. Mulu describes his relationship with Kidist, *'we share our ideas all the time. Even though I'm living in my own house, we are near each other. So when she feels pain... if she has some problems sickness or other things I come here and I visit her and we go to the clinic and in other situations also if I have the money sometimes if I get profit'*.

### ***Follow-Up***

When we met with Kidist during the follow-up fieldwork, she had failed her Grade 10 exam. She tells us that she cheated on the exam and subsequently failed. She can now no longer *'fulfil her dreams'* of continuing to upper secondary school, which would be the next step on her desired pathway to university. Having failed Grade 10 Kidist is now searching for other opportunities. She first considered the Technical and Vocational Training School (TVT), but was told that this would be too difficult for her, and so she then decided to enter into the Teacher Training College (TTC). Although Kidist is now training to be a teacher, she still has plans to sit the Grade Ten exam in the coming year and will leave the TTC if she passes. Kidist tells us that since she has failed her Grade 10 exam some of her community members and friends are putting her under pressure to be married, however, she does not have any plans to enter into marriage. Overall Kidist is happy that she migrated to Hawassa despite failing her exams, *'in the first place, my coming helps me to get a good education and good relationship with other people and I also escape from marriage proposals. If I was there I might get married'*.

### 8.1.2. SPECIAL CASE 5: MARTHA, TULA

#### *The Decision to Migrate*

Martha comes from Tula woreda approximately 45 minute drive south of Hawassa. Martha's father Abel also took part in the study. Martha recalls her 'good life' in the rural area even though she had a heavy work burden and was regularly later for school. Martha describes how her father Abel strongly supports her education, and he made the decision for her to come to Hawassa as he does not want her to enter into marriage. Similar to Grace's father Solomon, Abel has stood strong in the face of criticism from the community for not letting Martha enter into marriage, '*...I don't want to invite her for marriage. Because I know what happened on me, when I get married early, so I don't want her to live my life again*'. Abel explains that he wanted to send Martha to Hawassa to '*compensate for what he lost in life*' as a result of not being educated. When Martha first arrived in Hawassa she was not happy with this decision, and she eventually became sick and subsequently dropping out and returning to her home. She describes how, '*...I never slept when I came here. I was thinking all of the day and night about them because I hadn't been separated from them before and I got sick because for more than one month I couldn't sleep. Then I got sick and they took me home and I dropped out of school for one year and after one year I came back here*'. However, she describes how the gossip and the rumours of the community upon her return, motivated her to return to Hawassa so she could prove these community members wrong, '*...I hate the community's backbites. They were saying 'why did she go for education? Why is she back here from the urban area?'*'. Now that she has been in Hawassa for over two years she is happy to have migrated, indicating that she would now be married if she did not come to Hawassa.

#### *Life in Urban Areas*

Martha contrasts the lack of opportunities in the rural and urban areas describing how in Hawassa there are more opportunities and greater diversity '*...you see different things and you don't give up hope*', in comparison to the rural area where there is nothing to do but '*...sit in the house, go to the market, come back from the market. That's it*'. Martha lives with her uncle in Hawassa (father's brother) and this arrangement was negotiated by Abel and his brother, '*my brother, he owns a house. So if he owns house we talk each other you support me by allowing her to stay at your house and to attend her education. Then he accepted my proposal, then I sent her*'. In return for her room, board and school materials, Martha performs domestic activities in the house, but her work burden is not that heavy as there is also a domestic worker living in the house. Her uncle is strict with her, and he makes sure that she is following her education. Martha thinks that since she came to Hawassa and she is more mature and has gained a lot of confidence. She describes how previously in the rural area, she was afraid to talk to people, but now she is more confident and is happy to talk to people. Martha greatly appreciates

the support that her parents have given her and also feels a sense of obligation to her parents as they have invested in her education.

Martha discusses the improved quality of education in Hawassa in terms of the language barriers. In the rural schools the teachers would teach in Amharic and the students would not understand. However, now that she has learned some Amharic in Hawassa, she tells us that she is more capable of following the lessons. She describes how the school facilities in the urban area are also better - there is running water and so it is easier for girls to look after their personal hygiene. Like Kidist she believes that the teachers in the urban school also demonstrate respect for the students. Martha tells us that in addition to her academic achievement improving she has also learned important skills, *'My result is better here because in the rural area we don't know how to study, we don't know about studying. If we decide to study, we come together and we went from village to village wasting our time and we sit the exam. We don't have good results there. But here we give attention to our education because it's a choice'*.

### ***Follow-Up***

When we met with Martha at the stage of the follow-up fieldwork, she had failed her Grade Ten examination and had returned to the rural area, *'...then I took my result, but I failed, so I have nothing to do here, so I went back to the rural area, that's it'*. She is unhappy in the rural areas, where there is nothing to do other than sit in the house. She describes how she feels that she has let herself down by failing her exams, and like Kidist she also cheated on her English exam, *'...during that time, the students brought the wrong answers. I hesitated to take them, but finally I received the answer. And then finally the result is totally lost, zero'*. However, the good thing for her about being back in the rural area is that she no longer faces the same financial pressure as she did in Hawassa. Martha tells us that she has tried to search for employment opportunities but so far has not been able to find anything. She has however received many marriage proposals, but she did not accept them as she does not wish to be married. Overall, Martha is happy that she came to Hawassa and she ultimately feels as if she has benefited from this experience. Martha still has high education aspirations as she wishes to join university and to help her family. Abel also believes that Martha has gained many benefits from migrating to Hawassa *'because she now recognises early marriage is not good. So she will not accept anybody. If anybody proposes to her or wants marry her she would not accept easily. This is because she lived in the urban area'*.



### 8.1.3. SUMMARY

These final two case summaries of Kidist and Martha provide us with a glimpse into their lives and experiences as they navigate the urban context. While they migrated for different reasons - Kidist to escape rural life and Martha to continue her education - we see how male family members were influential in supporting their journeys. Both Kidist and Martha have relatively good access to resources especially in comparison to the wider group of participants; Kidist is living in rented accommodation and has the social support of her two brothers while Martha is living with her uncle who provides for her needs in return to Martha's contribution to the household, which is not that onerous. However, while a number of the participants in this study have relatively good access to resources and support, we find that there are a number of rural girls in this study who do not have this support and are living in more precarious situations. Moreover, even for Kidist and Martha who do have relatively good access to resources and support, still they tell us how they are struggling in the urban area. In terms of education, Kidist and Martha agree that the quality of education is much better in Hawassa and this includes better resources and facilities and better quality teachers. Nevertheless, as both have failed their Grade 10 exam, we must ask the question as to whether girls in this study can actually benefit from this better quality education in the urban areas, or whether the inequalities that they face are in fact too great. We see the consequence for Kidist and Martha failing the Grade 10 exam as their educational aspirations of reaching university are subsequently derailed, with Martha returning to the rural area and Kidist entering into teacher training. Here we see first-hand evidence of the presence of a vicious cycle of teacher quality whereby low-performing students enter into the teaching profession. In addition, Kidist regards teacher training as a second-grade and backup option and here we see evidence of the vicious cycle of poor teacher quality and low performing students. By the end of the study, the futures of Kidist and Martha are uncertain and it is unclear whether they will be able to reach their goals in the future. Nevertheless, they both agree that education and migration have brought them many benefits and they are happy that they migrated. The remainder of the chapter will now explore some of these themes in relation to the wider group of participants.

## 8.2. EDUCATION IN URBAN AREAS

Reflecting the stories of Kidist and Martha as described above, the majority of the participants in this study all spoke of how that the quality of education was better in Hawassa than in their respective rural communities. Considering differences in education quality from the perspectives of the participants in this study is particularly fruitful given that they are uniquely placed to be able to offer a first-hand account of the perceived differences in education quality having attended primary school in rural area and then entered into urban secondary schools. At the outset it is important to note that in their comparison of education quality in rural and urban areas, the participants are comparing their rural *primary* schools with the urban *secondary* schools. Therefore, the comparisons that they draw on cannot be considered equal. Nonetheless, it could be reasoned that the quality of rural secondary schools is even lower than primary schools, due to the targeting of the majority government of educational resources at primary and tertiary level. In terms of the better quality of education available in Hawassa three main themes were discussed: 1) the availability and quality of infrastructure and facilities in this area, 2) the quality of teachers and 3) language issues. These three themes will be discussed in further detail below.

### 8.2.1. RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

The findings from this study confirm the *urban bias* suggested by other researchers in terms of the education provided to students in Ethiopia whereby the majority of resources are concentrated in urban areas (Wedgwood, 2007; Grieve, 2016). While Chapter Five discussed the considerable challenges facing rural girls in their communities in terms of accessing their education, the findings presented in this chapter further demonstrate how access to school is often only the first hurdle that they meet, and they must also contend with a lack of and poor quality resources and facilities once they reach school. The absence and lack of facilities in rural schools is evident across virtually all the sending communities, and is referenced by students, teachers and parents alike which are said to differ strikingly with the better quality of facilities and resources available in urban schools. This included access to better science equipment, cleaner classrooms, a furnished library, and separate latrines for males and females. Emebet describes how ‘...regarding the facilities, you can’t compare this school with the rural school...’ in comparison to the urban area there are ‘...so many facilities like library, exercise books, and the seats in the classroom, the blackboard, and the teachers are also good...’. Inequalities in accessing appropriate facilities and materials place rural students at an automatic disadvantage in contrast to their urban and, while there are likely many more factors that contribute to the poor performance of rural students, based on these inequalities alone it is unsurprising that urban students consistently outperform their rural

counterpart in examinations as is found to be the case at the national level (Woldetsadik, 2013).

Although some facilities were found in the rural areas they were often described as being of very poor quality, for example Martha describes how there was a library in her rural community but it was not filled with different exercise books. This is also described by Beza;

*For example, with regards to the school there is no laboratory testing room there, but here we have a laboratory testing room, we have different books, in Shebedino there is a shortage of books, they don't give it to you to use for the full year. But here they will give you the book for the full year until you take the national exam. But if it is there, they don't allow you to have it, you have to give it back' (Beza).*

Resources that were available were said to be under significant strain given the large number of students who were using them, due to both overcrowding in the classroom and the double shift system operating in these schools. Participants spoke of how there were often four or five students sitting in one seat in the rural area, whereas in the urban areas there would only be two students sitting in a seat. In more extreme cases there were no seats available and as recounted by one participant students would have to search for pieces of wood to sit on before class or else they would have to stand and hold their exercise books in their hands.

*In the rural area if we are late there is no seat and we learn most of the time by standing like handling our exercise books on our arms we write down there so it was uncomfortable there' (Afewerk).*

In terms of the additional impacts of poor resources and facilities on rural girls, it was found that there were insufficient facilities available to enable girls to manage their menstruation sufficiently, which has also been found to be the case by other Ethiopian researchers (Mulugeta, 2004; Wall, Belay, Bayray, Salih & Gabrehiwot, 2016). Martha noted how in her rural school the toilets were not clean and the students were unable to 'keep their hygiene' while Sara (Wondo Genet) told of how there were no segregated toilets for males and females.

*In Wondo Genet there is a toilet but there is no difference for male and girls. When girls are using (them) the boys come in. Girls are afraid to use that toilet. Even if they use they are not using it appropriately they put things like, sanitary pads in it so it's not clean and it's dirty so it's not comfortable for us to keep our education here. The other part is if it is in here there is a separate toilet for girls and males. No male can bother us. The males don't come in there and it is cleaner' (Sara).*

In summary, these findings demonstrate that we must go further than just considering the presence of certain resources in schools (as is often the case in government reports) and instead consider the quality of the resources available and who it is that can access and use these resources. Although education quality is an elusive concept and difficult to define, from this evidence presented it is clear that there are significant inequalities between rural and urban areas in terms of the education that they receive and this translated to poor learning outcomes where urban students consistently outperform rural students (Woldetsadik, 2013).

### 8.2.2. PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHER QUALITY

Teacher quality is widely understood as one of the most significant factors influence the quality of education available to students as described in Chapter Two. In the current study, the participants also placed significant weight on the (poor) quality of teachers available and described how the quality of teachers were much better in urban areas than in rural areas. In general, the participants believed that the teachers in rural areas had less knowledge and were less motivated and committed than their urban counterparts, reflected in the fact that rural teachers were often late or absent from class, and they did not respect the students in the rural areas.

*'Also in the school there is no class all the time because the teachers say that we have meetings all the time so the school doesn't care about the students. If they want they can be absent, this is because there is a bad relationship between the teachers and the students' (Sara).*

In contrast, the participants believed that teachers in urban schools were better qualified, had better knowledge and were more motivated, *'...they (rural teachers) only have a diploma...so they are not efficient to teach the students and they are careless about teaching' (Rediet)*. Rediet describes how in the urban teachers are more committed and do not waste any class time, *'...if you see the school teachers (in the urban area) they are committed for their time. They don't want to waste any minutes by deducting from 45 minutes so here is better than the rural school'*. While it is not possible to objectively quantify these perceived differences of the participants in terms of the quality of the teachers available, they do echo sentiments expressed by other studies in the literature, as discussed in Chapter Two (e.g. Abebe and Woldehanna, 2013; Abdo & Semela, 2010, 2014; Semela & Admasu, 2004).

At the same time, the participants recognise the significant challenges that rural teachers face. Hilina describes how the poor school environment also affects the teachers, in particular she discusses how the overcrowding of the classrooms made it difficult for teachers to manage the class.

*'Yes they will face many problems, for example, one teacher cannot control 100 students at the same time and will not give equal education opportunity for those 100 students, because some of them disturb the classroom, some of them want to learn, and even some of them will sleep in the class. So it is difficult to manage 100 students. If you see here in (School 1), there are less than 60 students, so it is easy to manage every student, even it is easy to follow-up with every student every day. So it is not normal' (Hilina).*

As rural teachers are faced with these challenges on a daily basis it is not hard to imagine how their motivation and conduct may be affected. We heard also in Chapter Six from teachers who discussed the poor quality of resources available in rural schools and the difficulties circumstances that they had to contend with.

