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LONDON SCHOOL of HYGIENE &TROPICAL MEDICINE

THE **TRAFFICKING** OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN: EVIDENCE FOR PREVENTION AND ASSISTANCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FMS	Flow Monitoring Surveys
HTTCA	Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act (Nepal)
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
MWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (Nepal)
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (Nigeria)
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission (Nepal)
NSAG	Non-state armed groups (Nigeria)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWiFT	South Asia Work in Freedom Transnational Programme
UN	United Nations
VoT	Victim of human trafficking
WiF	Work in Freedom programme (Nepal)

FOREWORD

Across the globe, girls and young women living in fragile settings and humanitarian contexts are dreaming of a better life for themselves and their families. Girls tell us that they want to be pilots, doctors and teachers. For many of them, these aspirations will never become a reality. Instead, they are faced with impossible choices to secure their mere survival.

Conflict, violence, poverty, limited access to education and gender inequality drive girls and young women into unsafe migration pathways. Following their hopes for well-paid jobs and an escape from poverty and crisis, girls are often deceived, abused and exploited.

As this report shows, the patterns of trafficking and exploitation are in part driven by existing inequalities. Women and girls account for 71% of the detected victims of human trafficking globally and girls represent nearly the same proportion of child trafficking victims.

In 2015, world leaders launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

They promised to achieve gender equality and end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against children.

The SDGs were an important milestone that have galvanised global action. But the findings of this report demonstrate that as we enter the decade of delivery for the SDGs, global governments and the international community need to rapidly scale up their action and take much bolder steps to deliver on their commitments.

This report provides a snapshot of the lived realities of challenges and opportunities faced by this group, which is not often studied. It is my hope it will orientate global action against trafficking towards upholding the rights of the most marginalised girls and young women.

All girls have the right to dream, the right to seek a better life and the right to be safe. But unless decisive action is taken now this will not be a reality for millions of girls in crises.

Rose Caldwell
CEO, Plan International UK

Laxmi* was trafficked to India and sold into prostitution when she was 16

**Joy* 18, was
exploited at her
workplace**

POLICY CONTEXT

In 2015, UN Member States set an ambition – through the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7 – to end child labour in all its forms by 2025 and eradicate forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030.[1]

This target has the potential to transform the lives of millions of girls and women, who make up most victims of human trafficking and forced labour. Women and girls account for 71 per cent of the detected victims of human trafficking globally and girls represent nearly the same proportion (69 per cent) of identified child trafficking victims.[2] Women and girls also account for nearly three-quarters of victims of forced labour and forced marriage.[3]

SDG 8.7 has reinvigorated efforts to end the exploitation of human beings, building on some of the momentum that has been growing over recent decades.[4] In 2015, the same year as the goals came into force, the UK government introduced its Modern Slavery Act[5] and it has subsequently championed the issue internationally, including by spearheading a global *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*.[6] Launched in 2017,

the Call to Action has since been signed by 87 countries. Additional policy commitments on SDG 8.7 have also been secured from the G20[7] and Commonwealth Heads of Government.[8]

In November 2017, the UN Secretary-General called on the UN Security Council to include human trafficking criteria when adopting or renewing sanctions on regimes in situations of armed conflict,[9] and the Security Council subsequently adopted Resolution 2388 on trafficking in persons in conflict situations.[10] *The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, adopted in December 2018, also encourages international cooperation to promote and safeguard the dignity of migrants, including those who are trafficked.[11] Progress has also been made at the national level, including in Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh and Canada, to name but a few countries.[12]

While this is an impressive list of achievements that highlights growing international momentum behind this issue, none of these global initiatives deal specifically with the unique challenges faced by the majority of victims – girls and women.

INTRODUCTION

This research presents original data collected by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) on the trafficking of girls and young women up to the age of 24 in Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda. Data from IOM's Global Victim of Trafficking Database (VOTD) shows that, on average, women and girls represent 80 per cent of the identified victims of trafficking in these three countries. This is above the global average. Within the same database, girls and young women under the age of 24 comprise four in ten (42 per cent) of the identified victims of trafficking from Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda.

This research describes the migration and trafficking trajectories of girls and young women from these countries. It provides a snapshot of the realities faced by this group, which is not often studied. This report is intended to stimulate discussion and inform efforts to address human trafficking through survivor-centred gender-and-age-sensitive approaches.

Figure 1 Defining human trafficking

Human trafficking, as defined in the Palermo Protocol,[13] refers to "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

Act	Means of control	Purpose of exploitation
Recruitment Transportation Transfer Harbouring Receipt of persons	Threat or use of force Coercion Abduction Fraud Deception Abuse of power or vulnerability Giving or receiving of payments or benefits	Sexual exploitation Forced labour or services Slavery or practices similar to slavery Servitude Removal of organs
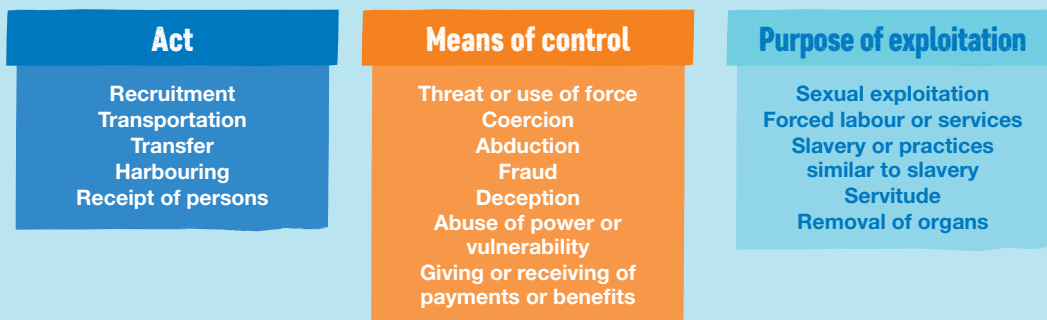
Child trafficking (the trafficking of a person under the age of 18) refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation even if this does not involve any of the means of control. While children may experience different means of control, the Palermo Protocol recognises that a child cannot give informed consent to his or her own exploitation, even if he or she agrees to travel or understands what has happened.

Additional definitions of common terms used in this report are included in Annex B.

WHY FOCUS ON GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN?

There is limited evidence on root causes of human trafficking.[14] However, a growing body of evidence highlights the role of structural and social factors in driving individual risks of forced migration and human trafficking.[15] The contexts where people live and their circumstances often affect their behaviour beyond their individual knowledge and inclinations.[16] Structural and social factors that may increase risks of human trafficking include global inequalities and wage differentials between countries and regions,[17] migration dynamics,[18] lack of education and decent work opportunities,[19] discriminatory labour or migration laws and gender-blind policies[20] and the high-reward and low-risk nature of trafficking.[21]

Individually, these factors are not necessary or sufficient conditions for human trafficking. However, they interact at the international, country, community, family and individual levels to heighten the vulnerability of girls and young women to human trafficking, forced labour and sexual exploitation.[22]

At the individual level, the power differentials that girls and young women from impoverished or unstable backgrounds encounter during their migration may increase their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.[23] Girls and young women may be particularly disadvantaged in their negotiations with brokers, intermediaries and employers because of prevailing gender norms that limit or stigmatise the economic mobility of girls and young women.[24] This is especially acute when overlaid with the perceived lower status sometimes assigned to their nationality or ethnicity,[25,26] their age and social class,[27] and the fragility or financial limitations of their social networks.[28] The power differentials that girls and women experience in migration are aggravated by patriarchal norms and gender power imbalances.[29]

The low economic value ascribed to women's labour and gendered stereotypes concerning 'suitable' forms of employment for men or women, also results in the sectors in which exploitation occurs being highly gendered. Women and girls are often trafficked into invisible and exploitative sectors that have traditionally been viewed as feminine, such as care and domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation, as well as into forced marriage and sexual slavery.[30] In situations of human trafficking, girls and women experience higher levels sexual violence than boys and men.[31] Women and girls who experience sexual violence during trafficking are at increased risk of depression and suicidal ideation[32] and may face different sexual and reproductive health problems.[33]

Within the IOM's Global Victim of Trafficking Database (VOTD), women and girls are most likely to have been trafficked for sexual exploitation (49 per cent) and forced labour (47 per cent). They are more commonly forced to work in domestic work (36 per cent), agriculture (17 per cent) and hospitality (16 per cent). Women and girls are often controlled or coerced through sexual abuse (34 per cent), false promises (74 per cent),

49%
OF WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

restrictions on freedom of movement (66 per cent) and physical (54 per cent) and psychological abuse (66 per cent).

Men and boys are trafficked into highly exploitative sectors such as long-haul fishing, construction and agriculture.[34,35] Within the VOTD, men and boys have been trafficked mostly for forced labour (92 per cent), compared to sexual exploitation (4 per cent) and other types of exploitation. They are more commonly forced to work in construction (54 per cent), manufacturing (13 per cent) and agriculture (12 per cent). Men and boys are often controlled or coerced through false promises (80 per cent), withholding of wages (74 per cent), excessive working hours (71 per cent) and psychological abuse (67 per cent). Men and boys also face high levels of violence, exploitation and abuse during trafficking with severe and long-lasting consequences to their health.[36]

However, this report focuses on the plight of trafficking girls and young women to call attention to the gender disparities and inequalities that affect their access to resources and their agency before, during and after their migration experiences.

Box 1 **Defining adolescence, youth and young women**

The term 'adolescence' refers to a specific phase of life within the process of a child's development – typically between the ages of 10 and 19 years old.[37] It is the period between entering puberty and the beginning of adulthood. While the definition of adolescence can change based on cultural context, it is generally understood that this period in life represents a transition time characterised by drastic physical, mental, and social changes taking place in the teenage years.[38]

Adolescence is a critical time for girls and boys – a period of their lives when they are open to new ideas and opportunities. However, it is also a time when discriminatory gender norms can become entrenched, affecting both girls' and boys' long-term attitudes and behaviours.[39] During this time, many girls and boys choose or are forced to migrate in search of better work and educational opportunities, or to escape poverty, humanitarian crises, or violence. Many adolescents experience positive outcomes resulting from their migration, yet a significant proportion end up in exploitative or abusive situations.

The term 'youth' refers to the period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood. The experience of being young can vary substantially across the world, both between countries and between regions, and 'youth' is therefore often a fluid and changing category. For statistical purposes, however, the UN defines 'youth' as the 15-24-year-old age group, and the World Bank has adopted the same definition.[40]

For the purposes of this report, which explores the trafficking of girls and female youth, the data has been disaggregated to distinguish between young girls (under the age of 10), adolescent girls (aged 10-18 years), and female youth (aged 19-24 years). The term 'young women' will be used to describe female young adults (19-24 years old) throughout the report.

Figure 2 Example of the individual risk, migration decision-factors, challenges and types of exploitation girls and young women may experience at various migration stages

Why might girls or young women migrate?

+ Personal aspirations
+ Motivation to improve her or her family's standard of living
+ Promise of increased and/or better education and employment opportunities and earnings
+ Increased acceptability of adolescents and females working
+ Migrant networks that enable and encourage migration

- Increased demand for female workforce, primarily restricted to low-skilled sectors
- Expectations around gender roles, social norms and discrimination
- Limited access to education, employment and basic services
- Violence, conflict and humanitarian crises
- Household emergencies and family breakdown
- To repay household debt
- Family demand/ expectation for extra income
- Expectations around marriage, including child, early and forced marriage

What challenges can girls and young women face when migrating?

- Resource constraints that inhibit migration choices
- Limited economic opportunities that force them to resort to low-skilled exploitative sectors
- Difficulty understanding process and paperwork involved in migration
- Unscrupulous recruitment networks and recruiters
- Corrupt migration officials or poor law enforcement
- Limited availability of child and youth-friendly services
- Deceptive recruitment
- Threats against them and/or loved ones
- Emotional, physical and sexual violence during transit and at destination
- Dangerous routes
- Documents, money, wages and/or goods withheld or stolen
- Illegal recruitment fees
- Incurring debt
- Contract substitution
- Restrictions on freedom and inability to leave

What exploitation could girls and young women experience?

x Sexual exploitation
x Forced labour, including during transit
x Slavery or practices similar to slavery
x Servitude, including domestic servitude
x Forced marriage
x Organ trafficking
x Forced child bearing
x Debt bondage

- x **Gender inequality**
- x **Restrictive social norms**
- x **Age-based discrimination**
- x **Ethnic and religious discrimination**
- x **Xenophobia and racism at destination**
- x **Stigmatisation and social isolation when she returns home**

Below is a fictional case example, based on qualitative findings from the South Asia Work in Freedom Transnational Programme (SWiFT) study in Nepal, which illustrates the key drivers of labour migration for girls and young women, **the challenges** and discriminations they face, and the exploitative outcomes they experience.

DITYA Nepal

Ditya was 14 years old. Her mother had died, her father had left, and she lived with her grandparents, who required care, and her siblings, who she wanted to support to finish school. **She was from a low caste and had little education. She could not find work where she was paid a decent wage.** She wanted to migrate for work to earn enough money to buy agricultural land and keep her siblings in school. She had friends and neighbours who had migrated for work and she saw this as an opportunity for her as well. She couldn't afford to study herself but wanted to guarantee her siblings would have a better chance of accessing an education.
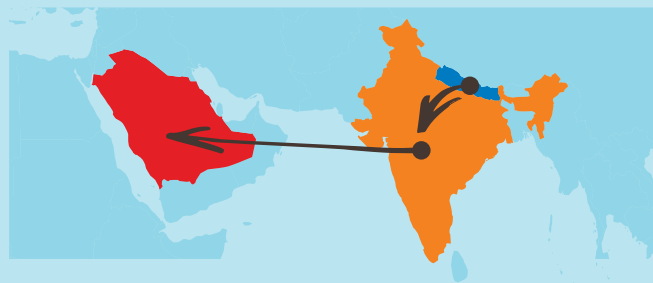
Since Ditya was **too young to migrate legally,** her grandfather had to pay the recruiter a bribe and they had to create a fake passport for her that said she was 25 years old. Ditya migrated to Saudi Arabia through India. She stayed in India for three weeks, in a house with other migrants. She was not allowed to communicate with her family during this period and was afraid about her future.

When Ditya got to Saudi Arabia, the work she had been promised by her recruiter as a caregiver was instead an 80 hours per week job as a domestic worker, with no breaks or holidays. Her employers confiscated her passport. She slept on the kitchen floor and was not allowed to leave her work premises. It was three years before she could go home to her family.

METHODS

This research project adopts a mixed methods interdisciplinary approach to investigate the trafficking of girls and young women within and from three countries: Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda. These countries were selected by Plan International UK based on research interest and data availability.

Quantitative analysis was conducted on three different datasets. The IOM's Global VOTD was analysed for Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda. The IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) provided supplementary data for the Nigeria chapter. The Nepal data from the South Asia Work in Freedom Transnational Evaluation (SWiFT)[41] of the Work in Freedom Programme was the primary quantitative dataset used for the Nepal chapter. VOTD data for Nepal, which only contained 13 cases, was included in Box 5.

Original analysis was conducted for this research on all three datasets. The VOTD data was analysed against three samples: girls under the age of 10, adolescent girls aged 10-18, and young women aged between 19 and 24. Due to the different categorisation of age within the FMS data, the age range for young women was capped at 25 years and children and adolescents

Table 1 Summary table of the data points by dataset, age, and country

Data source	Age range	Nepal	Nigeria	Uganda
VOTD	Under 10	-	14	33
	10-18 years	-	14	34
	19-24 years	13	118	28
FMS	Under 18 years	-	35	-
	18-25 years	-	241	-
SWiFT	10-18 years	45	-	-
	19-24 years	105	-	-
Total		**163**	**422**	**95**

Table 2 Summary table of qualitative interviews by country

Data source	Nepal	Nigeria	Uganda
Key informant interviews with policymakers and practitioners	5	6	5
Interviews with adolescent girls	10	8	8

were grouped. The SWiFT data did not include any girls under the age of 10. Table 1 summarises the quantitative data points by dataset, age, and country.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight to 10 adolescent girls and young women who were receiving post-trafficking assistance in services in each of the three countries. The semi-structured topic guide that was used for the interviews with the adolescent girls included themes on socio-demographic characteristics, pre-departure circumstances, experience of migrating, gender, process of reaching assistance services, and future hopes and expectations.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with key policymakers and service providers in each of the three countries, which provided expert opinions on the national context and informed analysis of the effectiveness of the response to human trafficking. Table 2 provides a summary of the qualitative interviews that were conducted in each of the three countries.

Finally, a narrative review of the peer-reviewed and grey literature on trafficking of adolescent girls was conducted focussing on the three research countries to understand the context of exploitation and migration trajectories, including social norms around gender, migration and work.

Further information on the data sources and analysis, as well as the limitations and the ethical procedures followed for this research, can be found in Annex A.

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Hannah* a trafficking survivor from Nigeria was interviewed as part of Plan International UK's Because I am a Girl campaign

RESULTS

TRAFFICKING OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN AND FROM NIGERIA, NEPAL, AND UGANDA

The results include three sections, one for each participating country, in which the results from the review and from the quantitative and qualitative research are presented together. The original quantitative and qualitative research results are highlighted using the following colour scheme, to help the reader navigate the findings:

Table 2 Summary table of qualitative interviews by country

Data category	Colour scheme
Quantitative, young girls (under 10 years)	Yellow
Quantitative, adolescent girls (10-18 years)	Orange
Quantitative, young women (19-24)	Green
Quantitative, young girls, adolescent girls and young women combined	Red
Qualitative, adolescent girl	Light blue
Qualitative, young woman	Dark blue
Qualitative, key informant	Purple

Figure 3 visualises the migration flows captured in the Victim of Trafficking Database and the SWiFT data of girls and young women from Nepal, Nigeria and Uganda.[42]

Figure 3 World maps with main corridors identified from the VOTD and SWiFT data of girls and young women from Nepal, Nigeria and Uganda.

Trafficking corridors of young and adolescent girls

Trafficking corridors of young women
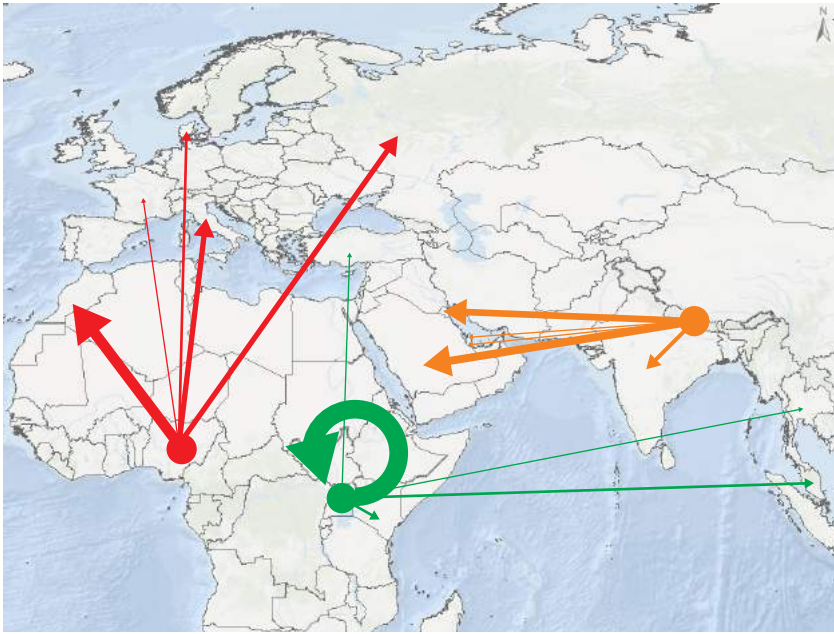
Nigeria:

Nigerian girls and young women in the VOTD had been trafficked to the Russian Federation, Morocco, Italy, Denmark, France, Ireland, France, Spain, Switzerland, Norway, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Egypt and Ecuador.

Nepal:

In the SWiFT data, Nepalese girls and young women migrated to Bahrain, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, India, Oman, Iraq and Lebanon. In the VOTD, girls and young women were trafficked to Lebanon, Kenya, Iraq, Malaysia and Kenya.
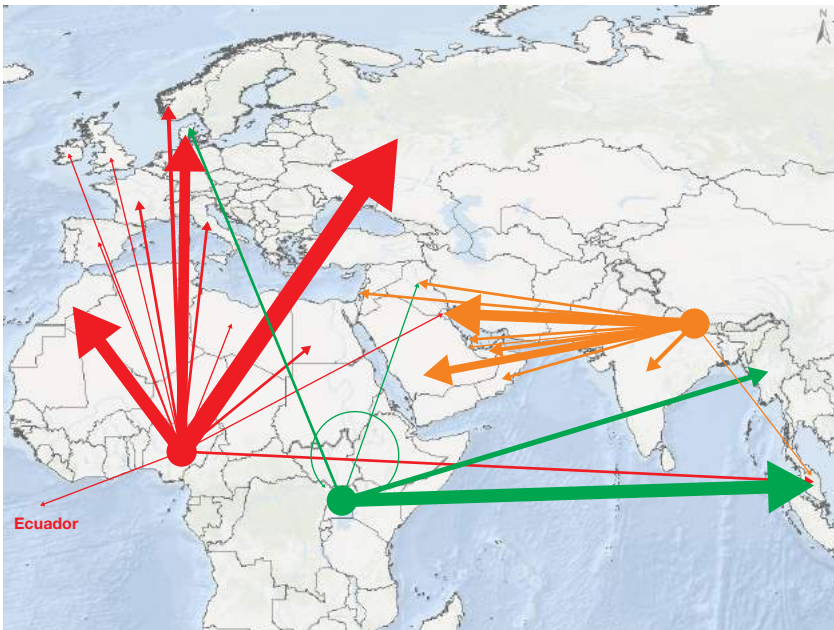
Uganda:

Ugandan girls and young women in the VOTD were most commonly trafficked internally within Uganda. International destinations included Malaysia, Thailand, Iraq and Turkey.

Source: IOM Victim of Trafficking Database. This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Maps: Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NDGC, and other contributors

TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN NIGERIA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Poverty and inequality

Nigeria has a population of over 200 million people, making it the country with the largest population in Africa and the seventh-largest in the world.[43] Despite being one of the world's fastest-growing economies, almost 95 million Nigerians, constituting roughly half of the country's population, live in extreme poverty.[44] Relative poverty is increasing while high unemployment rates and extreme poverty persist.[45,46] Nigeria is ranked 157 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index.[47]

Causes of poverty in Nigeria include conflict-related violence and displacement, low per capita income, a poor education system, lack of access to health and basic social services, discrimination, corruption, malnutrition and disease.[48,49] High dependence on the export of oil means the economy is volatile, which can also lead to the imposition of substantial welfare costs on Nigerian households.[50]

Adolescent girls' and young women's rights

Adolescents and youth (10-24 years) represent approximately 32 per cent of the total population of Nigeria.[51] There are an estimated 32.3 million adolescent girls and young women in Nigeria, representing 15 per cent of the total population.[52] Gender and age inequalities are pervasive and affect women and girls' access to education and economic opportunities.

Gender norms vary across ethnic groups in Nigeria. Nigeria has an estimated 374 ethnic groups, with the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa amounting to 40 per cent of the population.[53] These groups have different cultural beliefs, religions and lifestyles. Among the Igbos in south-eastern Nigeria, women are excluded from inheritance rights and cannot share land, which may contribute to them seeking alternative sources of wealth. Igbo and Yoruba women also tend to marry later in life when compared to Hausa/Fulani, which may increase their opportunities for independent migration.[54]

Women and young people form the majority of the unemployed (19.1 per cent of young women are unemployed[55]) and face higher levels of poverty than other population groups. Despite constitutional guarantees of equal access to education, literacy and other education indicators remain lower among girls with important implications for their social and economic future.[56] Nigeria has an estimated 22 million child brides and accounts for 40 per cent of all child brides in the Central and West African region.[57] Around 18 per cent of girls are married by age 15 and 44 per cent by age 18. This is the 11th highest prevalence of child marriage in the world.[58]

Only 45 per cent of girls complete lower secondary education (compared with 60 per

Plan International interviewed Ugandan adolescent girls who have experienced exploitation as part of its Because I am a Girl campaign

cent of boys), and 35 per cent of adolescent girls are out of school (compared with 32 per cent of boys). Most out-of-school girls live in rural areas and are from the poorest families.[59] Women and girls are also sometimes compelled to migrate in search of work to help support male siblings to complete their education.[60]

Child labour

More than half of Nigerian children aged 5 to 17 (50.8 per cent) are involved in child labour. Children in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to be child labourers than those in urban areas (59.1 per cent compared with 33.4 per cent). About 85 per cent of working children

aged 5 to 14 are involved in the agricultural sector, mostly working for family businesses, and 56.9 per cent of child labourers do not attend school.[61]

Conflict and humanitarian crises

Since the 1960s, Nigeria has experienced numerous security and stability threats, marked by military coups, civil war, civil and sectarian crises, and terrorism. From 2002, Nigeria has faced the threat of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), including Boko Haram (also known as Yusufiyya), a jihadist militant organisation originating from the Borno and Yobe states in the North East of Nigeria.[62]

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH (0-24 YEARS)
COMPRISE APPROXIMATELY**

40%

**OF THE TOTAL INTERNATIONAL
NIGERIAN MIGRANTS**

While there has been a fall in the number of casualties resulting from Boko Haram actions, there has been a dramatic increase in violence in the ongoing conflicts between Fulani herders and farmers in recent years.[63] The humanitarian consequences of this widespread violence and political instability have been dire across the Lake Chad Basin (which straddles Nigeria, Cameroon, the Niger and Chad): 2.5 million people have been displaced, 3.6 million people are food insecure,[64] public security has been undermined, and human rights abuses are widespread.

The most recent IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix indicates an increased displaced population across the six North East states of Nigeria, up from 1.98 million in May 2019 to over 2.01 million in July. Borno State, which is the state worst affected by the conflict, recorded over 1.48 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in July 2019.[65] Various sources report that boys and girls in IDP camps are at risk of different forms of trafficking, including forced labour and sexual exploitation.[66,67]

The ongoing conflict is characterised by deliberate and widespread attacks on civilian populations, which include sexual and gender-based violence; abduction, especially of girls and women; disappearances; child recruitment, forced recruitment and forced marriage; forced displacement; and the use of explosive hazards. Female and child-headed households, unaccompanied and separated children, and adolescent boys and girls are particularly at risk.[68]

NSAGs are known to have abducted and forced women and girls into sexual slavery,[69] and are also known for their instrumental use of women and girls, including widespread gender-based violence and the use of rape as a weapon of war.[70] In 2014, Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls from Chibok in Borno State. In 2018, they still held 100 of the girls in addition to more than 500 children abducted from Damasak, Borno.[71] Small, widespread abductions also occur very often among the IDPs and host communities in North East Nigeria.