Something less discussed in the literature which was raised by the participants in this study, was that they believed that urban teachers treated them with more respect than rural teachers. For example, Genet describes how *'...the teachers in the rural area insult the students'* while Samira offers an explanation for this perceived difference and suggests that teachers did not have any respect for rural students because teachers did not believe that rural students would benefit from education.

*'The teachers there, they don't give a quality education, because they consider that the rural students are careless. Even if they teach us we'll not bring any change, so they have that thinking so they don't give quality education' (Samira).*

Martha recalls how in the rural areas the teachers would administer harsh punishment to the students and *'...they might make you to stay on your knees for 40 or 45 minutes'*, whereas more democratic procedures were in place in urban areas to resolve disputes between teachers and students. Differences were also described in terms of how rural teachers treated male students differently.

*'For example, if it is in the rural area, even the teachers they will say "this is too difficult for the girls, it is only for the boys". So we also think that we think that we can't do this. So we stop participating in the activities – we would rather leave them for the boys. But here they give you equal things so you think that we are equal, so I try to work on the activities. Here they give us everything equally, so they are at the same time teaching that we are equal, and we are able to do the things like the boys, so it's not the same' (Hannah).*

Furthermore, the shortage of female teachers found in rural areas, as described by other authors (e.g. Mulugeta, 2004; Semela, 2014), may contribute to these unequal attitudes to female students and it may also mean that female students do not have role models in rural schools (Mulugeta, 2004; Rose, 2003).

The participants in this study spoke of how their own motivation was impacted by the motivation of the teachers and the respect they demonstrated for the students.

*It's not the same – education in the rural area is unequal – because if we see, based on gender difference here, the teachers in the urban area, they give equal chance to work on the tasks that are given in the class. For example, if it is in the rural area, even the teachers they will say 'this is too difficult for the girls, it is only for the boys'. So we also think that we can't do this. So we stop participating in the activities – we would rather leave them for the boys. But here they treat you equally so you think that we are equal, so I try to work on the activities' (Hannah).*

While we cannot draw definitive conclusions from the perceived differences of the participants between rural and urban teachers, this is still an important finding given that it has a real impact on participants' self-perceptions, which in turn impact on their achievement and outcomes. For example, Afewerk discussed how her confidence has increased since she came to Hawassa because of the better treatment she receives from the teachers.

*When I was in the rural area I was very shy girl, but when I came here and I joined (School 2), the teachers they give appreciation marks for those students who answer in the class and who answer the questions that are answered in the class room. Then without the other students answering any questions I got three points in one session. Then I got appreciated and I start to speak English and I start to not to be shy and answer for every question, so I'm very happy' (Afewerk)*

It seems that teacher motivation not only has a direct impact on students' learning outcomes affecting the quality of education that teachers provide, but it also affects students' learning outcomes indirectly through the impact that it has on students' self-perception and self-esteem.

One possible explanation for the perceived low motivation of rural teachers in this study is that many teachers are deployed to these rural locations against their wishes and from other locations as described by other authors in Chapter Two (Abdo & Semela, 2010; Abebe & Woldehanna, 2013; Semela, 2014; Shibeshi, 2009). In one of the rural secondary schools in this study it was described by a teacher how almost 90 per cent of teachers came from the Amhara region which had implication for the communication between students and teachers as there were often significant language barriers present. A mismatch appears here between the language policy that the government espouse and the mechanisms that they use to deploy teachers and although the government has invested considerable resources in seeking to improve the quality of teachers through improved teacher qualifications, it seems that there are other issues that need to be addressed. It is easy to

understand why the motivation of teachers might be affected if they are deployed from a different region to a location where they do not speak the language, and resources and facilities are poor, whether their deployment to this location was against their wishes. While other authors have underlined the need to improve teacher motivation as a pressing concern (e.g. Abebe & Woldehanna, 2013) the findings from this study have identified some underlying factors that may affect teacher motivation.

Finally, the findings from this study powerfully demonstrate the presence of a *vicious cycle* of teacher quality and poor performing students, which has also been found in other contexts including South Africa (Porter, Hampshire, Mashirir, Dube & Maponya, 2010) and Tanzania (Wedgwood, 2007). While it is certainly not the case that all those who enter into the teaching profession are low performing students, the findings confirm the assertion made by Semela (2014) that very often the pool of prospective teachers is made of low achieving students who did not successfully pass into higher education. The story of Kidist highlights how the teaching profession is seen as a stopgap for many, and it is unsurprising that teacher turnover is high or that many teachers indicated that they would leave the teaching profession for an equally paid position as highlighted in Chapter Two (MoE, 2014/2017). However, the findings presented here are illuminating, they present only a partial view and further insights could be gained from understanding the working conditions of rural teachers and how this impacts upon their motivation and performance.

### 8.2.3. LANGUAGE

As was evidenced in the literature review, there is debate as to whether learning through mother tongue benefits or disadvantaged students (e.g. Assefa, 2002; Heugh et al., 2007; Nekatibeb, 2005; Vujcich, 2013). While the findings of the current study do not provide conclusive evidence towards this debate, they strongly outline some of the challenges of implementing a mother tongue language policy in a multi-lingual context such as Ethiopia. In particular, they provide support for the assertion by Alemu and Tekleselassie (2011) that the benefits of mother tongue instruction can only be realised when there are adequate and sufficient resources available in the system. Given the fact that resources in Ethiopia are considerably strained, including both materials and teachers, it seems that it is not only challenging but sometimes impossible to implement this policy. Furthermore, not only do many of the rural girls in this study not learn effectively in their mother tongue in their respective rural areas, but they also fail to acquire a sufficient level of Amharic or English at primary level, supporting what was also found by Dom (2017) in the WIDE study sites. Taken together, the effects of these challenges seem to be that rural students neither acquire the basic knowledge or skills they need in primary school through mother tongue and have

a low education base entering into secondary school, but they are also ill prepared to learn through the medium of English at secondary level, as is the official policy. As argued by Alemu and Tekelselassie (2011) while the language policy of the government may have won political favour, it does not cater for the needs of disadvantaged groups.

Interestingly, it was found in this study that many of the students and their families are aware of the disadvantages that these challenges around language issues bring, not only for education but also beyond education. A number of students understood the importance of having the opportunity to learn Amharic and also English, which would be required not only to benefit from education but also to gain employment outside of their rural communities, and some cited this as their main reason for migrating to Hawassa.

*'Because in Leku, they only speak one language, Sidamigna. Even in Leku. So it is difficult to learn another language, even English or Amharic. So my father and I decided I would come to Hawassa to learn a new language' (Yannet).*

They understood that acquiring Amharic was important for their future and if they wanted to get a job outside of their rural community they would need to know how to speak Amharic.

*'I decided to come here because if I come here I can learn Amharic and I can increase my knowledge because the school is good, the teachers are good, and to become, to reach in a good position in the future' (Afewerk).*

For other participants in this study, while learning Amharic was not a motivating factor for their migration, they became to appreciate the significance of acquiring language skills while in Hawassa.

*'Because whenever you travel to different places, its only Amharic used to communicate with people so if you know this language then you advantaged to communicate with the people...So this is good things for me. And also if I know English, it is good for my education also' (Kidist).*

The participants spoke of how learning Amharic allowed them to improve their academic achievement and bridge the language gap between students and teachers. Outside of school it helped them to communicate with others and participants also believed that it would enable them to enter into employment more easily in the future.

*'Whenever you travel to different places, its only Amharic used to communicate with people so if you know this language then you advantaged to communicate with the people. And also when I am back to the home I am teaching my parents Amharic and I am happy because I am better off than other people and I am teaching them. So this is good things for me. And also if I know English, it is good for my education also' (Kidist).*



These are benefits that the participants could never access in their rural communities as there is little opportunity to learn Amharic and English outside the classroom, as was also mentioned by Vujicich (2013). Afewerk described how, after spending some time in the urban areas and starting to speak some Amharic, she was better than anyone in her community in speaking Amharic. At the same time, while the participants in this study spoke of how they had the opportunity to learn Amharic in the urban areas it is questionable whether the proficiency they acquire is sufficient for secondary level education. This was something that I observed through the group work with the participants during the participatory video process and it was also described by some of the participants.

*I can read Amharic, but I can't understand what it says. English is totally terrible for me...I'm not motivated to study because I can't understand what it says. It's only reading' (Samira).*

During the participatory video process when the participants were writing together in a group they adopted a strategy whereby they wrote using the Amharic script, but the words that they wrote were Sidamigna. Hannah describes how she also uses this strategy in class.

*'So I write like this and I am a leader at that this time. If I say to the students that I don't know Amharic they will not permit me to be their leader. So I don't want to say this. I will write it in Amharic-Sidamic words and then I will ask "What do we call this word in Amharic?" and also "What do we call this work in English? ". So then they will tell me and I will study them hard every night. Then after I start to learn by listening ' (Hannah).*

This demonstrates how they do not have formal support that they required for learning the language, and they struggle to employ different strategies to compensate for their poor language skills. It is questionable whether the level of Amharic that they acquire is sufficient to enable them to progress through their education. Nevertheless, what these findings highlight is how inequalities created in education through the current language policy of the government may bring challenges for students not only in benefiting from education but also in acquiring employment outside of their rural communities in the future. As suggested by Wagaw (2001) the language policy of the government may have disenfranchising effects on minority groups which may subsequently be detrimental to creating a unified national identity and potentially aggravate inter-ethnic tensions, as seen during recent protests in Ethiopia culminating in Ethiopia's declared state of emergency in 2016.

#### 8.2.4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Given the number of challenges that they have faced in their rural communities, we are not surprised to hear many of the participants describe how they are starting from a 'low

*educational base* when entering into the urban secondary schools compared with their urban counterparts. The participants spoke of how even though they were top performing students in the rural areas (e.g. Beza, Hannah, Kidist, Melal, Sara), since they had come to the urban areas their rank had decreased

*'When I was in the rural area, G1-5, in G1 I was number one out of all the students. But it is nothing got to do with the number because here I don't know anything. Even though I am the first, the second, the third out of all the students, I don't have the basic knowledge there. It's just that because all the students are not good, but I am a little bit better, that's why they make me number one or number two' (Hannah).*

They describe how they struggled to keep up with the urban students and how the inequalities that they faced in the rural areas still place them at a considerable disadvantage. However, they spoke of how their knowledge was increasing even through their rank had decreased, *'...when I was in Wondo Genet regarding the cumulative results it was better there but regarding the knowledge it is better here...it (education) was not good in the primary level...even if it is hard for us we try to keep up with the other students' (Sara).*

This was due not only to the better quality of education available in school but also because they have more time to devote to their studies as a result of a reduced work burden. We see how factor inside and outside school converge and impact on students' performance and outcomes. In addition some of the participants also indicated that they had now acquired important study skills in the urban area, in contrast to the rural area where they did not know *'how to study'*. For example, Beza tells us *'I didn't have a habit of reading when I was in the rural area'*, while Rediet tells us that in the rural area she did not *'have any idea about how to study'*, in comparison to the urban areas where she studies every day. Martha tells us that her results have improved in the urban area because in the rural areas she *'...didn't know how to study'*. While Grace indicates that *'...when I was in rural area I didn't know how to study and I didn't study all the time but here I study and I know how to study'*. However some of the night students (Alem, Hewan, Hiwot, Tsega) indicated that their knowledge had not increased, or in some cases had decreased, mainly due to the heavy work burden they continued to face in the urban areas.

*'I have good achievement there but now I'm giving more priority for work, so I'm not giving attention for my education' (Hewan).*

Hiwot tells us that her achievement was *'...better there because I have the time to study there'*. From a different perspective we again see how factors both inside and outside of the school are important.

Perhaps the biggest indictment of the inequalities in the education system and the poor quality of education that participants in this study received in the rural areas is the fact that,

all of those students who had taken their Grade 10 exam had failed and were unable to continue on to preparatory secondary school (G11)<sup>30</sup>. Like Kidist and Martha, who had both cheated on the Grade 10 exam, this was also the case for Grace, who subsequently failed her exam:

*'The exam was very simple, but I was confused because different students were bringing us different answers and telling us it is the stolen exam answers, so we were confused with different answers and I am not able to answer appropriately.'*

While it could be argued that the reason that these students failed their exams was because they had cheated on the test, it is perhaps more accurate to say that cheating on the test was a strategy that the students adopted to compensate for the insufficient knowledge that they had. Even though the participants have accessed a better quality education in the urban secondary schools, their low education base, poor language skills, and weak literacy skills have placed them at a significant disadvantage and it could be said that the effects of the poor quality education they received in rural schools caught up with them. While this is largely due to the poor quality of education they received in the rural area, there is also a shortcoming in the urban areas in attempting to remediate for these deficits.

While increasing educational aspirations are based on the assumption that education provides students with the skills that they need to enter into the labour market, we find that this is not the case for the participants in this study and education may not be the unqualified good that it is sometimes expected to be (Ansell, 2004; Crivello, 2011, Morrow, 2013; Posti-Ashokas & Palojoki, 2014; Unterhalter, 2003). Unfortunately that many of the participants in this study have internalised these shortcomings of the education system as personal failures. Beza describes how it was her own fault that she failed the exams due to her low education base and the fact that she did not acquire the appropriate study skills.

*'It is my personal weakness, because I failed to read or study hard. I am from the lower class; I don't have a habit of reading when I was in rural area' (Beza).*

Crivello (2011) and Morrow (2013) highlighted the risk of over-valuing the importance of formal education especially where structural inequalities make it difficult for students to realise their aspirations. It seems this risk has been realised by the participants who are left feeling as if they have failed and wrongly assume responsibility for the challenges that they faced in the education system.