The consequences of the conflict for boys and girls are severe. They include loss of their parents and other relatives, food insecurity, poor health and forced relocation, and severe disruption to education.[72] Sub-national analysis of household survey data demonstrates stark inequalities between education attendance and outcomes in North East Nigeria (part of the Lake Chad Basin) compared with the national average.[73]

MIGRATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria continues to experience high internal and external migration due to the size of its population, its economic climate, and its porous borders. In the Nigerian context, migration is commonly perceived as the only means to find income-generating opportunities[74,75] and a lifeline for poor Nigerian households. Children and youth (0-24 years) comprise approximately 40 per cent (500,591) of the total international Nigerian migrants. Fifty-two per of children and youth who have migrated internationally are female.[76] In comparison, among the total Nigerian international migrant population, men and boys are the majority (54.9 per cent).[77]

Migrating can help alleviate poverty by enabling migrants and their families to increase their incomes and their purchasing power.[78] Large diaspora communities may act as a pull factor for potential migrants due to the perception of improved living standards. Indeed, in 2018 the Nigerian diaspora sent an estimated USD25 billion in remittances to the country, representing 6.1 per cent of GDP, 83 per cent of the Federal Government budget and seven times the net foreign aid received.[79]

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked women and children, recruited from both rural and urban areas.[80] The IOM estimated in 2016 that approximately 80 per cent of girls and women arriving in Europe from Nigeria by sea were likely to be victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.[81] Poverty, parental pressure, cultural acceptance, and limited education and economic opportunities are commonly cited as factors that render young women and girls vulnerable to being trafficked.[82] Female migrants are at risk of trafficking when they seek assistance to find employment, work permits, visas and travel documents. Many rely on counterfeit documents to board planes or run the risks of unsafe journeys through the desert.[83]

The Delta and Edo states are the main source regions for human trafficking.[84] Nigerian children are trafficked to Europe, the Gulf States, and some African countries for domestic labour and for sexual exploitation.[85] Nigeria is also an important transit point for children from other countries in West Africa.[86] In the last two decades, there has also been a growth in internal trafficking from rural communities to cities such as Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Kano, Kaduna, Calabar and Port Harcourt[87] for exploitative domestic work, farm labour and commercial sexual exploitation.[88]

Additionally, the phenomena of 'baby factories,' whereby women or girls are persuaded or forced to become pregnant and give up their new-born babies for sale, is gaining increasing attention among both researchers and the media. The practice has been linked to human trafficking in Nigeria and threats, coercion, abuse and violence have been reported by survivors.[89]

14%
OF ALL ADULT FEMALE MIGRANTS ARRIVING IN ITALY WERE FROM NIGERIA[90]

NIGERIA FINDINGS

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

Among victims from Nigeria in IOM's Global Victim of Trafficking Database (VOTD), **94 per cent** are women or girls. Just over half of these women and girls (**51 per cent**) were 24 years old or younger at the time of registration, and **eight per cent** were under 18. For the women and girls with data available, **85 per cent** of them were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The figure rises slightly to **87 per cent** when restricting the sample to girls and young women aged 24 years and under.

The VOTD dataset for Nigeria contained **14** cases of trafficked young girls (younger than 10 years old), **14** cases of trafficked adolescent girls (between 10 and 18 years old) and **118** cases of trafficked young women (between 19 and 24 years old). The reported age ranges at the time of entry into the trafficking process of these girls and women in the VOTD data were 0-8 (9 per cent), 9-11 (2 per cent), 12-14 (1 per cent), 15-17 (4 per cent), 18-20 (19 per cent), 21-23 (51 per cent), and 24 (14 per cent).

DISTRIBUTION, GEOGRAPHY AND DURATION OF TRAFFICKING CASES

Most **young** and **adolescent** girls had been trafficked to The Russian Federation, Morocco, Italy, Denmark, and France (see Figure 3). **Twelve** young women were trafficked into other European countries, including Ireland, France, Spain, Switzerland, Norway and the United Kingdom. Another **two** young women were trafficked to Malaysia, **one** to Egypt and **one** to Ecuador. Data on country of exploitation was missing for 29 per cent of women.

Data on the duration of the trafficking process was available for **eight** of the 14 girls trafficked, **eight** of the 14 adolescents and **90** of the 118 young women. For the young girls, the reported duration of the trafficking process averaged **419** days (min=**35**, max=**1,387**). For the adolescent girls, the average duration was **37.5** days (min=**2**, max=**151**) The young women remained in the trafficking situation on average **643** days (min=**1**, max=**1,390**).

94%
OF VICTIMS FROM NIGERIA IN IOM'S GLOBAL VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING DATABASE ARE WOMEN OR GIRLS

85%
OF NIGERIAN FEMALE VICTIMS IN THE IOM'S GLOBAL VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING DATABASE WERE TRAFFICKED FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION AND RISKS OF TRAFFICKING AMONG GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN NIGERIA

Poverty and inequality

Key informants recognised conflict, poverty, unemployment and low literacy as important contextual determinants of migration and trafficking among girls and young women.

Nigeria has an internal labour market characterised by an excess of supply over demand. The large contingent of young people in Nigeria entering the labour market contributes to the high rates of unemployment in the country,[91] particularly for women and girls.[92]

Table 3 Perceived economic status of the girls and young women in the Nigeria VOTD

Perceived family economic status	Young girls (under 10)	Adolescent girls (10-18)	Young women (19-24)
Average wealth	8%	0%	1%
Poor	17%	50%	43%
Very poor	25%	7%	8%
Not known	0%	0%	12%
Missing data	50%	43%	36%

This disenfranchisement and exclusion of young people – particularly young women – poses a direct threat to their well-being and livelihood, increasing their reliance on others for basic subsistence and exposing their vulnerability to forced labour and human trafficking.

These findings are also reflective of the profiles of the girls and young women in the VOTD and FMS datasets – the majority of those for whom there is data report being from poor or very poor families and fewer than half have received a secondary education.

Key informants in this research stressed that poverty is a key driver of human trafficking in Nigeria.

The extreme levels of poverty and unemployment and the humanitarian crisis in the north of the country make "gainful employment" elusive for many.[93,94]

"Poverty is a major cause; it has a way of changing people's thinking. Also, the quest for more money: people want money so desperately. Societal pressures, parental and communal pressures, people must conform with certain standards, you must build houses, have certain amount of money."
Key informant

"One of [the] major factors that puts them at risk is poverty in Nigeria... Why do people send a child to work, or send your child to become a house maid? It is because their parents cannot feed them."
Key informant

"Poverty is a major driver of human trafficking. When people are gainfully employed, they are less likely to be trafficked."
Key informant

Conflict and the humanitarian crises

The protracted crisis in the North East of Nigeria has led to a loss of human capital, increases in poverty (especially among female-headed households),[95] and potentially increased gender gaps in education, employment and income.[96,97] This increased vulnerability, coupled with the breakdown of traditional support structures and the weakening of states' infrastructures and social service support systems, may create the conditions for traffickers to operate and exploit the vulnerabilities of affected populations.

All eight adolescent girls interviewed reported that family poverty, death in the family and conflict were the key drivers of their migration. The precarious life at the IDP camps and the disruption to, and breakdown of, families led some of the girls interviewed for this research to migrate, contributing to their vulnerability to forced labour and sexual exploitation. The intersection between livelihood crises and public insecurity[98] is made clear in the voice of one of the girls interviewed. When asked about some of the main reasons for her migration, she responded:

"The death of my father; the divorce of my mother and father; my father's relatives; and poverty. There was no money and we were very poor. Also, the Boko Haram people came."
Adolescent girl, 17 years old

Fictional case example 1 – Chiagozie

Before migrating, Chiagozie[99] lived in a village in northern Nigeria. She used to live with her parents, one brother and one sister. She was not in school, nor working. When she was 11 years old, Boko Haram burned down her village, killed her mother and abducted her brother. She managed to escape with others from her village. They walked for four days hiding in the bushes. She was raped by a military man during her journey. She was then sent to an IDP camp.

She didn't know anyone at the camp and had no access to food. When one woman offered her a place in her tent, she accepted. At night, this woman used to take her out of the camp to a nearby town where the woman forced Chiagozie to provide sexual services for men. The woman kept all the money. Eventually, Chiagozie got pregnant and the woman kicked her out of the tent. She received governmental assistance to deliver her child and was then transferred to a different camp.
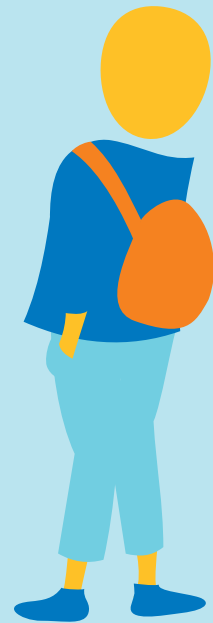
Key informants also recognise the role of the conflict in increasing the incidence of trafficking.

"These girls find themselves without parental guidance, so anybody can deceive them and traffic them. You know they are without [the] basic needs of life: food; medication; education; shelter. When you have a conflict of this magnitude there is going to be migration; while in the process of migration, many will face the chance of being deceived or moved abroad for some nefarious activities against the interest of the victim, but in the interest of the trafficker."
Key informant

Box 2 Conflict and humanitarian crises and human trafficking

Humanitarian crises compound poverty, gender and other inequalities. The poorest and most marginalised are often the hardest hit by violence, disruption, displacement and loss of livelihoods. Protection mechanisms, schools, social structures, health systems and law enforcement can be severely weakened or destroyed. In these situations, girls and women are at greater risk of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, child marriage, human trafficking[100,101] and sexual exploitation.[102,103,104]

High-risk locations for human trafficking can be transit or collective holding points for migrants, informal places of employment, displacement camps, informal settlements and host communities. UN Security Council Resolution 2331 recognises the vulnerability of persons displaced by armed conflict, including refugees, to human trafficking.[105] This is particularly concerning, given that levels of displacement are currently the highest ever recorded.[106]

Despite this, efforts to address human trafficking and forced labour remain limited in humanitarian settings[107] and the limited funding allocated specifically to counter-trafficking programmes remains a significant barrier. Trends in funding for some other sectors and areas that may help to counter trafficking are also worrying:

• The share of bilateral ODA funding from 14 major donors going to activities with gender equality as a principal goal represented only 4 per cent of their total bilateral ODA in 2017.[108]

• Funding for gender-based violence (GBV) services is estimated to have accounted for just 0.12 per cent of all humanitarian funding between 2016-2018. This is less than USD2 to each targeted woman or girl at risk of GBV in crisis and conflict settings.[109]

• An estimated 0.5 per cent of total humanitarian funding is allocated to child protection activities.[110]

• More broadly, humanitarian funding is rarely targeted to meet the specific needs of adolescent girls.[111]

Such limited prioritisation of the issues leaves women and girls especially vulnerable to human trafficking during conflicts and humanitarian crises.

From the interviews with key informants and trafficked girls, it is evident that forced displacement caused by parties to the conflict/NSAGs[112] increased the risk of trafficking. Key informants perceived that risks for trafficking for sexual exploitation, 'baby factories' and other kinds of exploitation are increased amongst the IDPs due to their increased vulnerabilities and exposure to violence. This was seen to an extent in the interviews with some of the adolescent girls interviewed for this research.

After one of Boko Haram's attacks, for example, one girl interviewed for this research described how she was sexually abused and suffered from other kinds of violence, including forced marriage:

"We were told we were [going to be a] slave because we have been working for the military and government. We were beaten every day. Then one day they married me to [a member of Boko Haram]. We lived inside a cave. One day, [he] went to fight with other Boko Haram fighters [and] he was killed by the Nigeria military. So then I was married to [another member of Boko Haram]. … We were beaten and they called us unbelievers and that we must marry a believer before we can be saved."
Adolescent girl, 15 years old

Key informants reflected on insecurity for girls and women in the IDP camps.

Salima* (on right) and her sister Jessica* (on left) are survivors of Boko Haram

> **"From what we hear, these traffickers are even going to IDP camps now. So, insurgency and trafficking go hand in hand."**
> *Key informant*

> **"We know that camp adolescent girls, people come to impregnate them, and babies are being harvested for different purpose."**
> *Key informant*

Gender inequality

Expectations around gender roles shape the various trafficking situations that boys and girls are exposed to. These norms and expectations are amplified during crises.[113]

It is not possible to state, based on the interviews, whether girls are more likely to be trafficked than boys. In most of the girls' opinions, boys and girls are equally exposed to the risk of trafficking, but boys can protect themselves better in the process. For key informants, there was no consensus over the risks, but the recognition of girls' exposure to sexual exploitation was present in most of their accounts.

> **"We have seen instances when boys are engaged into [sexual exploitation] when they are trafficked. But the number is very low compared to the number of girls. … You will see them [boys] where they are [forced] to work in industries that excessive strength is needed; the boys are also trafficked for organ harvest. However, the risks are higher for girls than boys. Most of the girls we have rescued in the region of [the] North East are around the age of 15 years [and] were easily deceived. The trafficker approaches them making promises to them and due to insecurity, poverty and lack of access [to essential services], they are easily deceived and exploited."**
> *Key informant*

> **"The difference now is the degree of exploitation they get to experience when they are trafficked. The adolescent young boy when trafficked is mostly likely to be caught in forced labour or forced (to join the) army where there is war. They are meant to carry drugs as well. But for the girls, it is more terrible, she is more often sexually abused. … For girls the exploitation mostly is sexual. Adolescent boys don't go through abortion by quack doctors, practitioners. Adolescent girls face risk [of] abortion delivered in dangerous conditions."**
> *Key informant*

RECRUITMENT AND ENTRY INTO TRAFFICKING

Family and community members

Where there is data available, the number of girls and young women that were directly recruited into trafficking by a recruiter is similar to those that were not (see Table 4). Of those that were recruited, the majority were recruited by an acquaintance, friend or family member.