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<sup>30</sup> The pass mark for transitioning from General Secondary Education to Preparatory Secondary Education in 2015/2016 was 2.7/5 with all the special cases scoring under 2.7. As we have seen from the case studies of Kidist and Martha they both had scored 2.4 each.

Having failed the Grade 10 examinations, the participants in this study have very few opportunities available to them. While three of the participants who failed their G10 exam had remained in the urban area, the majority of those who had failed the exams returned to their rural communities. Grace remained in the rural areas and applied for a number of different positions in both Teacher Training College and Technical and Vocational Training, however she was unsuccessful in these applications. She was now waiting to take the final interview in the newly constructed industrial park. Nevertheless, Grace indicated that even if she gets the job in the industrial park, she will quit this job if she passes the Grade 10 exam the following year. Similar to Kidist and Martha, even though the participants have failed their Grade 10 exams they still hold high educational aspirations for their future. Grace's experience was similar to that of Kidist outlined above who also plans to re-sit the exam in the coming year and enter into preparatory school if she is successful. In contrast to Grace, Beza and Emebet lacked the financial capacity to remain in the urban area and returned to their family homes in their respective rural area. However they too hoped to re-take the Grade 10 exam and to enter into preparatory education and then university. It seem that the lives of the participants are 'on hold' as they wait to re-sit the Grade 10 exam the following year, and to hopefully then continue on their educational pathways towards a better future. These findings have echo those of Mains (2012) who, in his study of male youth in Ethiopia, found that there was the potential for youth transitions to become indefinite for those who cannot secure employment after their education.

### **8.3. EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

#### **8.3.1. DOMESTIC WORK IN URBAN AREAS**

In the rural sending communities of the participants in this study, the unequal and gendered division of labour was one of the most significant challenges they faced in terms of accessing and pursuing their education. In coming to the urban area many are able to escape the heavy work burden mainly due to the fact that they were no longer responsible for looking after the entire family. In addition, linked to the findings in Chapter Five which discussed how rural girls must compensate for inequalities in basic resources and facilities such as electricity and running water, the fact that resources are more readily available in the urban area greatly reduces the time and effort needed to complete their domestic responsibilities and increases the time that they can devote to their education as described by many participants (Beza, Kidist, Meskerem, Vega, Afewerk, Martha).

*I had a good result starting from early classes, starting from Grade 1 up to Grade 8. But when I was in the village in Bensa, it was hard to focus on my study because I was near to my mother, so all the time she would order me to perform some activities in the home...But here you just only focus on your education, you will go in the morning to the school and you will go to tutorial class*

*in the afternoon... so here I have a good education' (Emebet).*

Genet believes that the additional time she has to devote to her studies as a result of her reduced domestic work burden will help her to achieve a better future, '*...the first thing is to escape the marriage questions there. The second is I had not any time for my studies and I realized that if I am in the urban area I have more time to study and also I will have a better life in the future*'. In addition, the availability of electricity in the urban area also meant that they could study after dark as noted by Afewerk.

Nevertheless, recognising the heterogeneity of experiences of participants, it is important to point out that not all the participant had a reduced work burden in the urban areas, with some participants facing an even heavier work burden in Hawassa and therefore they were unable to benefit from the better quality education. Abeba who migrated to Hawassa from the Amhara region to live with her grandmother so that she could attend her secondary education, did not realise the heavy work burden she would face in Hawassa.

*I recognized the amount of domestic chores was difficult within the first two days. Even if it was difficult, I didn't have any option since I came here travelling this long distance for education. I realized that I have to stay here until I finish this academic year' (Hewan).*

Many who were engaged in domestic activities in the urban area were subject to the orders and whims of their relatives/employers in terms of the work burden that they face and the access that they have to education (de Regt, 2016; Erulkar, Mekib, Simie & Guluma, 2006; Fernandez, 2010). While some of the participants had reduced their work burden by coming to Hawassa, they still continued to have many domestic responsibilities even though these were substantially reduced compared with rural areas.

In probing those who were struggling in the urban area as to why they still remained in Hawassa rather than returning to their community, one interesting finding to emerge was the importance the participants placed on maintaining this idea that they are doing well amongst their rural families and communities, whether this was the case. What emerged was fear of the criticism and the 'backbites' of the community continued to impact the participants. As Samira explains, *I know that if I go back to the rural area, the people will backbite me and say that I don't have a good behaviour and that is why I am back in the rural area. So I hate these things and I keep silent*'. This demonstrates how the pressure of the participant's sending community continues to impact on their lives, even after they have migrated. This reminds us that while in many ways the participants have escaped the censorship and monitoring of the community it continues to affect their lives even after they have migrated.

### 8.3.2. 'BECOMING URBAN'

In Chapter Two Van Blerk (2008) suggested that many rural girls in her study were attracted to the city by tales of the glamorous life they would find there. This was also found to the

case for some of the participants in this study, discussed earlier in relation to Emebet who told us that she had heard that Hawassa ‘...*makes girls beautiful*’. Since moving to Hawassa many of the participants spoke of how they were ‘becoming urban’ and they believed that they had become more beautiful since coming to Hawassa, while also mentioning that they had changed in other ways. Emebet tells us:

*‘My look has changed after I came to Hawassa because of the air condition and the environment - changed my skin colour, the food that I eat has also changed’,*

And she also mentioned how her confidence has increased, and she can manage her life better.

*‘...I have changed many things; the first thing that I have changed is the way I speak. How to organize different things and when I was there (rural area) I was frightened to ask anything and I was frightened to communicate with people. But now I am not frightened to communicate with people because they are just like me’ (Emebet).*

Similarly, Beza contrasts the urban areas to the rural areas where she could not look after her hygiene ‘*because there is a smoke there, everyday our activities are associated with the smoke, so its covered our beauty*’. However in the urban areas she describes how she is ‘...*more beautiful because there is no smoke or other things. I look after myself, I wash my clothes and everything, I keep my hygiene appropriately, so I am now good looking so it is good to be here*’. While at first, this perceived benefit of improved hygiene and appearance may appear quite superficial, the symbolism of this is much deeper as it reflects the increase access that the participants have to basic resources in the urban area, the more time that they have to take care of themselves and the greater agency that they have in determining their lives and everyday choices.

In the city the rural girls in this study have more freedom to decide what clothes they want to wear and many describe how they have now adopted an urban dress sense. For example, Grace indicates that she now wears trousers in the urban area, something that would never be permitted in the rural area. This is also discussed by Hilina;

*‘For example, when I was living in my rural area, I can’t wear short skirts, I can’t wear trousers, it is not allowed. It is not even allowed to open your hair, I have to wear a scarf to cover my hair, and so I have changed in lots of things. I can get access to factories; access to end products, access to clothes. And I know what I want to be and I have changed my imagination. I have also improved my language. If I was there I would not be able to do any of these things’ (Hilina).*

The effects of exposure to others in the urban areas is also noted and the participants also describe how they are motivated to take care of their personal hygiene and appearance by observing other in the urban communities.

*‘When I was there I didn’t even care about my hygiene, because all the people are the same. They don’t care about their hygiene; they don’t care about the hygiene of their environment. When you*

*are in the urban area you look at the people who are all clean, so I decided to clean myself*  
(Emeliya).

Similarly Dina indicates that since she came to the urban area she has changed, *'I realised that I can change by observing other people, keeping their personal hygiene, studying hard, getting jobs, so different things impressed me to stay here'*.

While having greater control over their personal appearance and hygiene is undoubtedly a benefit for the participants in the study, it is interesting to observe how the participants are eschewing their rural identity in favour of an urban lifestyle, which perhaps represents the fact that they consider the rural areas as *'backwards'* where people do not progress.

It also seems that in *'becoming urban'* the perceived social status of the participants has increased within their sending communities who no longer see them as rural. Rediet suggests that before she came to Hawassa the community did not care about her, but now when she returns to her rural community people *'...give me warm greetings...'* and *'...are happy to see her...'*. Grace too discusses how her community now gives her much more respect and are amazed at how much she has changed since coming to Hawassa. For Emebet, she describes how her family no longer *'...force her to do domestic chores'*. For Beza, a signifier of her increased social status when she returned to the rural community was the reaction of her peers with whom she had attended primary school;

*For example, my friends in the rural area, they are afraid to talk to us. Because they think that we are educated, and they think that we have already changed, that we don't want to live here anymore in the rural area. So they don't want to approach us and speak to us. It is not negatively it is positively' (Beza).*

Even though she described her peers as being *'afraid'* to talk to her she indicates that this is something positive as her friends now regard her as more educated. As Dom (2017) found in other rural communities in Ethiopia, it seems that girls who are educated better able to stand up for themselves and resist the unequal gender norms and expectations of their communities such as being overburdened with domestic chores, stand up against arranged marriage and female circumcision and wanting to become independent and secure their own income before marrying.

### 8.3.3. CHANGED EXPECTATIONS

Linked to the growing confidence of the participants in this study, perhaps one of the greatest benefits for the participants in this study is the fact that in many ways their expectations for their futures lives have substantially changed since they left their rural communities. As suggested in the literature, education can build the confidence and self-esteem of girls and enable them to make better and more informed decisions about their

lives (Boyden, 2012; DelFranco, 2010). In the current study we certainly see how the girls acquire greater confidence and develop more differentiated aspirations for their futures.

*I have changed my thinking about marriage. For example in the past we thought that if we failed in the exam, our option is marriage. But now I don't think marriage as the option. When we see married women they do not care about their personal hygiene so then I realised that if I get married I will not keep my hygiene' (Beza).*

As described in Chapter Six, the ultimate goal of many of the participants is to gain financial independence with many stating this explicitly and some stating that they wished to continue their education until they were employed, and they can see the importance of this for their futures. Even though pressure to enter into marriage returns for almost all of those who have failed their Grade 10 examination, participants are no longer willing to enter into marriage unless they have secured employment or their prospective partner can support their education as they do not want to be locked into a rural lifestyle.

*'Are you expecting that I am going to marry? I am not going to get married. Even marriage is comfortable if you have something, if you have nothing it is not comfortable. So I will try to search for a job' (Samira).*

In the past Beza would have considered that marriage was the only option if she had failed her exams, but now she tells us '*...unless I educate myself I will not say yes*' as she no longer wishes to return to the '*rural life*'. Grace also expresses a similar attitude towards marriage and asserts that she would not marry anyone from the rural area. However, she indicates that she may accept a marriage proposal from someone living in the urban area '*if he has his own income*' and was in a position to support her education. It seems that the rural girls in this study have learned that in order to have equal marriages they must also have equal education and financial independence. Education has replaced the role of marriage in securing the economic futures of girls (Boyden, Pankhurst & Tafere, 2012). From this perspective we can consider the experiences of the participant to have been transformative as they have changed the type of future that the participants will be willing to accept and have altered the participants understanding of what is possible.

#### **8.4. CHAPTER EIGHT SUMMARY**

The evidence presented in this final findings chapter has given us an insight into the lives of rural girls in the city. In coming to Hawassa they have managed to escape many of the challenges that they meet in rural areas including those that are specific to rural girls (e.g. domestic work, early marriage) and those that are experienced among rural students more widely, but often have a disproportionately negative effect on rural girls (e.g. lack of and poor quality infrastructure and facilities). Similar to other studies, migration has been



shown to provide girls and young women with an opportunity to escape restrictive gender norms and expectation in their sending communities (Erulkar et al., 2006; Ferrant, Tuccio, Loiseau and Nowacka, 2014; Van Blerk, 2008).

The information gathered from the participants, parents, teachers and principals in this study all indicates the availability of a better quality of education in urban areas, as highlighted by other authors (Boyden, 2013; Dom, 2017) and confirming the presence of an *urban bias* (Grieve, 2016). Drawing together the evidence from this study it seems that poor quality education in rural areas is a function of a number of factors including a lack of investment in education infrastructure and facilities in rural areas, fragmented education policies concerning a number of important issues and inequalities resulting from Ethiopia's wider uneven social and economic development. In terms of the *urban bias* in resources and facilities while often resources are missing in rural areas, those that are available are of a much lower quality than in urban areas and students do not always have the opportunities to use them. Therefore, the findings highlight how the presence of resources in rural areas alone should not be taken as a proxy for their quality or use.

The issue of teacher quality was one that featured prominently in the accounts of the rural girls in this study. From the perspectives of the participants, the teachers were not only considered to be better qualified and have better knowledge in urban areas, but also were described by the participants as being more motivated in their jobs and also as treating the students with better respect. This in turn was found to impact the perceptions girls hold of themselves and to affect the effort that the participants would then invest in their education. Low teacher motivation was described as resulting from the very difficult and challenging circumstances in which rural teachers are expected to work and rural students are expected to learn. This seems to be something that the government has overlooked and given that it has up to now focused its efforts on improving the qualifications of teachers, however these findings suggest that this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. Furthermore, the findings have shown a significant mismatch in the government's language policy for the provision of education through mother tongue and the resources provided to support the implementation of this policy as also highlighted by Alemu and Tekleselassie (2011). As a result of this misalignment the participants in this study are found to have completed a full cycle of primary education without having learned Amharic or English properly. We see how this has the potential to bring challenges for students not only in terms of benefitting from education but also in their ability to move outside of their rural community in the future (Wagaw, 2001).

What is particularly interesting in this study is how, in addition to the better quality of education in the urban area, the participants describe how they are not only acquiring better knowledge but have also developing many other important skills such as knowing how to

study which they never had acquired in rural areas. Again, this is important in demonstrating how in ensuring that students' have access to education quality, a number of factors must be taken into consideration.

The findings have demonstrated the complicated and varied role that domestic work has in the migration pathways of rural girls. We see clearly how migration provides rural girls with a means of escaping the heavy work burden that limits their education in rural areas meaning they may have more time devote to education (Mulugeta, 2009). At the same time entering into domestic work in urban areas provides a way for rural girls, especially those from poorer economic backgrounds, to facilitate their migration as also highlighted by others (Gallotti, 2013; Kifle, 2002; Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen & Barker, 2013). However for some participants, this is shown to be a double-edged sword as even though they may facilitate their migration through domestic work, the heavy work burden that they continue to face in urban areas means they cannot always benefit from the better quality education available. In some cases participants were not aware of the extent of the burden they would face until they reached the city, which has also found to be the case in other studies (Erulkar, Semunegus & Mekonnen, 2011).

It is also important to note that even for those who have relatively good access to social and economic resources to facilitate their migration, they still indicate that they are struggling in the urban area. For all the participants in this study, while they have overcome great difficulties and demonstrated considerable agency they continue to face many obstacles. Nevertheless, we find that whatever the experience of participants may be they generally do not wish to return home to their communities where it might seem that they had '*failed*' bringing shame to themselves and to their families. Interpreting these findings in light of the information presented earlier we understand how much the participants have put at stake in coming to Hawassa and we can sympathise with their reluctance to return to their rural communities having not yet fulfilled their aspirations. Taken together, the findings have helped to highlight the complexity of girls' migratory experiences which range from positive to negative, with both advantages and disadvantages for the same migrant. The findings help to demonstrate the importance of taking a nuanced and expansive approach to understanding the lives and experiences of individuals, while also accounting for the wider range of factors that influence and impact their outcomes.

Unfortunately the findings have shown us how, at the stage of the follow-up fieldwork, many have failed their Grade 10 examination and are no longer able to continue along their planned pathway into preparatory secondary school, leaving them with a sense of personal failure. We realise that while the rural girls in this study may share the same classrooms as urban students they continue to be disadvantaged in a number of ways. We see clearly that ensuring the rural girls in the study have access to a good quality education is more than

just ensuring that they have access to good schools and there is a range of other factors that impinge upon their educational experiences and outcomes. It seems that, given the extent of the inequalities that rural girls faced in their home communities, they are left in a constant state of trying to catch-up with their rural counterparts, and the potential for them to bring about genuine and lasting change in their lives is still uncertain. The final chapter of this thesis will consider some of the main themes that have emerged from this three findings chapters and will consider some potential implications and will suggest some potential avenues for future research.

## CHAPTER NINE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 9.1. INTRODUCTION

This study set out to explore the lived experience of twenty-seven rural girls from rural communities across 14 different woredas (districts) in the Southern Region of Ethiopia who had migrated to Hawassa city to pursue their secondary education. Recognising that rural girls represent one of the most marginalised groups in terms of accessing, progressing through and benefiting from secondary education in Ethiopia, this study considered the significant agency of the participants who have overcome significant challenges, moved to urban areas, and enrolled in urban secondary schools. Set against the backdrop of Amartya Sen's capability approach, this study adopted a critical feminist research approach and made use of multiple qualitative and participatory methods to help to challenge assumptions of vulnerability commonly associated with girls and women in Ethiopia and to take us closer to their lived experiences.

The three findings chapters charted the participants' education and migration pathways across time (past, present, future) and location (rural, urban). Starting in their home communities, Chapter Six first considered the lives of rural girls before they migrated (RQ1) and the specific challenges that they encounter, focusing in particular on the unequal and gendered division of labour and pressure for early and unwanted marriage. The impact that these practices had on their education, agency and general well-being was shown to be substantial. From here Chapter Seven explored the migration decisions and pathways of the girls in this study (RQ2), revealing their converging and diverging pathways, including the different resources they had access to and the varying strategies that they employed in seeking to realise their aspirations. Chapter Eight met rural girls in the present and explored their individual and shared experiences in Hawassa city both inside and outside of school (RQ3), and considered the academic outcomes of a sub-group of participants and the opportunities available to them following their Grade 10 examinations.

This study has helped to fill a gap in our understanding of the phenomenon of rural girls' educational migration. Overall, a mixed picture is presented in terms of the experiences of these rural girls and still their futures were revealed as uncertain. Nevertheless, aside from the conclusions that we may draw, the participants themselves indicated that overall they were happy that they had migrated and most were reluctant to return to their rural lifestyles. The study's key strength has been the fine-grained analysis and in-depth insights that it provides into the everyday lives and experiences of the participants. This final chapter will discuss some of the key themes and issues that have emerged from the study in relation to the topics of education and gender equality, reflecting on the contribution of this and the

potential implications of the findings. The chapter will then end with a critical reflection on the research approach and some final conclusions.

## 9.2. THE PROMISE OF EDUCATION

### 9.2.1. UNFULFILLED ASPIRATIONS?

This study is set at a time when rising educational aspirations of children and their families coincide with increasing scrutiny concerning the value of education and its potential to bring about lasting change in the lives of children, especially those who are marginalised (Dom, 2017). This is also reflected in this study. While these rural girls are somewhat unusual in their rural communities in that they have had the opportunity to pursue their aspirations for secondary education, the low quality of education that they have received in rural primary schools has meant that they have not acquired the skills that are necessary to fulfil their aspirations and many are struggling to just keep up. Those who have sat the Grade 10 examination have all failed, meaning that their pathways to achieving their aspirations have abruptly ended. As was shown to be the case by Mulugeta (2004), it seems that of those few female students who do reach university in Ethiopia, they are unlikely to be from rural areas.

In considering the value of education in light of the findings of this study, we see that education has not brought about lasting change in the lives of the participants, but rather the false promise of education has left many feeling as if they have failed. As highlighted by many authors in Chapter Three, the spread of formal education alongside unfulfilled expectations for a better life through education leaves many feeling frustrated and disappointment when their aspirations are not realised, and also makes transitions into adulthood appear indefinite (Crivello 2011; Dom, 2017; Gale & Parker, 2015; Mains, 2012; Morrow, 2013; Pankhurst, 2017; Posti-Ahokas & Palojoki, 2014). This leaves us with many challenging questions: What is the reason for this significant gap between what girls aspire to and what they can achieve? Why are young people not supported to realise their aspirations? How realistic is it that rural girls in Ethiopia aspire to go to university? If it is not realistic for rural girls to aspire to university level education, what other opportunities can be put in place to ensure that marriage is not the only other option for rural girls?

It seems that rather than reducing inequalities the findings have demonstrated (some of the) the ways in which existing inequalities may be exacerbated and how, despite growth and increasing education access, gaps are widening and many are getting left behind (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Bowles and Gintis, 1976; DeJaeghere & Lee, 2011; Greany, 2012; Terzi, 2007; Unterhalter, 2003; Walker, 2007; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). This is an issue that requires serious consideration given that it has been shown that the majority

of young people are not benefitting from Ethiopia's supposed growth, especially those living in rural areas and especially girls and young women (Guarcello, Lyon & Rosati, 2006; MoE, 2017; World Bank, 2016). While it is beyond the scope of this study to suggest what the wider consequences of growing frustrations around young people's unfulfilled expectations may be, the findings highlight the need to ensure those living in rural communities do not get left behind, a pressing concern given the rapid pace of Ethiopia's development.

### 9.2.2. TRAPPED BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Understanding the pathways of rural girls in this study from their rural communities to urban areas, we appreciate the considerable agency that they have exercised in pursuing alternative pathways. They have had to navigate and negotiate between two very different and often competing worlds: the traditional rural context where they are expected to enter into marriage and the seemingly modern lifestyle that education offers, which also brings with it considerable risk. At the same time, the findings reveal a distancing of girls from their rural communities. A sharp juxtaposition is evident between what they consider as rural and what they believe to be urban. In many ways they are seeking to distance themselves from their rural communities, where they see people as backwards and *lacking a future plan*, describing with much enthusiasm how they are *becoming urban* in the city and no longer seeing themselves as *rural*. The similarities between these findings and the findings from Mains' (2012) study with young men in Jimma city in Ethiopia are striking, as both highlight the tensions and presumed incompatibility amongst young people between rural and urban (educated) lifestyles. Mains (2012) explains how young men in his study have a negative view of their rural culture as something that is *bad* and *prevents progress*, which echoes sentiments expressed by the participants in this study. This is perhaps representative of attitudes more widely among the general rural youth population in Ethiopia, many of whom are choosing to leave behind their rural life where they see no future, for the city where they have at least some hope of a better life. While this is not a story unique to Ethiopia, together these findings highlight the growing chasms between rural and urban communities in Ethiopia. Again this highlights the importance of ensuring that those living in rural areas are not overlooked as Ethiopia progresses towards middle-income status.

Having spent some time living in the city, the participants describe how they have acquired aspects of the urban lifestyle such as improving their personal hygiene and appearance, adopting the urban dress style and seemingly *becoming more beautiful*. Having understood how heavily regulated the lives of rural girls in this study were in their home communities we come to learn that girls' desire to be beautiful - normal aspirations for adolescent girls - is

much more than a superficial yearning but rather is symbolic of the greater agency and control that they have over their lives in the urban areas. In addition to changes in their physical appearance, their aspirations become more differentiated and developed as they gain access to more knowledge and information, and they also start to speak Amharic. This in turn helps to enhance their perceived social status within their rural sending communities and the participants describe how their families and communities now consider them as urban girls. However, while experiencing greater confidence and self-esteem and feeling more respected by the community are no doubt benefits for the participants in the study, it also raises the stakes in terms of whether they are successful in their futures.

When they are unsuccessful in their education the participants now find themselves trapped between two worlds (Abebe, 2008) as they are unable to enter into meaningful employment in the city and because it is difficult for them to reintegrate into their rural communities - they no longer consider themselves as rural, but they also fear the reproach of their community members. Unwilling to succumb to the expectations for marriage that resurface and the rural lifestyle they thought they had escaped, they find themselves living in uncertainty as they wait for the next opportunity to re-enter into education and continue on the pathways that they set out for themselves. Even for those participants who failed the Grade 10 exams and managed to secure employment in the urban area, their expectations have been unfulfilled, and they have now had to enter into jobs they did not desire and also wait for the opportunity to return to formal secondary education. Thus, we start to wonder whether their investment has been worthwhile.

### 9.2.3. A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE?

If we were to assess the outcomes of the participants in this study purely in terms of their academic achievement, we might come to the conclusion that they have failed in their efforts to secure a better future through education. However, drawing on the capability approach (Sen, 1992) and taking a more expansive approach to considering their outcomes, we can see the many benefits that their experiences have brought them. Their experiences have altered how they understand themselves and what they believe is possible and this has consequently changed the type of future that they are willing to accept. Considering the finding we clearly see the protective role of education in the face of early and unwanted marriage, at least temporarily, as the majority have already passed the expected age of marriage in their communities and have resisted the expectations of their communities (CSA, 2016). In addition, due to their change expectations they are no longer willing to enter into marriage with someone who locks them into the rural lifestyle. While we cannot attribute this effect to education alone (as the experience of migrating to and living in urban areas also has a role to play), we may say that in least some ways their experiences have

been transformative. However, the ability for rural girls to continue to resist the rural lifestyle is uncertain and the pathways of rural girls beyond their education experiences should be considered. This is important, especially given the fact that evidence from other studies suggests that those who are unsuccessful in their education, and struggle in other ways in urban areas, are at risk of being drawn into risky livelihood strategies (i.e. Van Blerk, 2008), which are sometimes perceived as at least a better option than returning to the rural area.

#### 9.2.4. IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

It could be said that the Ethiopian government now finds itself at a critical juncture caught in the midst of rapid economic development, social transformation and growing inequalities. There is a fear that as Ethiopia continues to develop many vulnerable groups will get left behind, especially rural girls and young women (Pankhurst, Dom & Bevan, 2017). As we have seen throughout this study, getting girls into school is not enough; the quality of education matters a great deal as do factors outside school. Going forward, the findings in this study have shown that if the Ethiopian government is to move towards the inclusive society that it sets out in its development strategy (GTP II, National Planning Commission, 2016), then it must go beyond enrolment figures to understanding what happens to groups and individuals on their pathways through education, both inside and outside of school.

The government will need to align itself more closely with the SDG framework which sets out to tackle the underlying causes of all forms of inequality, and to address the limitations of the 'low-hanging fruit' approach of the MDGS (Camfield, Crabtree & Roelen, 2013; Stuart & Woodroffe, 2016). Furthermore, while exploring the experiences of the participant in the current study has been particularly illuminating, we must remember that many of these girls represent those select few from rural communities who were able to successfully migrate and enter into urban secondary schools. There are many more girls in these rural communities who do not migrate. Therefore, while we see gaps between these girls and their urban counterparts, it is very likely that the gaps between urban students and those who remain in rural areas are even greater, and this deserves further attention.



### 9.3. (CHANGING) CYCLES OF GENDER INEQUALITY

In going beyond simple dichotomies whereby female is understood in relation to male and rural is understood in relation to urban, this study has shown how gender norms and expectations in rural communities shape the interactions of rural girls in this study in the real world. This study provides strong support for the assertion that the ‘rural’ should be understood as more than a mere setting (Forsberg, 2001; Molestane & Ntombela, 2010; Pini, Molestane & Mills, 2014). Gender norms and expectations at work in these communities were shown to be the biggest challenge for rural girls’ education access, progression and achievement, as well as their overall well-being. The lower status of women was revealed as being deeply embedded in these communities, affecting all aspects of their life including the resources they have access to, the opportunities they have to exercise their agency and the value that is given to their education. The findings have helped to illuminate not only *how* these social norms and expectations are reinforced and *why* these gendered norms and expectations continue, which have been shown to have both ideological and instrumental underpinnings.