Family members and relatives also played a role in the trafficking trajectories of adolescent girls interviewed for this research. For example, one of the girls was trafficked into domestic servitude by her uncle and his wife, following the death of her parents when she was 16 years old. Her aunt and uncle were paid her wages. Another had a similar experience following the death of her parents. She migrated from an IDP camp to Abuja with relatives and her relatives then forced her into prostitution:

"Ayanna[114] took me to meet Halle and Dzidzo and they took us to another part of town every night to meet with men. We stay there till morning and come back to home. At times Lucy will ask me to go and meet men in town and I will stay with him for two days. Lucy said that is the only job. ... We work from 6.30pm till early morning then we go back home to sleep until the afternoon. At times me and Lucy go out with men during the day."
Adolescent girl, 15 years old

Key informants also reflected on the central role that family members can play in the trafficking process, often for their own profit:

"Most of the time people that traffic you are people from the family and community: we have seen stories of parents trafficking their children, also their uncles. ... Most of the time the traffickers are the immediate family members... Traffickers are even friends... it could be religious leaders."
Key informant

"At times parents will receive loans that they are not able to pay back; they may use their children to be engaged in forced labour or prostitution."
Key informant

Not only does this experience have immediate consequences for the girls and young women who are trafficked and exploited but it can also have long-term implications for family relations and trust. For example, one young woman interviewed for this research was assisted to voluntarily return to Nigeria. However, she did not want to come back to her family, who participated in her migration, and instead lives with a foster family who have supported her to return to education:

"I will not have to go back to my house because I told her I wanted to continue with my education. ... I have a family here, which I call my family though they are not my blood relatives."
Young woman, 20 years old

Table 4 Mode of recruitment and relationship with their recruiter of the girls and young women in the Nigeria VOTD

		Global VOTD		
		Young girls (under 10)	Adolescent girls (10-18)	Young women (19-24)
Entry into trafficking	Recruited in the context of undertaking international labour migration	7%	21%	29%
	Kidnapped or sold	7%	0%	0%
	Education	7%	0%	3%
	Family/friend visit	0%	21%	3%
	Missing data/unknown	79%	58%	65%
Relationship with recruiter	Acquaintance	8%	14%	12%
	Friend	0%	14%	5%
	Stranger	8%	0%	7%
	Business contact	0%	0%	1%
	Family member	0%	0%	3%
	Partner	0%	0%	1%
	Not known	8%	7%	3%
	Missing data	76%	65%	68%

Summary results from the IOM Flow Monitoring Surveys

The Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) are conducted with migrants and refugees by IOM field staff in transit points in the Eastern and Central Mediterranean routes. FMS data for 2016-17 was analysed for **35** girls under the age of 18 and from **241** young women aged between 18 and 25.

Italy was the primary intended destination for most girls (**74 per cent**) and young women (**58 per cent**). Other common destinations for young women were Germany (**14 per cent**) and the United Kingdom (**11 per cent**). **Ninety-six per cent** of girls departed from Nigeria and **four per cent** from Libya. Similarly, for the young women, **84 per cent** departed from Nigeria, **15 per cent** from Libya and **0.3 per cent** each from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, the Niger and Turkey.

Most girls (**96 per cent**) and young women (**84 per cent**) were not married. More than two-thirds of girls (**67 per cent**) and young women (**77 per cent**) were travelling alone. Another **10 per cent** of girls and **13 per cent** of young women travelled with family members, while a minority travelled with non-family members (**13 per cent** of girls and **10 per cent** of young women).

Figure 4 Reasons for leaving Nigeria, as reported by young women and girls in the FMS data

- Violence and conflict
- Economic motivations
- Limited basic services
- Limited humanitarian services
- Other
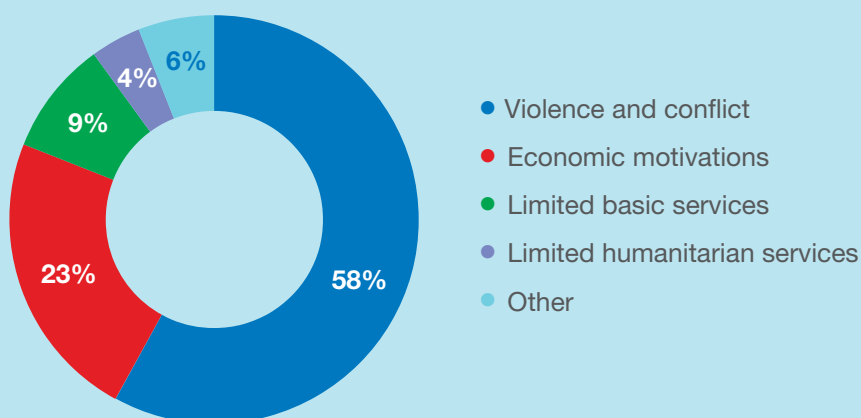
The reported costs for the journey at the time the data was collected were generally below USD5,000, with **half of all girls and young women** reporting costs of below USD1,000. **Twenty per cent** of girls and young women did not incur any costs in migration.

Many young women and girls (**58 per cent**) reported violence or conflict as the primary reason for them leaving Nigeria, while **23 per cent** stated that economic reasons were the main motivator for their migration. **Four per cent** of women and girls noted the limited availability of humanitarian services as a primary motivation for their migration.

EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND FORCED LABOUR

Trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation

The majority of Nigerian girls and young women in the VOTD dataset were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (**57 per cent** of young girls, **57 per cent** of adolescent girls and **68 per cent** of young women). More than one in ten (**13 per cent**) of younger and adolescent girls and **seven per cent** of young women experienced forced labour. Some experienced both forced labour and sexual exploitation (**13 per cent** of younger and adolescent girls and **five per cent** of young women).

The everyday lives of the trafficked girls interviewed involved long hours of work and multiple forms of abuse and exploitation. For example, one girl described her experience of being forced to work in domestic service in slavery-like conditions:

"I started working early in the morning around 4.30am. I wake in the morning to clean the compound then I start to prepare the meal that the family will eat. After that I will go to the market to buy food and soup ingredients and to run other errands. I also stay at my madam's shop to help sell things. I start preparing lunch and dinners. After dinner I wash all the plates and bathe my madam's children."
Adolescent girl, 17 years old

Sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and violence were also commonly reported by adolescent girls, including in concurrence with other forms of forced labour and exploitation such as domestic work. Two of the girls were sexually abused and exploited and became pregnant as a result, one of whom (see fictional case example 2) is currently raising her baby in an IDP camp in Nigeria.

57% OF YOUNG GIRLS FROM NIGERIA WERE TRAFFICKED FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

57% OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS FROM NIGERIA WERE TRAFFICKED FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

68% OF YOUNG WOMEN FROM NIGERIA WERE TRAFFICKED FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Fictional case example 2 – Joy

Joy[115] lived with her family before migrating. Her mother was the first wife of her father and had six children by him. His father's second wife lived in the same house with five of Joy's half-siblings. Joy felt like her father and her stepmother hated her, and both mistreated her. Joy finished her basic education before leaving her home town. Her parents wanted her to become a teacher, but Joy wanted to be a professional dancer. Her father was not supportive of her plans.

Joy was forced to migrate when she was 16 years old. One of her stepmother's friends had a daughter in Italy and convinced her stepmother to send Joy there. Joy had never thought about migrating and did not want to leave the country. She left Nigeria on a bus with other girls headed to Libya, where they spent one month. Joy reports that on the way to Libya, one of her travel companions was raped by police officers. She also witnessed beatings and killings.

While in Libya, Joy was living with many Nigerian girls and boys who were in transit to Italy, France and Germany. Some of the boys were being forced to work as beggars, others in commercial sexual exploitation. They crossed the Mediterranean Sea by boat. Joy arrived in a bad health state, with acute chest pain.

She was taken to a non-governmental shelter where she stayed for one month while she recovered. There were other Nigerian girls in this shelter. She eventually called the woman who had brought her to Italy. This woman was very upset with Joy and was shouting on the phone. A Nigerian couple removed her from the shelter and took her to this woman, who gave her some clothes and forced her into sex work. She used to work every day from 4pm to 6am. When she came back after work, the woman used to take away all the money she had earned. Joy used to protest, but the woman claimed that Joy had to pay her back the EUR30,000 that her journey had cost her. She used to abuse Joy verbally and physically.

Joy was rescued by an NGO and repatriated to Nigeria. Before going back to her home country, Joy called her parents. Until then, she was not certain that her stepmother was involved in her trafficking. When she found out, she decided to sever the ties with her family. After receiving post-trafficking assistance, she moved to a different town from where her family was based.

Child, early and forced marriage

Although none of the girls and young women in the IOM's VOTD or FMS datasets were forced into marriage, surrogacy, or linked to 'child harvesting' or 'baby factories', key informants reveal that these types of exploitation are an important concern for policymakers and practitioners. For example, trafficking into child, early and forced marriage[116] was raised as a particular concern:

> **"There are different types of trafficking… It depends on the type of trafficking, like [trafficking for] child marriage, common to the northern part of Nigeria, which is affecting both rich and poor."**
> *Key informant*

Means of control

Data on the means of control used by the trafficker or exploiter was only available for 21 per cent of the sample (n= 1 young girl, 5 adolescents and 25 young women).[117] Among the trafficking survivors who reported any means of control, they were most commonly controlled through physical and sexual abuse, threats, false promises or deception and by being denied freedom of movement (see Figure 5).

High levels and different forms of violence and abuse were reported in the qualitative interviews with adolescent girls. They experienced sexual abuse, rape, physical aggression, and psychological violence in the pre-departure context, during their journey and in their everyday life at their destination. Some of the girls were deprived of food and medical care, physically confined and heavily monitored. These experiences reflect those captured in the IOM VOTD dataset (see Figure 5).[118]

Figure 5 Means of control: Nigeria

Legend: ■ Young women ■ Adolescent girls ■ Young girls
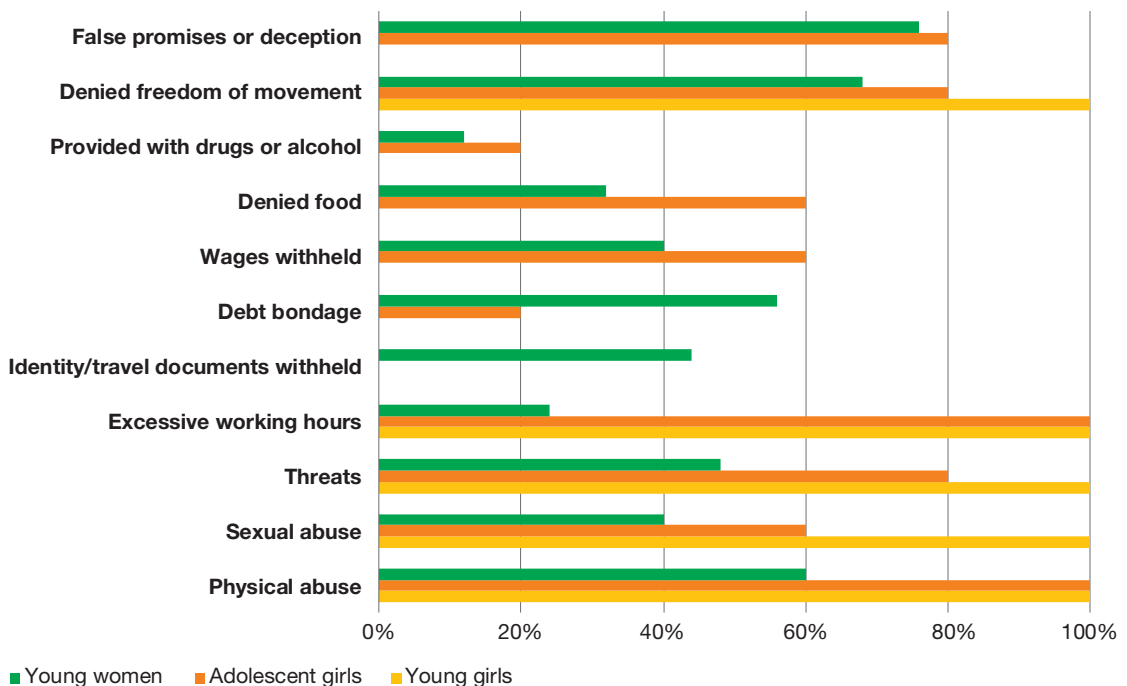
One adolescent girl, for example, described suffering multiple forms of violence while living in difficult conditions, trapped in domestic servitude:

"She did not give me anything; she always beat me... I was not treated properly; I was raped and they sent my money to my uncle... I did cleaning, mopping, cooking, and washing, always eating white rice with no oil, no pepper. Even when I worked, she wasn't satisfied, she beat me all the time... Whenever [she] is going out or travelling she will lock me inside the house with only small food and water. I am always hungry and thirsty."

Adolescent girl, 17 years old

Another adolescent girl highlighted how endemic violence and abuse is at each stage of a young woman's migration trajectory from Nigeria to Italy. During transit, in Libya, she witnessed other adolescent girls who were travelling with her being raped by policemen:

"They were beating people, they were killing people, as if the person was a cow. If somebody falls from the car, they will leave the person to die in the desert. (...) After they catch us, the policemen started touching their body... The police took [one of the girls] to their own house. When they reached there, they said she had to sleep with them."