#### 9.3.1. IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The study has made an important contribution to understanding the impact of the unspoken rules and norms at work in Ethiopian culture, captured by the concept of *yilunta*. While the presence of this concept is not new, understanding the importance of this concept from the perspectives of rural girls and young women, and the extent to which it impacts their secondary education has not previously been achieved. From the accounts of the participants in this study we hear how this strict and rigid code of behaviour (*yilunta*) governs operates across and within the different rural communities of the participants, extending its reach into almost all aspects of the lives of rural girls in this study, including the food that they eat, to the clothes that they wear to their physical movements within the community.

However, at the same time, we become aware of the circular logic in operation within the communities of the participants. The restrictive gender norms and expectations limit the opportunities and agency of the participant, which in turn serve to contribute to their subordinate status and, over time, these beliefs have become embedded in these communities and are now taken as absolute and unquestionable and females must ‘*keep silent*’. The rural girls in this study describe how these beliefs are reinforced through the harsh surveillance and criticism of family and community members, while those who veer outside of these norms and expectations face severe repercussions in the form of verbal and sometimes physical abuse, which in turn impact what it is that rural girls and women believe possible. However at the same time we see how these gender norms are not

unshakable and the same forces that contribute to upholding discriminatory norms may be the very forces that contribute to changing them. While this study has highlighted the barriers and challenges to rural girls' education it has also served to draw attention to where openings to address these challenges may be found (Marcus & Harper, 2015).

There is evidence of some change happening in these communities, albeit in a highly uneven manner (Jones et al. 2014). Transformation is needed given the pervasive and inescapable negative consequences that traditional norms and expectations have for the lives of rural girls. The question is whether this is happening fast enough. In some ways it could be said that gender equality has been achieved in theory but not in practice, communicated most clearly in the encounters with those who tell us that gender equality has been achieved while at the same time we witness the oppressively dominant masculine culture in which the participants live. Similarly, while disparities may be decreasing at least in the enrolment of males and females in national level statistics, the many barriers that impact the progression and learning of girls in rural areas are not. It could be said that the very migration of the rural girls in this study demonstrates that change is not happening fast enough and opportunities are not opening up quickly enough. Thus, in order to escape the rural area and have the opportunity to pursue their education they are migrating to urban areas, where there is greater gender equality and also more opportunities.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that while the concept of *yilunta* is in some ways useful in helping us to understand these rigid gender norms and how they are enforced and perpetuated, in other ways it offers too simplistic an understanding of the role and agency of rural girls and women in these communities. It does not account for the complicity of girls and women in accepting and perpetuating such norms or the subtle and less subtle ways they seek to disrupt these norms.

### 9.3.2. INSTRUMENTAL UNDERPINNINGS

In terms of the instrumental factors contributing to the prevalence and persistence of unequal gender norms and expectations and associated practices in these communities, a recurrent theme throughout the stories of the participants is how economic dependence and inequality are both a cause and an effect of women's subordination in the community. Significant differences in the economic capacity of males and females are found whereby females have few or no opportunities to earn money and cannot receive an inheritance from their family. One of the consequences of these economic inequalities according to the participants, is the continued practice of early and unwanted marriage, which is in many ways seen as a more secure and less risky way to secure the futures of rural girls amidst limited other opportunities. In addition, it was found that it is not only families who chose marriage for their daughters rather than education, but sometimes rural girls themselves.

This is consistent with other studies who have also signalled economic arguments for education that exist among many communities (e.g. Chuta & Morrow, 2015; Boyden, Pankhurst & Tafere, 2012) and also show how gender norms and expectations interact in complex ways to produce and reinforce inequalities. While often there is a sense in the literature that parents who advocate early marriage for their daughters are uneducated and uninformed, the findings from this study provide contrary evidence that shows that, at least in some cases, decisions for marriage are often rational and conscious decisions in the wake of limited other opportunities. Rather than families displaying a lack of awareness of the value of education or what it takes to succeed in education, another explanation is that families are in fact making strategic decisions to enable their daughters to succeed in the only secure way known to them, namely their entry into marriage. This is an area that warrants further explorations from the perspective of parents and rural girls who chose to enter into marriage early. In addition, the findings have clearly shown how inequalities in economic and material resources between rural and urban areas, such as access to electricity and running water, exacerbate and augment the domestic workload of rural girls and women. Thus, we see that it is not just cultural beliefs alone that underpin these practice but also how these interact with economic opportunities and constraints, including (lack of) access to basic resources and employment opportunities in the community.

### 9.3.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRESS IN GENDER EQUALITY

Overall these findings have demonstrated how continued progress in gender equality will require broad economic change, the expansion of economic opportunities, the extension of basic resources to rural communities, improved access and quality of education (and all that this requires) and strategies to address prevailing gender norms and expectations. Firstly, in terms of the sustained practice of early and unwanted marriage, the findings in this study suggest that while education is a protective it is not an end-all solution. Although progress in both education and gender equality will be complementary, deeply entrenched inequalities are not simply eroded by getting more girls in to school. The findings from this study emphasise the need for greater economic opportunities for girls outside of marriage both as an alternative to formal education and as a pathway beyond education. As we see from the study's findings, while education may have the ability to delay entry into marriage, the lack of real opportunities after education will mean that expectations to enter into unwanted marriages will continue to persist. Secondly, the gendered division of domestic work requires more attention both in terms of girls' education access but also the wider implications that it has for the lives and well-being of girls and women in Ethiopia. Other studies have demonstrated how increasing the entry of women into the labour market does not lead to a decrease in the gendered division of labour (Mulugeta, 2004; Semela, Bekele

and Abraham, 2017). Efforts should be made both to understand this issue better and also to work towards addressing it.

The findings in this study have also shown how the heavy and onerous work burden that rural girls face is not only gendered but also spatial given that the lack of basic resources and infrastructure in these communities means that the work burden is increased and intensified as a result. The findings point to the need for a holistic approach in the unequal and gendered division of labour in rural communities, one that includes awareness raising to tackle the gender norms and expectations that underpin this practice; the promotion of a re-designation of domestic work responsibilities within households, and the extension of better basic resources and infrastructure to rural areas rather than their continue concentration in the urban space. This is an issue that requires concerted effort given that these inequalities play out in the private sphere and are less likely to change on their own.

#### 9.4. REFLECTING ON THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Amartya Sen's capability approach provided the normative framework for this research study which adopts a critical feminist research approach employing qualitative methods with participatory elements. This approach has helped to place the agency of the participants at the heart of this study, recognising them as active agents in their own lives who values and insights matter (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009b; Creswell, 2012; Deneulin, 2009; Deneulin & Shanani, 2009; Frediani, 2007; Robeyns, 2011). In line with the goals of critical feminist research approaches this study has helped to make certain invisible aspects of the inequalities that rural girls face visible, to acknowledge the transactional nature between the research and the participants and to produce a partial understanding of the lives of the rural girls in this study (Lather, 1986; Olesen, 2005). The capability framework has been useful in connecting the individual stories of the participants with the wider structural forces - at both the local and national level - that impact their lives and experiences and influence their ability to convert their skills and resources into valued outcomes (Creswell, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Olesen, 2005; Sen, 1992; Unterhalter & Brighouse, 2007; Walker, 2012).

Going beyond the human capital reasoning whereby education is understood in terms of the contributions that education makes to national growth (Hanushek, & Wößmann, 2007) the capability framework has helped to consider both the intrinsic and instrumental value of education in the lives of the rural girls in this study (Raynor, 2007; Walker, 2007; Walker and Unterhalter, 2007). The study has also shown how linear conceptions of education and development are not sufficient for understanding the reality of the lives that people lives. At the same time it has demonstrated how education alone cannot always remediate for

deficits earlier in life as sometime proposed by those from within a human capital framework. In particular the capability approach has shown the need to focus not only on equality of outcomes but the ability of individuals to achieve the outcomes that they value (Sen, 1992). In summary the methodological framework of this study has helped to provide a more expansive approach in terms of understanding and conceptualising the education of the rural girls in this study and has helped to achieve a more nuanced understanding of their lived experiences (Unterhalter, Vaughan and Walker, 2007).

## 9.5. A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH METHOD

### 9.5.1. ADVANTAGES

In reflecting upon the question *'what might you have done differently in this study?'* I recognise that many different approaches may have been taken in the current study. If I had access to the wealth of knowledge, information and experiences that I now have, there are many things that I might have done differently. However, the approach that was taken in this study is one that was negotiated in the space in-between the academic setting and the immediate and sometimes challenging context on the ground. These two worlds are not always compatible and are sometimes conflicting, and the challenge of the research is to try to make decisions that are faithful to each. The choices made were those that were judged to best meet the objectives of the study, to ensure the approach taken would be compatible with the underlying theoretical and philosophical framework, to respect the participants in the study and to negotiate the challenges and constraints of doing research in doing research in this context with the limited resources of a PhD study.

What I think this study does best, is to provide a very real insight into the lives, experiences and choices of the twenty-seven participants in this study. The 'ground-up' approach of the study, the use of multiple methods and the length of time spent on the ground were some of the features of this study which I think really helped to contribute to achieving this 'insight. Building on the information that we gathered from multiple sources during the preliminary fieldwork, as well as maintaining a systematic, but flexible approach to the data collection are two aspects that I think served this study particularly well. However, what is harder to capture, but equally important in the completion of this research study, was the substantial contribution of many individuals and organisations to the research in both formal and informal ways.

### 9.5.2. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The biggest challenge in this study was undoubtedly the significant language barriers present between the researcher and the research participants. While this was an expected challenge, the extent to which this would impact the research was something that did not

become clear until we began the fieldwork. Although the strategies that were taken to overcome these language barriers were multiple, and in many ways successful, the impact of these language barriers undoubtedly had an impact on the data collection and findings. While a significant benefit of this study was the length of time spent on the ground and the perspective of the lives of the participants over time, in many ways this was not long enough. We have seen from the findings how the lives of the participants changed drastically over the course of main data collection and follow-up fieldwork. Thus, there is significant scope for a more longitudinal approach to exploring these issues, particularly one that follows the lives of rural girls beyond school.

### 9.5.3. REFLECTING ON POSITIONALITY

This study started from the position that when conducting research in developing country contexts, Western researchers cannot help but represent particular power dynamics, while Western research methods may also reinforce power imbalances and undermine local ways of knowing (Beazley & Ennew, 2006; Benatar, 2002; Marshal & Batten, 2004; Papoutsaki, 2006). As a white, well-educated and relatively well-off female from an 'advanced' capitalist society travelling to a developing country context to conduct my fieldwork, I was undeniably an outsider. Throughout this thesis I have outlined the processes, strategies and procedures that I adopted with the goal of seeking to work in a more participatory and collaborative way while at the same time recognising my privileged status within this context. My motivations for pursuing the research and the journey and evolution of the research were outlined (Chapter One), the transactional nature of the research was set out (Chapter Four) and the role of the research assistant was highlighted (Chapter Five). In terms of the 'insider-outsider' debate this study aligned itself with the position that a researcher can never truly occupy the position of insider or outsider, but rather inhabits the 'space between' and moves in in and out of similarities and differences with their participants and that all accounts are meaningful in their own right (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Tinker & Armstrong, 2008). Having completed the fieldwork I consider it important to reflect on some of my learnings in this study in terms of my positionality and how my positionality interacted with that of Eyerusalem, the research assistant.

Working together with Eyerusalem provided interesting insight into the tensions and challenges in relations between Western researchers and local researchers. While my status as an outsider was obvious, I had considered Eyerusalem to be an insider as she was a female from a rural community in the Sidama region of Ethiopia. However, I came to realise that despite her perceived status as an insider Eyerusalem did not consider herself as an insider. Describing her experiences of working in other roles, Eyerusalem described instances of travelling to rural communities, where not only did she not consider herself an insider but neither did the local community members. She spoke of instances of when, travelling to rural communities in different research roles, she would adopt strategies to

minimise the differences between her and the community members, for example by dressing like a 'rural person'. Eyerusalem also spoke of how, when travelling to rural communities alone as a female research assistant, she would have concerns for her safety and would always wear long trousers under her skirt to protect her from sexual assaults, which alarmingly demonstrates her vulnerability. She would also face other challenges related to her gender such as constant catcalling which she would not have faced had she been a male researcher. In addition, as the rural community would consider her as an urban person they would expect payment from her and would often refuse to cooperate with her. Some of the strategies that she would employ to entice the local community members to cooperate with her such as speaking in their local language, telling them that she had a relative in the village or she was from the village or giving people money.

As a white female researcher, I had many similar experiences and encounters as Eyerusalem that I do not think that I would have faced as a male researcher. However, I do not think my safety was compromised in the same way as Eyerusalem. First of all, due to my very visible status as an outsider, if I did encounter any verbal harassment on the streets, someone would very quickly intervene on my behalf. Secondly, when travelling to remote places the research assistant and usually at least one other person always accompanied us, whether it was a local NGO worker or one of the research participants. Nonetheless, this sometimes put the research assistant or other individuals in a difficult position whereby they ended up working as a sort of mediator between the local community and the researcher. They were sometimes seen in a negative light by the community who considered them to be '*on the side*' of the researcher. Thirdly, during the research, I did not make any attempt to 'dress like the participants'. Although this is a strategy that many researchers adopt in seeking to minimise differences, I did not think such attempts to minimise differences were realistic or demonstrated sufficient respect for the participants. In conversations with many of my Ethiopian friends who worked with foreigners, I was aware of how they would feel disrespected when they overheard their foreign colleagues talk about how they would 'dress differently' in Ethiopia than they would in their home country. As such I did not attempt to change my dress style, but at all time would dress in a respectful manner.

For me these experiences highlight how the positionality of different researchers brings distinct challenges and concerns in sometime different and sometimes similar ways. For example, both Eyerusalem and I had similar encounters due to our status as a female, however these challenges played out differently for each of us. Nonetheless, both Eyerusalem and I agreed on three of the most important aspects for conducting research in the context of Ethiopia as either a foreigner or someone from within Ethiopia. These three aspects are 1) the personality of the researcher, 2) demonstrating respect for the participants and 3) spending sufficient time getting to know the context. First, I consider

that my personality and my willingness to engage with the participants and local culture greatly facilitated the research. While many challenges were faced in the research process, it was important to always retain a positive outlook and search for new or alternative strategies of achieving a goal. Similarly, for Eyerusalem, her personality was a key asset in the study in helping to gain support and buy-in from participants, stakeholders and local community members. Secondly, demonstrating respect, not only for the participants, but for all individuals encountered throughout the research process was imperative. For any research conducting fieldwork in a different context, I believe that it is important to spend sufficient time living with the local people, getting to know their behaviour, learning the language, eating the food and taking part in the culture. Perhaps being in a culture so different to my own provided me with an opportunity to get even closer to the lives of the participants, than I would have in my own country. In addition, both Eyerusalem and I believed that the participatory video, while very time-consuming and resource intensive, really helped to achieve a level of respect and trust with the participants which in turn contributed to their willingness to share their stories with us. Finally, the length of time that I spent in the field was invaluable in getting to know not only the participants but also the context. It not only helps one to get to know the attitudes and behaviour of the people but also provides the opportunity to triangulate the information and contribute to the overall validity of the project.

## 9.6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The rapidly changing pace of development in Ethiopia is creating new tensions and divides that cross the existing divisions of geographical location, religion, race, and even gender. The rural girls in this study who are migrating to urban centres in pursuit of a better future are at the forefront of this transformation. They are migrating not only in geographical terms, but also socially and culturally. Whether they are successful in realising their aspirations is still uncertain. Considering the evidence, it seems that given the significant challenges that girls face in their rural communities, strategies to simply empower girls by getting them into school on apparently equal terms with boys will not address the entrenched inequalities in their lives and will not help them succeed in education. Furthermore, education alone is not sufficient for helping to improve the lives of rural girls and alternative opportunities outside of formal education are needed both instead of, and beyond secondary education. Finally, the stories of the participants in this research do not end here and future research should aim to uncover the impact of these potentially transformative experiences on the lives of the participants and the implications these may have for their futures families.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Key Informant Information Sheet, Consent Form and Interview Schedule

#### Appendix A.1. Information Sheet



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN  
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF DUBLIN



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL  
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

#### INFORMATION SHEET

##### WHY AM I CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW?

My study is called *"The Educational Journeys of Girls Living in Poverty in Ethiopia"*. This is the first part of my study. I want to find out as much as possible about the educational journeys of girls living in poverty and the factors that help or prevent them from attending secondary school in Ethiopia.

##### WHY DO I WANT TO INTERVIEW YOU?

I believe you have a lot of information to share with me which would be very valuable to my study.

##### WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU TAKE PART?

If you take part, I will ask you questions about your knowledge and experiences of girls educational journeys living in poverty. This interview will take between 30-45 minutes. It is your choice to take part, you can answer as many or as few questions as you like and you can stop the interview at any time. Please be aware that this means that I can also stop the interview at any time. You will be asked to sign a consent form, but your name will not appear anywhere else and no one will be able to identify you from your answers.

##### ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BENEFITS?

The information will be used in my research study which may be published at a later stage. There are no direct benefits for taking part in my study, and no money will be exchanged. However, your participation will help me gain important information that will contribute to my research. There are no foreseen risks other than those you would encounter in your daily life. You may stop the interview for any reason and any time.

##### OTHER INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW

My study has been ethically approved by Trinity College Dublin. Any information you tell me will be kept confidential unless you tell me something which is against the law, then I may have to tell the authorities. The information you provide will be stored in a safe and secure place and this is required by Irish Legislation (The Freedom of Information Act (1997) and The Data Protection Act (2003)). You can access your own data at any time under the Freedom of Information Act 1997.

##### IF YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS YOU CAN CONTACT ME OR MY SUPERVISOR:

Louise Yorke	Professor Robbie Gilligan,
<a href="mailto:yorkel@tcd.ie">yorkel@tcd.ie</a>	<a href="mailto:robbie.gilligan@tcd.ie">robbie.gilligan@tcd.ie</a>
School of Social Work and Social Policy,	School of Social Work and Social Policy,
Trinity College,	Trinity College,
Dublin 2,	Dublin 2,
Ireland.	Ireland.
+353(0)1 8962179	+353(0)1 8961331

*Thank you for your interest in my study!*

#### Appendix A.2: Consent Form



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN  
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF DUBLIN



IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL  
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn

CONSENT FORM

For office use only
Participant Number:
Site ID:
Data Number:
Date of Administration:

“The Educational Journeys of Girls Living in Poverty in Ethiopia”

Louise Yorke, PhD Candidate

School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

Please tick the following boxes if you agree to take part in the study

- I am 18 years or older
- I understand what the study is about and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received answers to all my questions
- I understand that I can stop taking part in the study at any time
- I understand that I might be contacted again at a later stage by the researcher
- I understand how the information I provide will be used and stored
- I freely and voluntarily agree to take part in this research study

PARTICIPANT’S NAME:

PARTICIPANT’S SIGNATURE:

PARTICIPANT’S CONTACT DETAILS:

RESEARCHER’S SIGNATURE:

Date:

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

My name is Louise Yorke and I am a student in Trinity College Dublin. I am interested in understanding the educational opportunities for girls living in situations of poverty in Ethiopia. An important first step in my research is gaining information and advice from individuals with particular expertise in the area I am seeking to investigate. This will help me to understand the environment where my study will take place. You have been chosen for your particular knowledge of this topic which is very valuable to my study. Information that emerges from this interview will be used to plan the main part of the study that will be conducted in a rural community in Ethiopia. Any information you provide will be confidential and anonymous. The interview will take approximately 30-40 minutes. Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study.

**1. Tell me about yourself and your work.**

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Education Level
- Name of Community/Organisation
- Role in Community/Organisations
- How long have you worked in this policy area?
- How do you define your work in this policy area?

**2. In your opinion, what support factors help girls to attend secondary school in Ethiopia?**

-Individual –Parents – Siblings –Availability of resources

**3. In your opinion, what barriers prevent girls attending secondary school in Ethiopia?**

- Barriers - Attitudes towards girls? - Time constraints? - Girls from different backgrounds/regions etc.
- Involvement in other tasks?

**4. In your opinion, what barriers face girls attending secondary school in Ethiopia?**

**5. In your opinion, what role does the Government play in girls secondary education?**

**6. In your opinion, what role does the community play in girls secondary education?**

**7. In your opinion, what role do parents play in girls secondary education?**

**8. What could be done to make sure more girls attend school?**

**9. What do you think would encourage more girls to attend and complete secondary education?**

**10. Are there any other issues that you think are important that we have not covered today?**

Thank you very much for your time. Once the results have been generated a summary of the findings will be provided for all participants who took part in the key informant interviews. Would you like to receive a copy of these findings?



## “The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for Secondary Education in Southern Ethiopia (SNNPR)”

### Briefing and Consultation Session

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Professor Robbie Gilligan and Ms. Louise Yorke of the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin (TCD), in association with the Action for Self Reliance Organisation are delighted to welcome you to a briefing and consultation session on the doctoral research study *“The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for Secondary Education in Southern Ethiopia (SNNPR)”*. The purpose of this event is to inform participants about the scope of the research and to consult on plans for the study and on wider issue of girls’ education in Ethiopia.

**Background**  
To advance the international progress made by the Millennium Development Goals, attention must now turn to secondary education. In many countries including Ethiopia, recent evidence suggests that poor rural children are migrating to urban areas for secondary education with the hope of fulfilling their educational aspirations and those of their families, and achieving better social outcomes, increased economic prospects and enhanced well-being.

**The Doctoral Study**  
The study aims to deepen understanding of the migration of rural girls to urban areas for secondary education. It will explore factors influencing girls’ migration, their experiences in urban settings, their different trajectories through education and the impact of migration both for girls’ future lives and in their sending communities. The results of the thesis will contribute to the understanding and debate of critical issues related to girls’ education in the policy, NGO and research community.

**Collaboration**  
*The Action for Self Reliance Organisation* was established in 2000 and has designed various programmes focused on children and women using a family and community based approach. The Action for Self Reliance Organisation and TCD have agreed to collaborate on the doctoral research study. This was based on a mutual understanding of the importance of increasing girls’ participation and attainment in secondary education in Ethiopia. It is hoped that the collaboration will help to inform programme development to support girls’ educational progress.

For more information visit: [www.girlseducationaljourneys.com](http://www.girlseducationaljourneys.com)

We wish to thank the Embassy of Ireland and Ato Getachew Demissie for helping us to coordinate this event.

*Initial seed support kindly acknowledged from the Oak Foundation and the Trinity Trust Foundation.*






**Robbie Gilligan** is Professor of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin. He served as founding Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy from 2005 to 2011. He is currently Associate Director of the Children’s Research Centre at TCD. Professor Gilligan’s research focus is on the experiences, capacities and supports of children and young people in challenging circumstances (displacement, poverty, abuse etc.). Current and past work includes the conduct or support of studies in Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Ireland, Lithuania, Spain, Thailand and Vietnam. Professor Gilligan is a Visiting Research Fellow (2013 - 2016) at SFI - The Danish National Centre for Social Research and Extraordinary Professor at the Optentia Research Programme at North Western University, South Africa. He also served as President of Childwatch International Research Network (2010-2013).



**Ms. Louise Yorke** is a doctoral researcher at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, TCD and a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholar. She has practical experience of working with children in settings such as India, Kenya and Ireland. This has given her an appreciation for the value of education in the lives of children, especially those in living in disadvantage. Her MSc thesis focused on the resilience of children from disadvantaged communities in Ireland, at risk of dropping out of school early. During this time she was awarded an internship with the *Young Lives* study at Oxford University, which investigates the lives of children living in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. She has continued to work part-time with the *Young Lives* education team focusing on children’s psychosocial skill development and the potential of education in the lives of children living in disadvantage.

## Appendix C: Partnership Agreement between TCD and Hawassa University

 COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH | TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN  
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

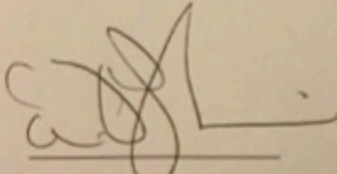
21<sup>st</sup> October 2015

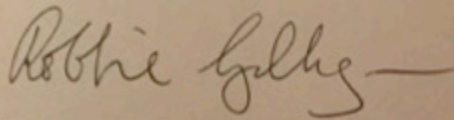
To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you in relation to the doctoral research study "*The Educational Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas in Southern Ethiopia*", carried out by Ms. Louise Yorke and supervised by Professor Robbie Gilligan at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin.

It is acknowledged that the study will be carried out in partnership with the Centre for Policy and Development Research, Hawassa University, directed by Professor Tesfaye Semela. It is also understood that both parties will agree upon a formal memorandum of understanding.

Kind regards,

  
Professor Eoin O'Sullivan,  
Head of School

  
Professor Robbie Gilligan  
PhD Supervisor

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Dáinn na nEalaíon, na nDaonnachtaí agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta, | Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, | F +353 (0)1 671 2262  
Foirgneamh na nEalaíon, Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire. | Arts Building, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland | socialwork.socialpolicy@tcd.ie  
www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie

Appendix D: Local Government Approval

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Southern Nations, Nationalities and peoples Regional  
Government Hawassa City Administration Education  
Department

ተ.ገ.ቁ. 26086/4  
Ref.No  
22/03/07  
Date

Ms. Louise Yorke,  
Doctoral Candidate,  
School of Social Work and Social Policy,  
Trinity College Dublin,  
Ireland.

**RE: Letter of Acceptance**

Dear Ms. Yorke,

I am writing to inform you of our official approval and support for your doctoral research study "The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas in Southern Ethiopia (SNNPR)" supervised by Professor Robbie Gilligan at the School of Social Work and Social Policy, Trinity College Dublin. We understand that the study will be carried out in collaboration with the Action for Self Reliance Organization

We acknowledge that the purpose of the research is to explore the educational journeys of rural girls to Government secondary schools in Hawassa city and we support your plan to conduct interviews with a sample of rural girls in Hawassa City.

To demonstrate our official approval and support for the research study, we hereby send you a signed letter on behalf of the Hawassa City Administration Education Bureau.

Kind regards,

  
Ato Taye Biliso  
Hawassa City Administration Education  
Department head



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## Appendix E: Ethical Approval Trinity College Ireland



COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH  
Ollscoil Átha Cliath

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN  
The University of Dublin

21 October 2015

**RE: Professor Robert Gilligan and Ms Louise Yorke, REAC Reference No 550  
'Educational Opportunities for Girls Living in Poverty in Ethiopia'**

To whom it may concern:

I confirm that ethical approval has been granted to Professor Robert Gilligan and Ms Louise Yorke for their study 'Educational Opportunities for Girls Living in Poverty in Ethiopia' by the School of Social Work and Social Policy Research Ethical Approval Committee (REAC). The ethical approval is dependent on the study receiving local ethical approval within Ethiopia.