Young woman, 19 years old

Human trafficking and exploitation of Nigerian migrants in Libya

The findings from this research further demonstrate that Libya is a dangerous country for girls and young women. The main route for migrants crossing by land is through the Niger (Agadez and Dirkou) and then Libya (Sebha and Tripoli). In their journeys, migrants may face the scorching heat of the desert, sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour and violence, kidnapping and extortion by smugglers, as well as unlawful detention, torture and unlawful killings by state and non-state armed groups.[119]

The UN reports that Nigerian women and girls appear to be vulnerable to trafficking in and through Libya by criminal networks.[120] Nigerian female migrants sampled in this research reported that, when they were in Libya, they experienced severe violence, threats, restrictions to their freedom, forced labour, offers for organs in exchange for services, and arranged marriage when in Libya.[121] This supports previous research using IOM Flow Monitoring Surveys that showed that 50 per cent of Nigerian female migrants travelling along the Central Mediterranean route reported being held against their will, 18 per cent experienced unpaid labour, 26 per cent were forced to work, and 71 per cent experienced physical violence, almost exclusively in Libya.[122] Male migrants, however, experienced violence, abuse and exploitation more frequently than females.

Political instability in Libya has undermined border controls in the country enabling smuggling networks to thrive.[123] The frequent use of violence and intimidation seems to be partly associated with this dispersed form of organisation. This requires law enforcement to constantly broaden its horizons to monitor flows in this illicit market.[124]

ANTI-TRAFFICKING POLICY AND INTERVENTIONS IN NIGERIA

The Government of Nigeria is committed to increasing efforts to end human trafficking. It has endorsed the *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking* and has recently agreed to become a 'Pathfinder Country' of the global Alliance 8.7 initiative.[125] The government has also recently invested more heavily in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse among IDPs.[126]

Nigerian migration policies have focused on the prevention of trafficking of women and children.[127] In 2003, Nigeria created its National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) with the purpose of fighting human trafficking through the 4P strategy – prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership.[128,129] NAPTIP is responsible for the prosecution of traffickers, investigation of cases, assistance to victims and promoting awareness among the public and government officials. Three of the girls interviewed for this research said they were rescued by NAPTIP.

Prevention

Key informants highlighted three critical areas for the prevention of human trafficking: education, information on safe migration, and a collaborative network against trafficking (see partnerships section).

Upholding the right to education was viewed as a key intervention that can enable children to protect themselves, improve their life opportunities, and gain information on the risks of trafficking and the avoidance of exploitation:

"When you come to understand your human rights, you will learn to say no even when in [a] vulnerable situation."
Key informant

"Some of these girls never went to school. They don't have anything to look forward to."
Key informant

Despite this, even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, one in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria (10.5 million 5-14 year olds are not in school).[130] In the north of Nigeria, the net attendance rate is as low as 53 per cent[131] and recent estimates from Plan International UK show that around 600,000 girls were out of school in Nigeria's crisis-affected regions.[132]

Awareness-raising campaigns and access to information and guidance on trafficking prevention through NGOs, mass and social media, religious leaders and institutions, and other actors was also highlighted as an important counter-trafficking intervention:

"To a reasonable extent, you know this part of the country is [a] radio-loving region, any programme on the radio voice out to everybody to be aware of [the issues]; the second thing is through the traditional rulers and religious leaders, you know, the traditional rulers have a lot of the influence in the society: when they talk to their people they listen, the same thing in the religious leaders."
Key informant

"The traditional leaders and religious leaders should join the fight against trafficking, they should preach on the pulpit that migration should be done regularly [regular migration]."
Key informant

The Government of Nigeria and civil society have invested in awareness campaigns, including through radio and media campaigns

warning about fraudulent recruitment for jobs abroad, through school visits, and raising awareness among transport workers.[133]
In August 2018, the Nigerian government launched a mobile phone application, iReport, which allows members of the public to report cases of human trafficking.[134] This may be particularly useful in places such as Benin City where 33 per cent of women reported having been offered assistance to travel abroad and 44 per cent declared knowing someone who was currently engaged in sex work out of the country.[135]

Protection

In interviews with key informants, NAPTIP was recognised as a key resource for the protection and prosecution of trafficking cases. NAPTIP's toll-free line that is in place for reporting cases of human trafficking was highlighted as a valued resource for

prevention of trafficking, as well as for rescue and assistance for survivors. NAPTIP provided police, immigration, and social services personnel with specialised training on how to identify trafficking victims and direct them to NAPTIP.[136]

In the past, the Nigerian government has been criticised for not having a policy for repatriation and reintegration and for not protecting the rights of trafficking survivors.[137] Currently, the government has structures to provide initial screening and assistance for identified victims through government-run care assistance services such as medical care, vocational training, education, and shelter.

Law enforcement and prosecution

In 2015, the government amended the 2003 Trafficking in Persons Law Enforcement and

Plan International UK interviewed Nigerian adolescent girls who are survivors of trafficking for its Because I am a Girl campaign

Administration Act, increasing the penalties for trafficking offenders.[138] The Act also prescribed compensation for survivors in its Section 65:1, 2 and 3 'Right to compensation or restitution'. The government prosecuted several cases domestically and collaborated with international law enforcement agencies. Yet, the gaps in cross-national cooperation between Nigeria and destination countries have meant that criminal justice responses have yielded limited results.[139]

Key informants report that strengthening and improving the implementation of legislation, including in relation to mandatory education, stronger penalties for human traffickers, criminalisation of begging, and surrogacy law regulation will have an impact in reducing human trafficking.

"Let me look at it from the baby factory perspective. Health workers have been able to hide under the fact there is no surrogacy law when they are linked to young pregnant girls or somebody that they are helping to perform surrogacy. In the absence of surrogacy law, they have been able to sell babies intimately. We need to define child adoption rules. When they are charged to the court, instead of perpetrators being charged for trafficking, they are charged for adoption, which carries a lighter fine."
Key informant

"Criminalisation of begging in Kano has equally helped; children used to be recruited from the rural areas and brought to Kano to assist the destitute in begging, leading them to the strategic points in the city for begging. But with this criminalisation of begging, the menace has been reduced to the minimum."
Key informant

Partnerships

Although key informants recognised the central role of NAPTIP in the national response to human trafficking, they highlighted the presence and importance of links with other social actors in a collaborative network against trafficking.

Insufficient funding for anti-trafficking efforts is a key issue raised by all the informants. They recognise the importance of the government's actions towards the eradication of trafficking but are also clear about the lack of resources to implement and strengthen these actions.

"Funding is the issue, not international funding but our own government putting our own resources into doing what we should be doing. I am talking of social services. The fight is against a multibillion-dollar business and it takes a lot to achieve total eradication... We need more help and more partnership. (...) Even though Nigeria government has done a lot of policies, in the actual sense funding is not there to implement them."
Key informant

"If we [NAPTIP] have enough funding we could be in any state. We need to have our men on the ground. Funding has affected our staff strength."
Key informant

The Nigerian government has also been praised by the US Government for engaging in more sophisticated collaboration with foreign states in investigation of trafficking cases, joint intelligence sharing and mutual legal assistance.[140]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Our data shows that Nigerian girls and young women often migrate in unsafe conditions, both internally and internationally. Their migration is commonly motivated by lack of attractive local livelihood opportunities, conflict and violence, established migration flows, limited access to basic services, and limited ability to access and make productive use of economic assets.

Some of these migration drivers – mass poverty, excess of supply in the labour market, and unemployment – have also been identified as some of the drivers of conflicts in the North East of Nigeria.[141] While the Nigerian government has dedicated consistent efforts to ending the conflicts and violence, the crisis has become protracted and there are no indications that it is likely to cease in the short term. These trends will only be reversed through long-term investments in human capital, social cohesion, and economic and social development.

Displaced girls and young women, or those that have lost close family members through the conflict in the North East of Nigeria, seem to be at particularly high risk of human trafficking and exploitation – particularly if migrating through Libya. Violence, deception and coercion mark each stage of these girls' and young women's migration trajectory, and sexual abuse and exploitation of trafficked adolescent girls is common.

Stronger international collaboration between law enforcement agencies would be an important measure to take forward. Greater efforts are required to prosecute the people who profit from the girls' and young women's vulnerability, from smugglers to officials who may facilitate the trafficking process, and employers. These need to be coupled with wider efforts such as the training of prosecutors and judges to better understand human trafficking, including the age and gender dimensions, and to prioritise trafficking cases in prosecution efforts, even when these cases do not include organised criminal groups.

This research highlights the role that family and community members play in facilitating migration and human trafficking. The informal character of these networks may pose some challenges for monitoring and law enforcement. Adolescent girls and young women could benefit from increased knowledge about the recruitment process, as well as the channels through which they can obtain redress and remedy for any exploitation they experience. It would be important to consider how best to involve families, parents and other adults who are often involved in planning the migration of adolescent girls.

Ultimately, however, the protective environment surrounding Nigerian girls and young women needs to be strengthened and access to protection services improved to keep girls safe. Migrants often have limited power and agency at high risk migration corridors and awareness of rights can do little to protect them without access to strong protection mechanisms during transit and at destination.

More targeted efforts are also needed to reduce girls' vulnerability and provide them with the requisite knowledge, skills and resources to ensure that migration is a choice rather than a necessity.

Hannah* a trafficking survivor from Nigeria was interviewed as part of Plan International UK's Because I am a Girl campaign

TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN NEPAL

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Poverty and inequality

Despite economic growth averaging 4.8 per cent over the last decade[142] and recent improvements in human development indicators, Nepal remains one of the poorest countries in the world.[143] Nepal is ranked 149 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index[144] and has a score of 0.48 in the Gender Inequality Index (where 0 represents equality between males and females and 1 is the lowest score).[145]

There are large disparities in poverty rates across gender, social group and geographical area.[146] Poverty in Nepal is coupled with deeply entrenched discriminatory practices directed at certain groups within society. Although caste-based discrimination is illegal in Nepal, the caste system has been well documented for creating marked social stratification and associated restrictions on social mobility, preventing low caste families from escaping poverty.[147] Furthermore, the problems of landlessness and the adverse incorporation of poor Nepalese people in the local and international labour market perpetuates chronic poverty.[148]

Adolescent girls' and young women's rights

Adolescents and youth (10-24 years) represent approximately 32 per cent of the total population of Nepal.[149] There are around 4.72 million adolescent girls and young women in Nepal, 16 per cent of the estimated total population (29.1 million).[150]

Social norms in Nepal historically condone control of female sexuality and girls' and women's normative subservient role in the household.[151] Poor, marginalised and low caste women and girls occupy weak social, economic and political positions in Nepali society. Their common reliance on loans can drive unsafe migration, hazardous labour, trafficking and bonded labour.[152]

Eight out of ten girls (79 per cent) complete primary education (compared with 89 per cent of boys).[153] Completion rates significantly decrease with age through lower secondary (60 per cent of girls and 70 per cent of boys) and upper secondary (3 per cent of girls and 10 per cent of boys) education.[154] The challenges related to the quality of education in Nepal have led to many girls and boys having poor learning outcomes and lacking some of the basic skills necessary to transition into decent work.

Girls drop out of education primarily due to poverty, with marriage being cited as the second most common reason. Once out of school, many girls are expected to start working in their home contributing towards domestic duties or outside of their home to generate income. As a result, 40 per cent of girls between 15 and 19 years old are in employment.[155]

In Nepal, 7 per cent of girls are married by age 15 and 40 per cent by age 18. Nepal ranks as number 17 in the world for the

prevalence of child marriage.[156] Married girls in Nepal are 11 times more likely to be out of school compared with their unmarried peers.[157]

Child labour

Although the prevalence of child labour is declining at the rate of 100,000 every year, there are still around 1.6 million child labourers in Nepal. Sixty per cent (373,000) of the 621,000 children engaged in hazardous work in Nepal are girls.[158]

Natural hazards and climate change

Nepal is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, ranking in the top 20 globally and as the fourth most vulnerable to climate change.[159] Nepal is particularly prone to natural hazards due to its geographical location and active tectonic processes, young and fragile geology, variable climatic conditions, unplanned settlement and growing population.[160] In addition to earthquakes, the country is exposed to multiple hazards including floods, fires, avalanches, landslides and drought which regularly lead to deaths and loss of property.[161]

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Plan International UK interviewed adolescent girls in Nepal who are survivors of trafficking for its Because I am a Girl campaign

MIGRATION IN NEPAL

International labour migration is an important strategy for improving livelihoods, buying land, paying debts, accessing education and health care or building a safe place to live.[162] This is particularly the case among rural Nepalese populations. According to World Bank data, remittances account for 28 per cent of the country's GDP.[163]

Female migrants comprise 69.7 per cent (342,315) of the total number of international Nepalese migrants.[164] However, girls and young women (0-24 years) represent just 16 per cent of the total recorded female international migrant population.[165] According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), more than one in six girls between five and 17 years old indicates marriage as the reason for their most recent migration.[166]

The types of low-skilled or informal labour that most migrant girls participate in, such as domestic work in the Middle East and Gulf States, or working in India's entertainment sector, is associated with highly exploitative working conditions and vulnerability to trafficking.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NEPAL

Trafficking in persons is a serious problem in Nepal, characterised by cross-border, international and internal trafficking of women, men, and children for various purposes including commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour. As is the case globally, however, there is a critical gap in reliable prevalence estimates of the trafficking of girls in Nepal and to date most estimates rely on case data, administrative data or surveys. While there is not a single, comprehensive estimation of the number of Nepalese girls trafficked from and within Nepal, research shows that it is a pervasive human rights issue.