Sincerely

**Jennifer O'Toole**

**School Administrative Manager**

Scoil na hOibre Sóisialta agus an Pholasáí Shóisialta

Dáimh na nEalaíon, na nDaonnachtaí  
agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta,  
Foirgneamh na nEalaíon, Coláiste na Tríonóide,  
Baile Átha Cliath 2, Éire

School of Social Work and Social Policy

Faculty of Arts, Humanities  
and Social Sciences,  
Arts Building, Trinity College,  
Dublin 2, Ireland

T: +353 (0)1 896 2001

F: +353 (0)1 671 2262

socialwork-socialpolicy@tcd.ie

www.socialwork-socialpolicy.tcd.ie



Appendix F: Ethical Approval Hawassa University, Ethiopia

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**HAWASSA UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND  
HEALTH SCIENCES  
Institutional Review Board

Ref. No: IRB/079/08  
Date: 09/03/2016

Name of Researcher/s: *Louise Yorke, Robbie Gilligan*

Topic of Proposal: *The migration of rural girls to urban areas for secondary education in southern Ethiopia (SNNPR): Proposed research design and method.*

Dear Sir(s)/Madam(s),

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the College of Medicine and Health Sciences of Hawassa University has reviewed the aforementioned research protocol with special emphasis on the following points:

1. Are all principles considered?
  - 1.1. Respect for persons: Yes  No
  - 1.2. Beneficence: Yes  No
  - 1.3. Justice: Yes  No
2. Are the objectives of the study ethically achievable? Yes  No
3. Are the proposed research methods ethically sound? Yes  No

Based on the aforementioned ethical assessment, the IRB has:

- A. Approved the proposal for implementation
- B. Conditionally Approved
- C. Not Approved

Yours faithfully,  
  
Ayalew Astatkie (PhD),  
Institutional Review Board Chairperson.



☎ +046 820 92 90 Fax +046 2208755  
📠 1560 Hawassa

## Appendix G: Visits to Schools

### Questions for Schools

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_  
Time of Interview \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of the School (identify on a map) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of pupils:

- Grade 9 total \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 9 boys \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 9 girls \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 10 total \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 10 boys \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 10 girls \_\_\_\_\_

2. Percentage (%) of these pupils that come from the rural areas?

- Grade 9 boys \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 9 girls \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 10 boys \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 10 girls \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why do rural students attend this school and not other schools?

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3. How many shifts are there in this school?

- What shifts do students coming from rural areas attend? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is there a reason they attend this shift?

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4. What are the general characteristics of *female* students coming from rural areas?

- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
- Religion \_\_\_\_\_
- Sending communities \_\_\_\_\_

5. What do you know about the lives of rural girls in this school?

- Inside school?

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- Outside school?

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6. Where do rural girls live in urban areas? e.g.

- Boarding school? \_\_\_\_\_
- With relatives? \_\_\_\_\_
- With family friends? \_\_\_\_\_
- A group of rural girls living together? \_\_\_\_\_
- They do not have a home? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the biggest challenges for rural girls?

- Inside school?

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- Outside school?

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**Interest of the School in Taking Part**

1. Would this school be interested in taking part in the study?

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2. How do you think the study could benefit your school?

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3. Do you have any concerns about the study?

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4. Do you have any questions about the study?

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5. Do you have suggestions for the study?

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6. Are you willing to provide a letter of support indicating your willingness to take part in the study?

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## Appendix H: Screening Questionnaire for Recruiting Participants

### **Screening Questionnaire for Recruiting Participants**

*Please answer the following questions as truthfully as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. The information will be used to identify a group of participants to invite to take part in a research study. If you do not wish to answer these questions, please leave the sheet blank. Thank you.*

Question 1. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 2. What age are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years \_\_\_\_\_ months

Question 3. What is your religion?

Protestant  Orthodox Christian  Muslim  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Question 4. Which ethnic group are you from?

Hadiya  Sidama  Wolayta  Kembata  Gurage

Amhara  Oromo  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Question 5. What shift are you attending?

Morning  Evening  Night

Question 6. What grade are you in?

Grade 9  Grade 10

Question 7. What is the name of your primary school? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 8. Where are you from (where do your family live)?

Region \_\_\_\_\_

Zone \_\_\_\_\_

Woreda \_\_\_\_\_

Kebele \_\_\_\_\_

Question 9. Where are you currently living?

Region \_\_\_\_\_

Zone \_\_\_\_\_

Woreda \_\_\_\_\_

Kebele \_\_\_\_\_

Question 10. What age were you when you moved to the urban area? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 11. What is the main reason that you moved to the urban area?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 12. Who are you currently living with?

With relatives (e.g. aunt, uncle, cousin etc.)  With friends (renting a house)

In boarding accommodation  With my parents

With my siblings  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Question 13. Have you lived with this person or in this place since you came to Hawassa?

Yes  No

Question 14. If not, where else have you lived? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 13. Are you currently working?

Yes  No

Question 14. What work do you do? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 15. How many hours per day do you work? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 15: Approximately how much do you earn from this work per day? \_\_\_\_\_

Question 16: For what purpose do you use this income? \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you very much for your time!*

## Appendix I: Information Sheet for Participants

My name is Louise Yorke and I am a student in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

You are being invited to take part in my study:

***"The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for General Secondary Education in Ethiopia"***.

Louise Yorke

[yorkel@tcd.ie](mailto:yorkel@tcd.ie)

0938064171

**WHAT DOES THIS INVOLVE?**



I want to learn more about the lives of rural girls who move to urban areas (like this one) for secondary school. I want to find out more about their lives, what is important to them and their experiences and feelings.

**WHY HAVE I BEEN CHOSEN?**



- I am asking you to take part because you are a rural girl enrolled in a secondary school in an urban area. I would like to know more about your life.
- After gathering information through the screening questionnaire, I have decided that you would be a good person to take part in my study.
- I will return tomorrow to ask you if you want to take part and to answer any questions you have.
- I want you to think carefully about taking part in the study. You do not have to take part in the study if you do not want to – nothing bad will happen you if you do not take part.
- If you do agree to take part and then change your mind later, this is okay and you will not be punished.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART?**



- If you agree to take part you will be asked to take part in a group discussion to share your experiences.
- Some participants will then be invited to take part in a three-week workshop based on their availability and interest.
- During the workshop we will take part in lots of games and activities and we will learn together how to use a video camera so that you can make your own video to represent your lives and experiences.
- The workshop will take place every two weeks in the afternoon from 1-4pm with a group of 9-10 other female students from this school.
- I will also invite each member of the group to take part in an interview with only my research assistant and me. This will be a chance to talk about some issues that you might not want to share with the group.

- I may take some photographs to record the research process during the study. If there is any photograph which you are in which I wish to make public I will ask your permission, if you don't want this photograph to be shared I won't share it.
- Once I have finished collecting all the information, I will summarise it in a research book that I will submit to my university for examination. I might also take some of the information and publish it in an academic newspaper. Parts of the things that you say, and parts of the video will help me to write this book.

**ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BENEFITS**



- During the research we will try to have as much fun as possible and get to know each other. You will learn new skills such as how to make your own video and I will give you a copy of the video to keep.
- My study will not be able to change things in your life, but I will make sure that people in the local and national government know about the findings to help them to make plans for children like you in the future.
- There is a chance that you might become upset during the research if you choose to share some personal information. However, you do not have to share any information with me, or with anyone else if you do not want to.
- However, if you tell me something that means that you are in danger, or someone else is in danger, I will have to report this information to your guardian and the authorities.
- I might also suggest that you talk to someone about your problems if I think this can help you.

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?**



- My university (Trinity College Dublin), Hawassa University and the local Government have given me permission to carry out this study.
- I will store all the information that I collect safely in a secure safe and in a safe place on my computer that will only be accessed by people who have a password.

## Appendix J: Consent Process

### Audio Recorded Consent Process for Participants and Youth Advisory Group

My name is Louise Yorke and I am a student in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. You are being invited to take part in my study: "The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for General Secondary Education in Ethiopia". I am going to ask you some questions and I will record the answers using this tape recorder.

*Please tell me your name...*

*Please tell me your age...*

*Do you understand what the study is about?*

*Have you had the chance to ask any questions and have all your questions been answered?*

*Do you understand that you can stop taking part in the study at any time?*

*Do you know how the information you tell me will be used and stored?*

*Do you agree to take part in this research study?*

**Thank you**

### Audio Recorded Consent Process for Guardians

My name is Louise Yorke and I am a student in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. You are being requested to give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in my study: "The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for General Secondary Education in Ethiopia". I am going to ask you some questions and I will record the answers using this tape recorder.

*Please tell me your name...*

*Please tell me your age...*

*What is your relationship to \_\_\_\_\_?*

*Do you understand what the study is about?*

*Have you had the chance to ask any questions and have all your questions been answered?*

*Do you understand that you can stop taking part in the study at any time?*

*Do you know how the information you tell me will be used and stored?*

*Do you give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in this research study?*

**Thank you**



**Written Consent Form For Video Release**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I have taken part in the research study "*The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for General Secondary Education in Ethiopia*".

I have given verbal consent to take part in this study

I was involved in producing a participatory video

I understand that this video will be used to engage other groups in the study

I understand that this video may be shown within my community

I understand that the video may be used in research reports, in presentations, in exhibitions and in other publications related to the research.

I understand that no financial gain will be made as a result of sharing my video

I give permission for the video to be used for these purposes

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Written Consent Form For Photograph Release**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

I have taken part in the research study "*The Migration of Rural Girls to Urban Areas for General Secondary Education in Ethiopia*".

I have given verbal consent to take part in this study

I have given permission for my photograph to be taken during this study

I was told that some of these photos might be made public

I have had the chance to review the photographs that will be made public

I understand that the photographs may be used in research reports, in presentations, in exhibitions and in other publications related to the research.

I understand that no financial gain will be made as a result of sharing my photographs

I give permission for the photographs to be used for these purposes

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K: Participatory Video Process

**Session 1:** Introductions, planning for coming week, game, video tuition, rules, discussion.

**Session 2:** Game, recap, introduction to tripod, camera field of view, discussion.

**Session 3:** Recap, discussion, types of shots, discussion, comic strip, summary of learning.

**Session 4:** Game, recap, debate “Education is important...”, focus group.

**Session 5 Detailed:**

At Hawassa Lake

- The group is given a card with a list of different sounds, images and feelings. They have 30 minutes to capture different sounds and images in the location that represent the various themes on the cards.
  - Discussion: What did you like about the video clips, what would you have done differently?
- Vox Pop: The participants are tasked with interviewing 3-5 people in the area on various themes. Each of the participants must have a turn as the interviewer, sound person and camera person.

**Session 6:** Game, recap and discussion of lake visit, planning for participatory video.

**Session 7:** Storyboarding, discussion “what issues are important to represent, timeline.

**Session 8:** Poll results for video, storyboard discussion planning and voting.

**Session 9:** Recording of the video drama.

**Session 10:** Review and discussion of the recorded drama.

## Appendix L: Life Story Interview Schedule

The interviews will be flexible and participant led – The following topics are meant as a guide.

**Themes:** Migration, Education, Gender, Poverty and Development, social networks, barriers and access to education

What are the main barriers in rural areas?

What are the main supports in urban areas?

### Introduction

- This is an interview about your life story.
- We are asking you to tell the story of your life including your life in rural areas, your current life in Awassa and your imagined future life.
- There are no right or wrong answers; we are just looking to learn more about your experiences. If there are things you don't want to share then you don't have to.
- The interview will last approximately 1-1.5 hours. You may be invited to a follow up interview if we do not cover all the topics today or if there is any follow up questions that I have.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

### *\*Obtain consent for the individual interview\**

Background information (check this against information already collected)

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Rural area
- Current grade
- Parents' professions
- Where they are currently living

### *\*General dialogue to get started\**

#### Explore participants' experiences in rural areas

- Can you tell me about your life in your rural area?
  - Typical Day?
  - Best thing/most difficult thing
- Can you tell me about your family?
  - Home?
  - Parents? Educated?
  - Siblings? Educated?
  - How do your family earn money? Who contributes to the household? Economically?
  - What responsibilities did you have in your family household
- Can you tell me about your education in your rural area?
  - What do you understand by education?
  - Is education important for you? Why?
  - Is education important for your family? Why?
  - Number of students? Teachers? Boys/Girls?
  - Your achievement? Repetition? Dropout?
  - Your relationship with teachers/other students?
  - School facilities? Discipline?
  - Access to secondary school? Distance? Why did they not go to this secondary school?
  - What were the best/challenging things about education in rural areas?
- Can you tell me about your community?
  - Important people?
  - Differences for boys/girls, men/women, rich/poor in your rural area?

#### Decision to Move to Urban Area

- Can you tell me about your decision to come to Awassa?
  - Why did you decide to move to Hawassa?
  - When did you decide that you wanted to move?
  - How was the decision made for you to come to Awassa?
  - Who made this decision?
    - If participant – did your parents agree with this decision?
    - If family/parents/other – did you agree with this decision?
  - Did you know any other people who had moved to Awassa for secondary school?
- Not every rural girl has the opportunity to migrate to urban areas, what are the factors that made it possible for you to migrate?

- How would your life be different if you had not migrated?
  - *Are you happy about your decision to migrate?*
- Imagine a girl you knew in your rural community was about to come to (this city) for secondary education like you did, what would you tell her?

#### **Integrating into the Urban Areas**

- How did you feel when you first came to Awassa?
  - *Have your feelings changed since then? How?*
- Had you ever visited Awassa before?
- Did you know any people living in Awassa before you arrived?
  - *Who? Did they help you?*
- What did you know about Awassa before you came?
  - *Was this accurate?*
- Did you have any problems when you came to urban city
- Did you have any problems when you started school?

#### **Current Life in Urban Areas**

- Can you tell me about your life in Awassa?
  - Can you tell me about a typical day here? School day and weekend?
  - Is that similar to other young people you know here?
    - How is your life different to urban girls
    - How is your life different to rural girls
  - Can you tell me about what is important to you?
  - Is your life different here to your life in rural areas? How?
  - What do you do when you have a problem? E.g. if you are sick, lonely, sad
  - Do you do any kind of work at the moment
  - What things are important to you now?
- Can you tell me what school is life for you?
  - How did you decide to go to this school?
  - Do you have many friends in this school?
  - How do you get on with other students?
  - Do you take part in any clubs?
- What is the best thing about life in Awassa?
- What is the most difficult thing about life in Awassa?
- Do you stay in contact with you family? How often do you talk to them
- Have you returned to your community since you move here?
  - If so, how many times?
  - What was this like?
  - If not, are you sad about this?
- Have any of your family come to visit you

#### **Imagined Future**

- Can you tell me about your hopes for the future??
- What kind of job would you like?
- Where would you like to live?
- How will you achieve these goals?
- Will education help you achieve these goals?
- What level of education do you wish to achieve?
- What are your expectations when you leave school?
- Are you married?/At what age would you like to be married?
- Do you have any children?/At what age would you like to have children?
- Do your parents support these decisions?

#### **Closing up**

- Is there anything else that you would like to share with me?
- Do you have any questions about any part of the research?/Life

## Appendix M: Interview Schedule for Relatives/Siblings/Employers of Rural Girls in Urban Settings

### Background Information

- What is your name?
- What age are you?
- What is your religion?
- What is your ethnic group?
- Where were you born?
- What work do you do?
- How many hours per day do you work?
- How long have you lived in Awassa?
- Why did you come to Awassa?

### Relationship to Rural Girls

- Can you tell me about your relationship to \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you tell me about your relationship to \_\_\_\_\_ family?

### 'Good Life'/Development

- What do you think is a good life?
- What is the role of education in achieving a good life?
- What are your aims in life?
- How have you achieved these aims?

### Education

- What does education mean?
- Is education important? Why?
- What level of education have you completed?
- Can you tell me the difference in education in rural and urban areas?
- In your opinion is education always positive?

### Gender Equality

- What does gender equality mean?
- Is gender equality important? Why?
- Who is responsible for achieving gender equality?
- Can you tell me the difference in gender equality in rural and urban areas?
- What is the difference between:
  - Girls who have an education and girls who do not have an education?
  - Girls who are educated and boys who are educated?
  - Girls who are not educated and boys who are not educated?

### Migration

- How is life different in rural and urban areas? For boys? For Girls?
- What do you think are the main reasons for rural girls coming to Awassa city?
- What do you think are the main reasons for rural girls coming for education to Awassa?
- What challenges do rural girls face in Awassa?
- How is life different for rural girls in Awassa?
- What do you think helps to support rural girls in Awassa?
- What can you do to support rural girls?

### Future Aspirations

- What are your hopes for the future?
- What are your hopes for \_\_\_\_\_ for the future?

## Appendix N: Follow-Up Fieldwork Information Sheet

### Appendix N.1. Information Sheet for Participants (Questionnaire Only)

#### INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

**WHAT DOES THIS PART OF THE STUDY INVOLVE?** This is the final part of the research study. We have returned to ask you some questions about what your life is like now to help us understand your journey through education. We are interested in hearing about any changes that have occurred in your life since we last spoke.

**WHY HAVE I BEEN CHOSEN?** You are being invited to take part in the follow-up study as you took part in the main study in the academic year 2008 E.C. (2015/2016 G.C). This involved group discussions, life-story interviews and you may have also taken part in a participatory video. We discussed your life in your rural communities, your decision to come to Hawassasa, your life in Awassa and your future plans.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART?** If you agree to take part in the follow-up fieldwork you will be invited to complete a short questionnaire about your current life and any changes that may have occurred in your life since we last spoke.

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?** My university (Trinity College Dublin), Hawassa University and the local government have given me permission to carry out this study. I will store all the information that I collect safely in a secure safe and in a safe place on my computer that will only be accessed by people who have a password. You will be able to access this information in the future if you wish to.

**ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BENEFITS?** As we discussed before, my study will not be able to change things for your life, but I will make sure that people in the local and national government know about the findings to help them to make plans for children like you in the future. Please answer all the questions as best you can. If there is a question that you do not wish to answer, please leave it blank and move onto the next question. However, you do not have to share any information with me, or with anyone else if you do not want to.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY YOU CAN CONTACT ME OR MY SUPERVISOR:**

<b>Louise Yorke</b> <a href="mailto:yorkel@tcd.ie">yorkel@tcd.ie</a> (Ethiopian Phone Number)	<b>Professor Tesfaye Semela</b> <a href="mailto:tesfayes@hu.edu.et">tesfayes@hu.edu.et</a> (Ethiopian Phone Number)	<b>Professor Robbie Gilligan,</b> <a href="mailto:robbie.gilligan@tcd.ie">robbie.gilligan@tcd.ie</a>
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## Appendix N.2. Information Sheet for Participants (Special Cases)

### INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

**WHAT DOES THIS PART OF THE STUDY INVOLVE?** This is the final part of the research study. You are being invited to take part in a final survey and a follow-up interview. This is to help us get a better and more complete understanding of what your life is like now. It is to help us understand your journey through education. We are interested in hearing about any changes that have occurred in your life since we

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART?** If you agree to take part in the follow-up fieldwork you will be invited to complete a short questionnaire about your current life and any changes that may have occurred in your life since we last spoke. You will then be invited to take part in a follow-up interview. The follow-up interviews will be similar to the interviews that you took part in in the previous school year and they will take approximately one hour. We may also ask to speak to some people in your life who have been important in your education and migration journeys. This might include people in both Hawassa and in your rural community such as your parents, siblings, friends or other important community members. If you take part in the survey, you do not have to take part in the follow-up interview.

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD KNOW?** My university (Trinity College Dublin), Hawassa University and the local government have given me permission to carry out this study. I will store all the information that I collect safely in a secure safe and in a safe place on my computer that will only be accessed by people who have a password. You will be able to access this information in the future if you wish to.

**ARE THERE ANY RISKS OR BENEFITS?** As we discussed before, my study will not be able to change things for your life, but I will make sure that people in the local and national government know about the findings to help them to make plans for children like you in the future. When completing the survey, please answer all the questions as best you can. If there is a question that you do not wish to answer, please leave it blank and move onto the next question. During the follow-up interviews there is a chance that you might become upset during the research if you choose to share some personal information. However, you do not have to share any information with me, or with anyone else if you do not want to. However, if you tell me something that means that you are in danger, or someone else is in danger, I will have to report this information to your guardian and the authorities. I might also suggest that you talk to someone about your problems if I think this can help you.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY YOU CAN CONTACT ME OR MY SUPERVISOR:**

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## Appendix O: Themes and Codes from Data Analysis

Theme	Codes
<b>Aspirations and Values</b>	Imagined future
	Motivation for education
	Life if they did not migrate
	Advice to another rural girl
	Rural Girls who Stay
<b>Benefits of Migration</b>	Better life in urban areas
	Learning Language
	Personal Hygiene and Appearance
	Freedom to Study
	New Knowledge
	Resources and Infrastructure
	Observational Learning
	Increased Social Status
	Increased Confidence
	Study Skills
<b>Community Life</b>	Community attitudes towards education
	Yilunta
	Positive aspects of community life
	Income generating activities
	Differences between rich and poor
	Community elders
	Suicide
<b>Decision to Migrate</b>	Reason for migration
	Whose decision
	Influence of social networks
	Prior knowledge
<b>Education Experience</b>	Academic achievement
	School availability
	Night shift
	Dropout and repetition
	Tutorials
	Late-coming
	Absenteeism
<b>Education outcomes</b>	Failed Grade 10
	Transition to Grade 10



	Teacher Training College
	Night to day student
<b>Education Quality</b>	School facilities
	Teacher quality
	Education quality
	Discipline
	Language barriers
<b>Family Relationships</b>	Family support
	Parents' attitudes to education
	Sibling education
	Parent's education
	Parents' attitudes to marriage
<b>Family Structure</b>	Family income
	Family members
	Death of a family member
	Raised by other people
	Polygamy
<b>Gender</b>	Community gender norms
	Keeping silent
	Harassment (physical and verbal)
	Inheritance and money
	Keeping girls at home
	Decision-making power
	Inequality in food
<b>Marriage outcomes</b>	Entered into marriage
	Pressure to get married
	Marriage by choice
<b>Migration outcomes</b>	Feelings about migration
	Returning to rural area
	Impact of migration on others
<b>Research process</b>	Participant comments
	Research assistant comments
<b>Urban Life</b>	Challenges in urban areas
	Living situation
	Feelings on research urban area
	Time living in Hawassa
<b>Work</b>	Domestic work
	Daily routine

	Time use and freedom
	Employment opportunities
	School work balance
	Paid work

## **Appendix P: Ethical Issues**

### **Safety of the Participants**

Fieldwork with marginalised groups may create ample opportunities for rich insight into their daily lives, but it also presents unique sets of personal, moral, ethical and methodological dilemmas, which require considerable negotiation between the researcher and participants (Abebe, 2009). The level of risk that research poses to young people is of particular concern with vulnerable groups who already face significant risk in their own lives and concerns about safety, privacy and confidentiality may be heightened (Powell & Smith, 2009). Some researchers suggest that due to the fact that the lives of some participants may be chaotic and unplanned means that they are vulnerable to disclosing information in the research which they may have barely had the time to process themselves, being more susceptible to becoming distressed in the course of the research process than research with the general population (Corbin & Morse, 2003). A number of strategies were taken to minimise this risk. First I sought to reduce risk through multiple visits to the field for preliminary research to understand the cultural context, by establishing local partnerships (community and research) and establishing advisory boards (academic and youth) as well as employing a local research assistant. Secondly the flexible and reflexive approach of the current study sought to minimise this risk. Methods were employed to enable participants to tell their stories and to have a level of control over how they are represented. Thirdly, participants were informed that their answers would remain anonymous and that they should not reveal any personal information, which they did not wish to disclose. The participants were also be told that any information they provide would remain confidential unless they reveal illicit activities, in which case the researcher would be required to report these activities to the relevant authorities. Furthermore, participants were reminded that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage.

Despite these safeguards, a number of participants did become upset during the research. For example some participants became upset when they spoke of a family member that had passed away. Other participants, particularly those who were more vulnerable, became upset when discussing the heavy burden of stress they were under or mistreatment from relative or employers whom they lived with. When the participant became upset we stopped the interview and reminded the participant that they were free to withdraw from the interview or that they could continue the interview if they wished. None of the participants chose to withdraw from the interview. Many thanked us at the end of the interview for taking the time to listen to their experiences, as they did not have anyone else who they could share their experiences with. We made sure not to end any interview on a sensitive topic and we usually spent some time talking to the participant at the end of the

interview to readjust and we would accompany the student back to the school or their home. Follow-up contact was made with each participant after each individual interview.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

As outlined above the main fieldwork involved the collection of different types of data at different phases of the research. The privacy and confidentiality of the participants was considered in relation to each type of data collected.

- **Photographs:** Photographs were taken at various stages of the research process. Written consent was sought for any photographs that were intended for dissemination use where the identity of the participant was visible.
- **Audio Recordings:** All the individual interviews (life story interviews and semi-structured interviews) were audio-recorded. Full permission was sought for the audio recordings at the beginning of the interview. Only one participant (social network member) did not wish to be recorded, the audio recorder was not used in this interview and instead notes were taken by hand. The audio recordings were all transcribed and all the stored data was anonymised with a code e.g. 'Life Story 1'.
- **Video Recordings:** The video recordings collected during the participatory video process were stored and are only accessible to the core group of participant, to the researcher, the research assistant, the local research partner and the supervisor. Where relevant, video recordings were transcribed and used for data analysis.
- **Final Video:** Participants were told in advance that the video that they produced would be shared within the group, and may also be for dissemination purposes. Full control lay with the participants as to how they were represented and the dramatization of the participatory video meant that this video did not reveal the individual identities of the participants. Written consent was sought for the final video and participants were aware that the video would be used for dissemination purposes. As participatory video seeks to give a voice to those who are not normally heard, the visual footage that is included in the final video has not been anonymised.
- All participants were allocated an I.D. code, which was then used in all subsequent stored data records. Any information related to personal or sensitive information that could make the participants easily identifiable was changed and pseudonyms were assigned to all the participants. Efforts were made to ensure that the privacy and confidentiality of the participants were not compromised and participants were made aware of the limits of complete confidentiality whereby if any information they provided made illicit activities known to the researcher, these

would be reported to the appropriate authorities. All data has been stored safely and securely. Electronic data is password-protected and hard copies of any data are securely stored in a locked cabinet with access strictly restricted to the researcher. The principles of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act 1997 were followed.

## Appendix Q: School 2 Participatory Video Drama

### Participatory video drama included in the CD-Rom.

- School 2 Video Drama.mov – Video
- School 2 Video Drama.pdf - Transcript
- School 2 Video Drama.srt – Subtitles file

### Themes to Emerge from Participatory Video

Community	Peers influence.
	Male members of community ' <i>convincing</i> ' girls to enter into marriage.
Community/Family	Gendered division of labour
	Unequal distribution of resources in household.
	Emotional abuse towards girls.
	Inter-generational transfer of gender roles.
	Marriage inevitable and ultimate outcome for females.
	Physical abuse towards girls.
	Strict social norms.
	Lack of options for girls/young women.
	Education reinforcing gender inequalities and divisions.
	Gender inequality.
	Perpetuation of gender roles.
Family	Sibling (brother) support for girls' education.
	Decision making in house controlled by males.
	Economic barriers to education.
	Parental attitudes - Mother wants to keep daughter at home
	Parental attitudes – lack of understanding of education.
	Parental attitudes- Father wishes to send both children to school.
	Trade off between resources.
Individual	Heavy domestic work burden
	Children/young people's high educational aspirations.
	Lack of agency of girls.