For example, the Women and Children's Service Directorate (part of the Nepal Police) reported 366 cases of trafficking from 2013-2015, of whom 94 per cent were female and approximately half were under the age of 18 at the time of their case.[167] Nepal's National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) most recent trafficking in persons report indicates that 78 per cent of identified victims of trafficking in 2017/18 were female, and 25 per cent were children.[168] The NHRC also estimates that hundreds of female migrants, many suspected to be adolescent girls, are trafficked for marriage to the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of China every year.[169]

Internal trafficking is also a significant issue in Nepal. Girls are trafficked internally within Nepal for forced labour (primarily in the garment or service sectors), sexual exploitation, and forced marriage, but the magnitude of these types of trafficking is unclear, as is how prevalence might vary by destination or sector.[170] A significant number of girls are estimated to be trafficked for sexual exploitation in Kathmandu's entertainment sector and across the open border with India to Mumbai and other urban centres. Recent research in Kathmandu found that between 40 and 60 per cent of the females interviewed in entertainment sector workplaces (massage parlours, dance bars and cabin restaurants) were under the age of 19.[171]

NEPAL FINDINGS

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

Due to the limited number of cases in the VOTD for Nepal, the empirical findings for the Nepal chapter are based on the data from the evaluation of the South Asia Work in Freedom Transnational Programme (SWiFT) in Nepal, alongside the results of the qualitative interviews with adolescents conducted by IOM for this report.

Surveys were conducted with 521 returnee migrants in three of the five districts in which the Work in Freedom Programme was implemented: Chitwan, Rupandehi, and Morang. This research was funded by the UK Department for International Development.

Among returnee migrants, **45** were adolescent (10-18 years old) at the time of their most recent migration and **105** were aged 19 to 24. More than **one in four** adolescent migrants and **a third** of young women had migrated more than once. The results from the sample of adolescent girls and young women who participated in the survey are presented here.

Analysis of the VOTD data for Nepal is presented separately in Box 5.

MORE THAN

1 IN 4

ADOLESCENT MIGRANTS FROM NEPAL HAD MIGRATED MORE THAN ONCE

MORE THAN

1 IN 3

OF YOUNG WOMEN FROM NEPAL HAD MIGRATED MORE THAN ONCE
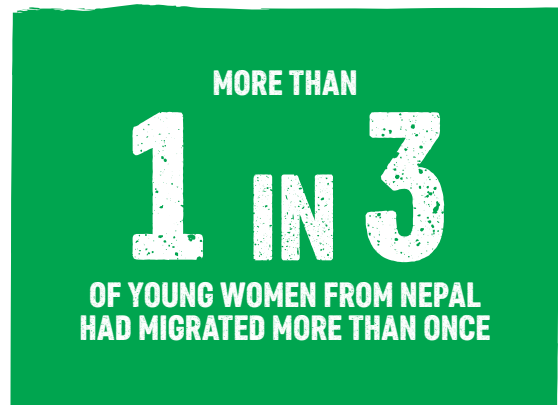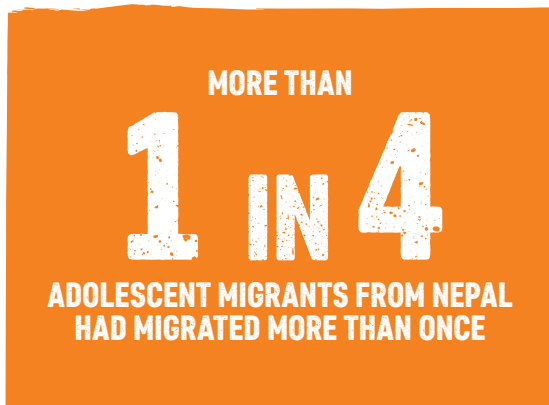
DRIVERS OF MIGRATION AND RISKS OF TRAFFICKING AMONG GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN NEPAL

Economic and aspirational motivators

Poverty and limited economic opportunities

Nepal is characterised by structural poverty and inequality. Although poverty levels are declining, an estimated 10 million people (32 per cent of the population) live on incomes between USD1.90 and USD3.20 a day.[172] The proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) stands at 32 per cent.[173] In this context, international migration may be seen an alternative to meet individual and family aspirations.

"We should mobilise local resources and generate jobs for them. On the one side we are saying migrants for foreign employment are vulnerable; on the other side here are no jobs to do, no business, no working environment: what will they do?"
Key informant

The scarcity of attractive employment opportunities in Nepal, especially in rural areas, is a driver for female migration both to urban centres in Nepal and to countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Kuwait, primarily for domestic work. Exploitation of Nepalese female domestic workers is common in the Gulf countries.[174]

"I migrated due to poverty... [and a] difficult life due to a lack of money and a desire to earn... I was trying [to migrate to] any place, so that I could develop my skills and earn some money."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

In the SWiFT survey, **76 per cent** of adolescent girls and **88 per cent** of young women migrated with the intention of earning extra income for their family. Almost a third (**31 per cent** of adolescent girls and **36 per cent** of young women) migrated to pay non-family debts. **Forty per cent** of adolescent girls and **47 per cent** of young women were motivated to migrate because of employment shortages at home. One adolescent interviewed in the qualitative research reflected on the lack of choice in her decision to migrate.

"My heart denies [it] but there is compulsion for migration."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

Almost all the adolescent girls interviewed for this research entered trafficking through labour migration – only one was deceived into travelling to India and then trafficked for sexual exploitation. Adolescent girls described the various economic pressures (family financial needs, unemployment, medical expenses, outstanding loans) that motivated their migration. One adolescent girl described how access to economic opportunities can be more limited for girls, when compared with boys:

"It is easy for the boys to hunt for jobs compared to the girls. There may be high security threats to the girls, people might be backbiting behind them, there are different kinds [of] risks to the girls, but it may not be the same for the boys... Girls are not as safe as boys."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

Limited access to quality secondary education

Poverty, unemployment and low literacy were recognised by key informants as the main contextual determinants of migration

among adolescent girls, alongside age and gender. While education is an important factor in combating the worst forms of child labour, including human trafficking, issues of poverty, social exclusion and gender bias mean that education is unattainable for many adolescent girls.[175]

"I used to go school and some household work and then some agriculture... There was problem of road, school was far, I always late for school, we couldn't reach school on time."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

As a result, many adolescent girls end up dropping out of school and into marriage, to support their families, or in search of economic opportunities. Many end up being exploited in hazardous work.[176] More than half of adolescent girls (**59 per cent**) and young women (**55 per cent**) in the SWiFT study had not studied beyond primary education. Furthermore, wider research has indicated that the lack of formal education of young girls (six to nine years old) may be higher among daughters of domestic and agricultural workers in Nepal,[177] perpetuating intergenerational poverty.

The 2015 earthquakes had a significant impact on infrastructure and learning environments. This is likely to have exacerbated existing challenges related to the poor quality of education and worsened an already difficult situation.[178]

Aspirations

Severe poverty and a lack of opportunity are not always the primary drivers of labour migration:

49 per cent of adolescent girls and **26 per cent** of young women in the SWiFT survey did not report any pressing economic reason as a factor that strongly motivated their migration. Migration or entry into the labour market can also be driven by the desire to benefit from globalisation, to gain more freedom and access broader life opportunities, and to see the world.[179] For example, **38 per cent** of adolescent girls and **36 per cent** of young women were influenced by a desire to see a foreign country and **almost a third** of adolescent girls and **almost half** of young women were influenced by other people's migration experiences.

Adolescent girls interviewed for this research also considered the importance of aspiration, including the ability to access technology and luxury goods, as a key influence over migration decisions:

"The adolescence period is highly curious, [we] want to learn more, try to know new things, and have keen interest in using equipment and devices, and [are] desirous of having these devices, which are pushing us towards risk."
Adolescent girl, 16 years old

"A few people from the village have gone abroad for work and the earnings and goods they bring are visible which has affected others, but it is not visible that they have faced problems there. When the earnings, luxury goods, new technology etc. are visible, it is influencing people to go abroad."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

Box 4 Legal bans on female mobility

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Government of Nepal put in place widespread restrictions on female mobility. This policy was implemented as a perceived protective measure against exploitation of female migrants following extensive reports of trafficking and exploitation of female Nepalese domestic workers, especially in the Gulf States. Although the specifics have changed, the policy continues to this day for women under the age of 24 (see Table 5).

Qualitative research has suggested that the migration bans have not deterred women or girls from migrating. Instead, female migrants have been forced into risky and illegal migration through informal channels.[180] This has simultaneously excluded them from national labour migration estimates. Several policy reviews have highlighted the worrying effects of migration bans on female migrants' control of their migration process and on workers' rights abroad.[181,182,183] Recent findings of the Work in Freedom Programme have, however, indicated that the bans could contribute to a reduced likelihood of forced labour.[184]

Table 5 Summary of legal bans on female mobility by the Government of Nepal[185]

Summary of migration bans in Nepal	
1985	Women prohibited from leaving the country without consent from their guardian
1998	Permission from guardian required for women seeking to migrate
September 1998	Complete ban on women's migration to the Gulf countries
2003	Ban partially lifted allowing women to migrate for work in the formal sector
September 2008	Restrictions on women's migration to Gulf countries and Malaysia for low-skilled work
November 2009	Women's migration to Lebanon for all sectors banned
December 2010	Ban on women's migration to Gulf countries and Malaysia lifted for all women
August 2012	Women below 30 years of age banned from migrating to Gulf countries for domestic work
July 2014	Age ban expanded to include women of all ages, prohibiting them from migrating to the Gulf countries for domestic work
September 2014	Total ban on women migrating as domestic workers
April 2015	Regular migration channels opened for women migrant domestic workers to the Gulf countries and Southeast Asia; women below 24 years of age banned from migrating as domestic workers to these countries

Nonetheless, such discriminatory bans contravene the principle, set out in the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women,[186] of substantive equality – including equality of opportunity – between women and men, boys and girls. Instead of prohibiting the mobility of young women, increased efforts should be made to create and enforce rights-based agreements with destination country governments that formalise a shared responsibility for labour recruitment issues, the protection of migrant workers, and the identification and repatriation of victims of trafficking.

Social norms and discrimination

Gender inequality and caste-based discrimination

Women and girls often have limited control over their life decisions, such as attending school, when they marry, or whether to migrate.[187] State-imposed bans on female migration reinforce those norms (see Box 4).

In Nepal, it is becoming increasingly acceptable for women and girls to work, although the workforce is still highly gendered. While the female participation rate in the workforce is high at 81.7 per cent (compared with 84.4 per cent for males),[188] the demand for female labour is often limited to low-skilled, hazardous sectors where exploitative practices are commonplace, such as domestic work, care work, entertainment and the garment sector.

In the SWiFT survey, for example, **most adolescent girls and young women** migrated for domestic work – a feminised, highly unregulated and often invisible labour sector (see Figure 6). Their main destinations were Bahrain and Kuwait.

Table 6 Destinations for migrant Nepalese adolescent girls and young women (SWiFT data)

	Adolescent girls (10-18)	Young women (19-24)
Oman	2%	3%
Bahrain	49%	54%
Iraq	2%	5%
Kuwait	31%	26%
Lebanon	2%	0%
United Arab Emirates	9%	5%
India	2%	7%
Other	2%	1%

Figure 6 Proportion of girls and young women working in different labour sectors in the SWiFT survey

Adolescent girls

- Domestic work — 76%
- Garment factory — 2%
- Care giver — 9%
- Agriculture — 2%
- Retail — 7%
- Other — 9%

Young women

- Domestic work — 86%
- Garment factory — 2%
- Care giver — 7%
- Restaurant/hospitality — 3%
- Agriculture — 1%
- Other — 5%
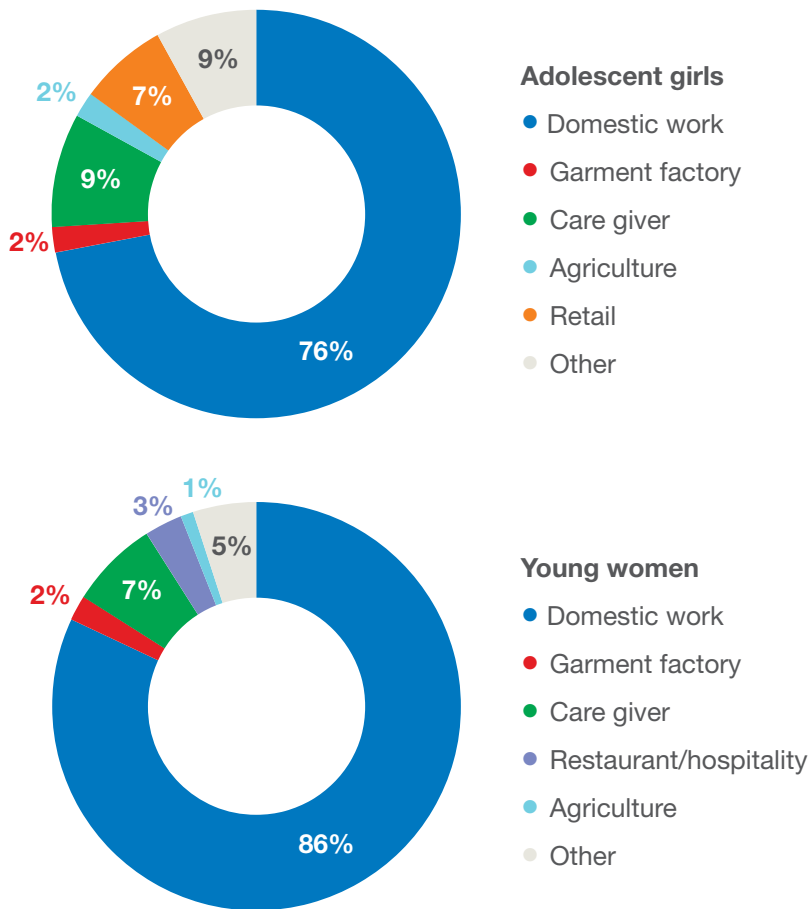
Adolescent girls are often targeted for exploitation because of their low status and limited agency within society.[189] Women and girls from marginalised groups, particularly those from the Dalit caste, who have traditionally been considered 'unclean' or 'untouchable' occupational workers, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.[190] In the SWiFT survey, **36 per cent** of adolescent girls and young women were Dalits (compared with the proportion in the general population of just 14 per cent[191]). Despite being forbidden by law, discrimination against Dalits in employment is pervasive and threats of exclusion from social activities and labour opportunities also increase their vulnerability to forced labour.[192]

The proportion of Janajati was also high in the SWiFT sample, with **40 per cent** of adolescent girls and **39 per cent** of young women reporting this indigenous caste. The Brahaman and Chettri upper castes were less commonly represented, with **16 per cent** of adolescent girls and **10 per cent** of young women.

April 2015 earthquakes

Anecdotal evidence[193] suggests a rise in human trafficking in the aftermath of the April 2015 earthquakes, which affected around eight million people in Nepal.[194] Girls and boys in the most affected districts faced increased risks of child trafficking, child labour, child marriage and violence (including sexual and gender-based violence) as a result of the earthquakes.[195] Many families lost their homes and livelihoods and adopted harmful coping mechanisms, placing children at further risk.[196]

The earthquakes resulted in widespread displacement and migration. One key informant described different migration trends: poorer people were forced to migrate internally while those with more financial resources sometimes left the country:

THE INDIAN BORDER FORCE REPORTED AN INCREASE IN NEPALESE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING FROM

33 IN 2014, TO

336 IN 2015, AND

501 IN 2016

"After the earthquake […] most people have migrated to the cities from (the) villages. Those who are a bit financially stronger have migrated for overseas employment and those who are financially not strong have resided in the cities and it has become a two-way chain."
Key informant

The NHRC reported a 15 per cent increase in the interception of people vulnerable to human trafficking during the three months following the earthquakes.[197] This trend was noted by key informants to this research:

"If we analyse the data, it has increased by 15 per cent after the mega earthquake in Nepal. The risk of trafficking is increased during natural disaster, and conflict. The natural disasters like floods, landslide and earthquake made many people homeless and displaced. At that time certainly they were at high risk; in some of the places like Nuwakot, Sindhupalchok, we can see still they are at risk. In these districts in some places, they are still living under the tents."
Key informant

According to the NHRC, the Nepal Police rescued 161 children (52 per cent of them girls) from different border points between Nepal and India in the five-month period directly after the earthquake.[198] Other anecdotal evidence supports this trend. For example, in 2016 the anti-trafficking NGO Maiti Nepal intercepted more than 5,700 'vulnerable' girls at border crossings to India. This compares with 2,900 in 2014, the year before the earthquakes.[199] The Sahastra Seema Bal, the Indian border force, also reported an increase from 33 victims of human trafficking in 2014, to 336 in 2015 and 501 in 2016.[200]

RECRUITMENT AND ENTRY INTO TRAFFICKING

Recruiters, brokers and labour intermediaries

Traffickers are commonly portrayed as external predators, but it is rare that girls and young women would not have had some previous interaction with the recruiter before the migration process.[201] Most adolescent girls and young women in Nepal are influenced to migrate or introduced to labour intermediaries by their wider network, including family members or social contacts.[202,203]

Recruiters or brokers are often known to the girls and young women or to their family. Most adolescent girls interviewed for this research reported that it was a close family member, kin, neighbour or friend that first initiated their consideration of or plans to migrate. Some of the girls migrated with a sibling or friend.

"The brother from our village told me he will take me to the city and find the job for me."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

Fictional case example 3 – Laxmi

Before Laxmi[204] decided to migrate, she used to live in rural Nepal. Her father died when she was ten years old. She lived with her mother and two siblings. Her uncle would occasionally help with her family's expenses, but he had a drinking problem and was often verbally and physically abusive towards her. She used to fear her uncle. While in her home village, Laxmi used to collect fodder and firewood, fetch water and carry manure to earn some money. She worked from 8am to 5pm every day. She gave most of the money she earned to her mother, but sometimes used some for herself. She used to earn approximately half of the wage given to boys her age for the same job. She had been out of school for two and half years before migrating.

She left her village when she was 14 years old to work in Kathmandu. Her uncle arranged the job through common acquaintances. She went by bus to the city accompanied by an acquaintance from her village. She felt frightened and alone when she got to Kathmandu but started to work as soon as she arrived there. She worked for three years in a hotel cleaning dishes, chopping vegetables, preparing tea. She used to work 14 hours per day and could not leave the hotel if she wanted to. She received food and accommodation but was not paid for her work.

"There was one neighbouring elder brother in Kuwait; he told me to come to Kuwait then after issuing passport I had gone there."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

"There was my sister and I went with her."
Adolescent girl, 16 years old

In the SWiFT survey, **40 per cent** of adolescent girls and **44 per cent** of young women reported that the broker was a friend, family member or acquaintance, or were referred by a family or community member. **Thirty-six per cent** of adolescent girls and nearly a third (**31 per cent**) of young women had help from the family or a friend to find a job abroad.

Half the adolescent girls (**53 per cent**) and **63 per cent** of young women used a local recruiter to help them find a job abroad, and **40 per cent** of adolescent girls and **29 per cent** of young women reported that they were influenced by a recruiter in their decision to migrate.

Eighty per cent of adolescent girls and **64 per cent** of young women paid for their migration expenses (i.e. travel, recruitment fees, expenses for documents etc.). Almost one in six (**16 per cent**) adolescent girls and **29 per cent** of young women took out a loan to pay for their migration, while **29 per cent** of adolescent girls and **10 per cent** of young women had the amount deducted from their wages at their destination.

Pre-departure risks

More than half of women in Nepal (62%) use recruitment agencies to migrate.[205] The country has a thriving labour recruitment industry, with almost 800 firms licensed by the Government and 50,000 brokers engaging in recruitment activities, mostly unlicensed and operating 'illegally.'[206]

Recent media publications have reported on the risks that Nepalese children, adolescents and their families can take when they place their trust in labour intermediaries, who then force them into work or bonded labour.[207,208] However, the complexity and uncertainty of international migration make labour intermediaries indispensable for migration to some destinations. Common abuses by labour recruiters include: deception about the nature and conditions of work, retention of passports, replacement of contracts, undisclosed fees, deposits and illegal wage deductions, illegal recruitment fees to workers, debt bondage linked to repayment of recruitment fees, and threats of violence and deportation.[209,210]

Among female migrants interviewed in SWIFT, **96 per cent** of adolescent girls and **92 per cent** of young women did not know if the labour intermediary they used was licensed.

Most adolescent girls (**76 per cent**) and young women (**66 per cent**) did not have a written work contract before they left Nepal for their most recent migration. The minority had a labour permit (**35 per cent** of adolescent girls and young women who responded to this question) or life insurance (**25 per cent** of adolescent girls and **21 per cent** of young women who responded[211]) when they migrated.

One of the key informants interviewed for this study claimed that adolescents were especially at risk of trafficking because they were more likely to be deceived by recruiters or brokers:

"The most high-risk group for being trafficked is the adolescence group, because the adolescents trust very easily, and it is easy for the brokers to entrap such a group. The adolescents are in very high-risk group, because in any form of trafficking, the brokers can earn better money, and get more profits."
Key informant

Sharmila* was trafficked to Dubai where she was forced into domestic slavery

Understanding the processes and paperwork involved in migrating is usually difficult for those who can read, but impossible for the **25 per cent** of adolescent girls and young women in the SWiFT sample who could read very little or nothing at all. This could, in part, explain why adolescent girls and young women often rely on local recruiters and labour intermediaries to organise many aspects of their migration.[212] However, doing so may limit their autonomy to decide on important aspects of their migration, such as type of work, destination, work contract or mode of travel, and can leave them particularly vulnerable to trafficking, sexual exploitation and forced labour.

Increasing awareness among women and girls of migration processes could support them to make more informed choices. For example, the SWiFT survey indicated that, prior to their migration, young women and adolescent girls valued the provision of practical information about documentation and avenues for legal migration, vocational skills-building components, and rights-based training activities.[213] However, the effectiveness of safe migration trainings is often limited because of the substantial power differentials that women encounter in their interactions with brokers' networks and employers during their migration.[214,215]

Furthermore, evidence from SWiFT shows that **68 per cent** of adolescent girls and **71 per cent** of young women who experienced forced labour reported being aware of the risks at the time of migration. Additionally, **40 per cent** of adolescents and **88 per cent** of young women who intended to migrate again had experienced forced labour in their most recent migration. This highlights the importance of combining pre-departure awareness-raising efforts with a set of wider strategies that address the structural drivers of human trafficking and the systemic risks in the migration pathway to avoid perpetuating a state of 'informed powerlessness' for migrants and potential migrants.[216]

EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND FORCED LABOUR

Means of control

As is common, many of the adolescent girls interviewed for this research were working in highly feminised and often invisible sectors including care and domestic work (see Figure 6).

The informality of the working arrangements and the precarious legal status of migrant girls and young women abroad can restrict their access to justice. In one study, for example, Nepalese female migrant domestic workers in Lebanon reported high rates of violence, long hours, threats, verbal abuse, and lack of basic rights such as privacy in their accommodation, medical treatment or sick leave. The same study found that 83 per cent of Nepalese migrant domestic workers would not have migrated to Lebanon if they had known the reality of the working conditions.[217]

Adolescent girls and young women in the SWiFT survey commonly reported abusive and poor working conditions at their destination. The means of control experienced by adolescent girls and young women are shown in Figure 7.

The asymmetry of power in the relationship between employer and workers often impedes workers from openly negotiating their rights, especially when the worker is a child.[218] There are many other anecdotal narratives in empirical research and NGO reports about girls who are deceived by recruiters in the migration process or employers at their destination in India, ending up trafficked to urban areas such as Mumbai and exploited in prostitution.[219] Girls and women who participated in the SWiFT survey, however, did not report sexual exploitation.

Figure 7 Means of control: Nepal SWiFT data
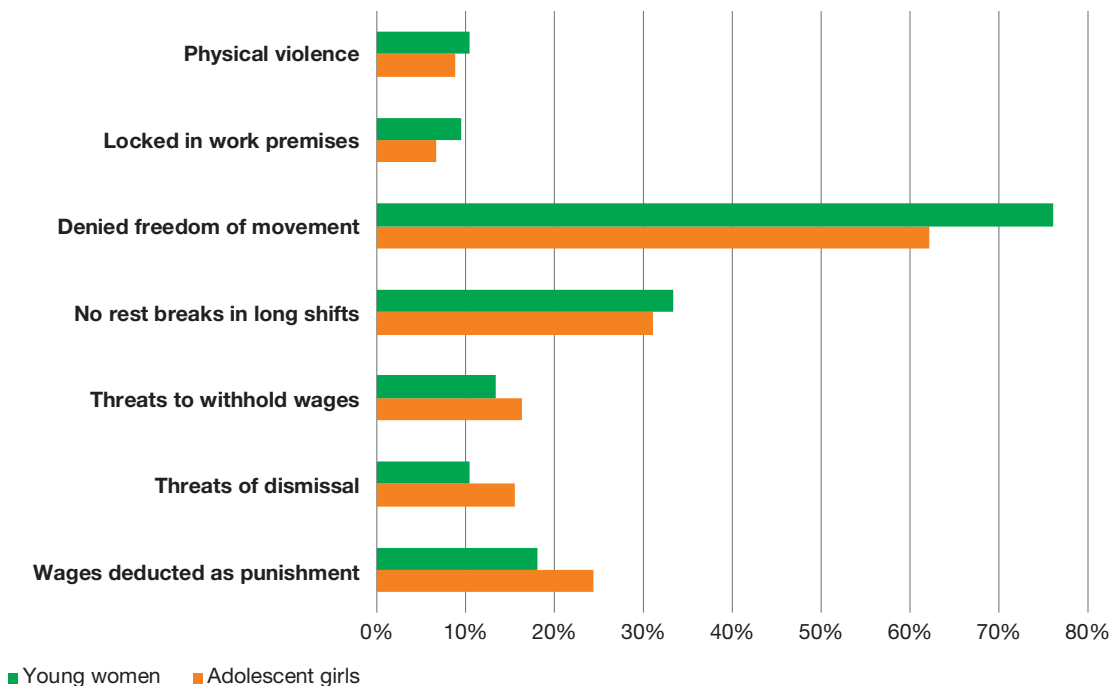
Most of the adolescent girls and young women interviewed for this research reported working long hours, some as many as 18-20 hours in a day, many without a day off. Despite their economic motivations to migrate for work, few of the adolescent girls and young women interviewed ever saw their promised wages. Those that did receive a wage were sending most of it home to their mothers or family.

"I was expecting to earn some money, but they did not pay me."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

Box 5 IOM's Global Victim of Trafficking Database cases for Nepal

Among victims from Nepal in IOM's Global Victim of Trafficking Database (VOTD), 74 per cent are female. The VOTD contained records for 13 young women aged between 19 and 24 years old at the time of registration. The VOTD contained no cases of girls.

The most common international destinations for young women were Lebanon (**83 per cent**), Iraq (**7 per cent**), Malaysia (**7 per cent**) and Kenya (**3 per cent**). The reported duration of trafficking ranged between three days to **1,415 days**, with a mean duration of **97 days**.[220]

Labour migration (**54 per cent**) was the primary means through which young women (19-24) entered the trafficking process. Most reported using a recruiter, and more than two-thirds (**72 per cent**) reported that the recruiter was a business contact.[221] The most common (**89 per cent**) purpose of trafficking was forced labour, compared with other forms of exploitation (**11 per cent**).[222] **None** were trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Figure 8 Means of control: Nepal VOTD
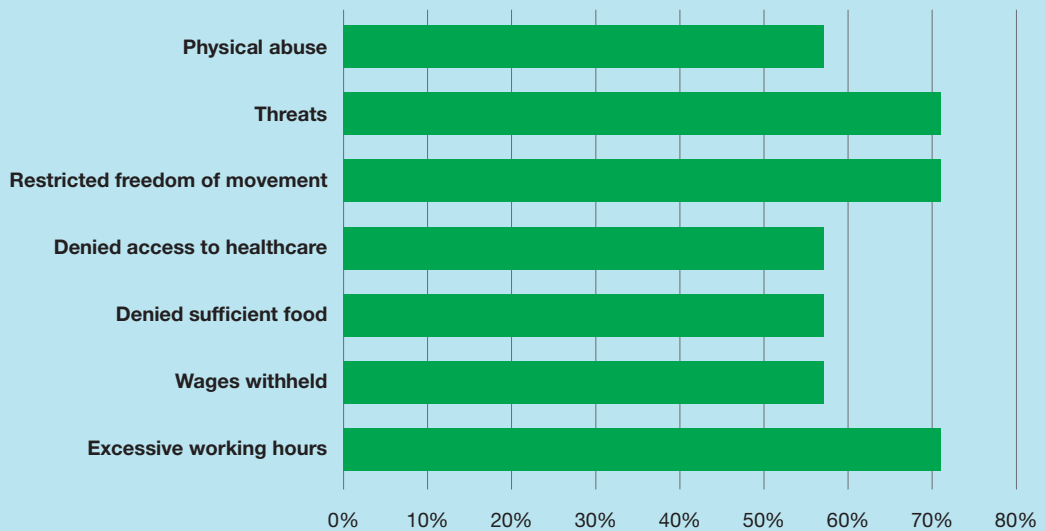
Violence, abuse and exploitation

The experiences of the 150 Nepalese adolescent girls and young women in the SWiFT survey show that migrants remain susceptible to experiences of violence, abuse and exploitation throughout the migration cycle. The majority reported experiencing forced labour at their destination.

One of the adolescent girls interviewed for this research reported being forcefully given alcohol before being sexually exploited and beaten. Others were aware of the potential risks of sex trafficking and sexual violence faced by migrant girls and young women. Although experiences of sexual abuse are frequently reported among female migrant workers,[223] including Nepalese workers in the Gulf States,[224] **none** of the adolescent girls or young women in the SWiFT survey sample reported sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by employers.[225] Sexual exploitation is a sensitive and often stigmatised experience and it is possible that this form of violence has been under-reported.

Other forms of violence and abuse were reported, however. **Thirty-eight per cent** of adolescent girls and a **similar number** of young women reported that their employer or someone responsible for their job yelled at, insulted or humiliated them. **Four per cent** of adolescent girls and **2 per cent** of young women had their clothes intentionally damaged or ripped. **Seven per cent** of adolescent girls and **9 per cent** of young women were hit with a fist, slapped or had something thrown at them that could hurt. **Two** adolescent girls and **eight** young women were

Fictional case example 4 – Sanjana

Sanjana[226] used to live with her parents in a populous town in Nepal. Her father only worked part time and used to spend most of the money he earned on alcohol. Her mother worked outside the house, while Sanjana worked in a restaurant washing dishes. Sanjana's father was violent towards her and her mother. Sanjana was scared of him and wanted to leave home. Her parents were not supportive of her decision.

A friend arranged a job for her as a domestic worker in Kathmandu. She used to work from 5am to 9pm every day. Her employers were verbally abusive and did not pay any of her wages. She was not allowed out of the house at any time. She did not have enough food to eat.

She managed to contact the friend who had arranged the job for her and he took her out of there. When she returned to her parents' house, she shared her experience with a neighbour who worked at a post-trafficking assistance service. At the time of the interview, Sanjana was learning to read and receiving skills training. She hopes to open her own small business sewing clothes.

pushed, shoved, kicked, dragged or beaten. **Two** young women were tied, chained or choked on purpose, and **one** was threatened with a weapon. **Four** young women reported that the employer or a member of their family threatened to use a gun, knife or other weapon against them, and **two** were chained, tied or choked on purpose.

There is a common feature across the sample: **all** the adolescent girls and **91 per cent** of young women reported that the perpetrator was the employer. **Half** of the adolescent girls and **almost a third** of the young women also reported the employer's family members as perpetrators. This reinforces findings from previous research with Nepalese domestic workers abroad who reported abuse from their employer or their employer's family members.[227]

These findings, while not claiming to be representative of the experiences of all Nepalese migrants, demonstrate that serious gaps remain in the prevention of exploitation during the migration process.
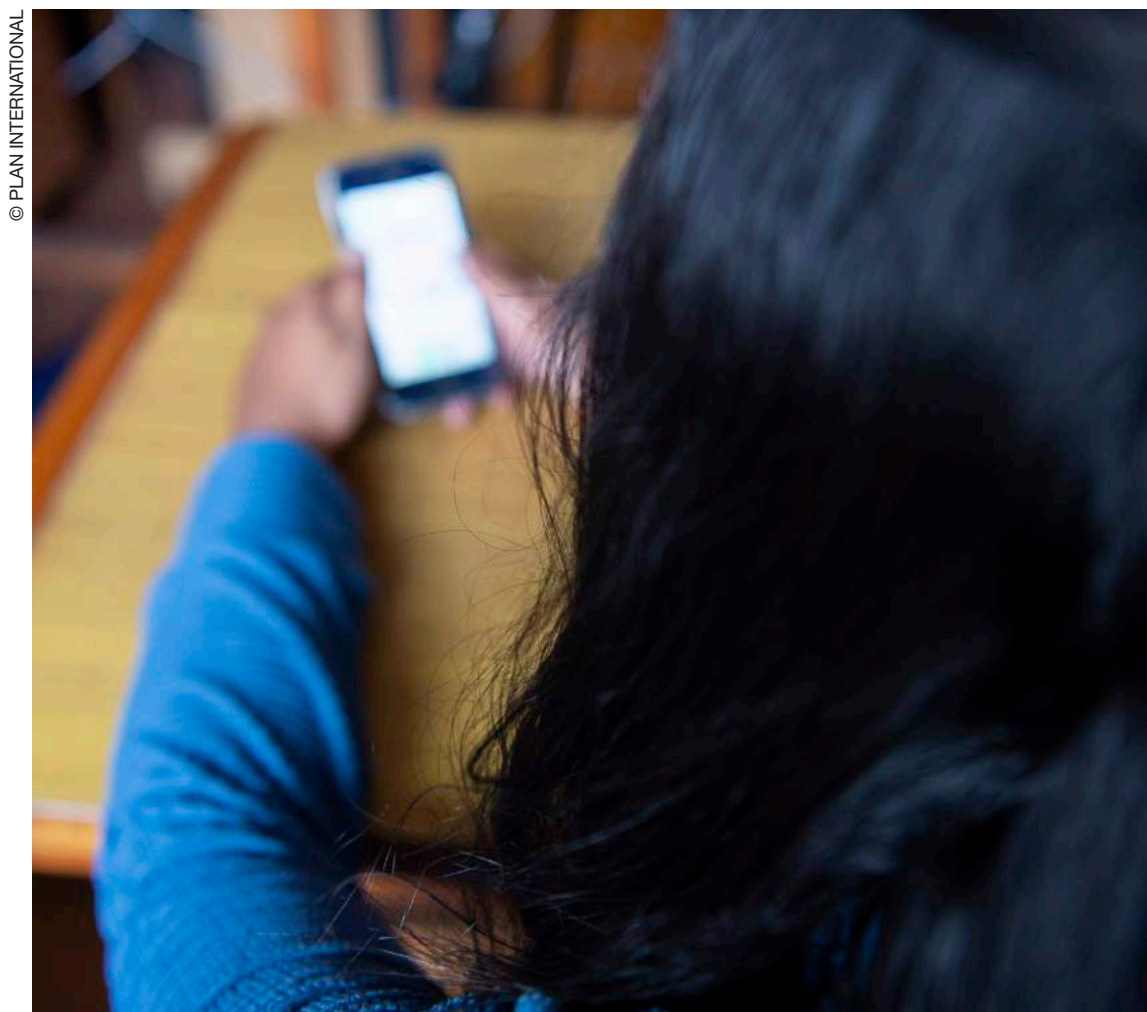
Plan International UK interviewed adolescent girls in Nepal who are survivors of trafficking for its Because I am a Girl campaign

ANTI-TRAFFICKING POLICY AND INTERVENTIONS IN NEPAL

The Government of Nepal has shown political commitment to achieving SDG 8.7 through its endorsement of the *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking* and its agreement to become a 'Pathfinder Country' of the global Alliance 8.7 initiative.[228] These recent commitments reinforce longstanding efforts by the Nepalese government to address human trafficking and promote decent work. However, gaps remain, including through the government's failure to ratify the Palermo Protocol.[229]

Prevention

This research has demonstrated that more needs to be done to ensure girls complete a quality education, have access to decent work, and are able to make informed migration choices. Education and skills training for groups at risk of trafficking was seen by key informants as an important prevention strategy:

"Those girls who have been dropped out from the school and want to learn some skills, skills-based training programmes are also effective to develop interest and they are motivated to advanced skills-based training and contributing for self-employment."
Key Informant

In the past decade, the government and NGOs have invested a considerable amount in awareness-raising and rights training across the country, including for adolescent girls. The Ministry of Education has also integrated content on trafficking into the social studies curriculum from Grades 6-10.[230] Key informants to this study believed such activities should continue to be prioritised:

"Our Ministry should give priority in awareness programmes, and interaction programmes with the communities should be focused."
Key Informant

"They do not have knowledge and education [on] how to protect themselves from being trafficked, and they also do not have knowledge on existing provision of law and regulation; these are the factors that are increasing risk of trafficking."
Key Informant

"Our community is looking at overseas employment, human trafficking, gender violence, sexual harassment etc. and if we include these things in our education system, we will be aware and updated on these things."
Key Informant

Given that many at-risk girls and boys are in rural areas and likely not to be in education, it will be important to couple this with wider efforts to target this vulnerable group. Key informants were keen to stress that large-scale approaches to the prevention of human trafficking should be rolled-out in rural areas. A bottom-up approach and strategies to identify and address the root causes of human trafficking were also raised as important:

"Regarding the NGOs, they should not limit their activities at the centre, but they should go down to the grass roots level and find out the real problem and the root cause."
Key Informant

> **"While developing plans, we should not be confined to Kathmandu; rather, should go to the working district, consult with the women and adolescents or other persons and discuss with them, [to understand] what type of programme will support them… Taking their views, proposals should be developed but just [the] opposite [is happening] in practice; the proposals are developed in Kathmandu, while implemented in the rural areas. Some of the programmes are failing."**
> *Key Informant*

> **"On top of that, controlling human trafficking, or identifying vulnerability – how many of them are vulnerable, where are they vulnerable – we have no such actual data recorded."**
> *Key Informant*

The National Committee for Controlling Human Trafficking (NCCHT) oversees nationwide anti-trafficking efforts, with support from both district- and local-level committees. The NCCHT trains members of the district-level committees funded by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MWCSC) to support awareness campaigns, meeting expenses, emergency victim services, and the local committees in line with the government's 2012-2022 anti-trafficking National Plan of Action. There are 732 local committees in operation, overseeing local efforts and identifying and screening for trafficking within their communities.[231]

Evaluating the effectiveness of counter-trafficking interventions and analysing the mechanisms through which these programmes can protect girls and young women can help increase value for money in NGO and government interventions. Indeed, the need for evidence-based interventions was highlighted by one key informant:

> **"Now that a new structure (state structure) has been established this might be a golden opportunity… They need evidence-based information like, for example, which places there are problems of trafficking of girls, problems of sexual exploitation etc."**
> *Key Informant*

Protection

In 2017 the Government of Nepal doubled the dedicated budget for assistance to female victims of violence, including trafficking survivors.[232] The MWCSC also supports NGO-run shelters for female victims of violence, including trafficking, with funding for staff members, running costs, and legal and psychosocial support for victims.[233] Furthermore, efforts have been made by Nepalese embassies to expand the provision of legal support in destination countries.[234]

Overall, however, stakeholders still consider prevention efforts to be more valued by donors than protection.

> **"Sometimes we must face unexpected events, like natural disasters, which are adding new challenges. Sometimes what happens, most of the donors want to support prevention, because outcomes can be seen there. But the donors are not interested in the protection theme, because the clients are just living and eating, it takes very long time to produce outcomes or outputs; those who expect outcomes in short time, they do not like investing in this theme."**
> *Key Informant*

This finding is in line with recent research on anti-trafficking policies in more than 180 countries,[235] which indicates that protection of survivors is usually the weakest area of

governmental investments, especially in developing countries.

> **"We are happy to receive the remittance and a large portion of our national budget is from this remittance, but we do not have any mechanism to trace the labour migrant, where is s/he? What is s/he doing? Or is s/he in any trouble? Nobody is there to look after [him/her]."**
> *Key Informant*

Girls and young women often face intense stigma and are ostracised when they return home, leaving them further vulnerable to marginalisation and exploitation.[236] There remains a significant unmet need for psychosocial support and other services to meet the immediate needs of adolescent girls, despite the opening of 19 emergency shelters and the same number of community service shelters in 2018. There are now still only ten rehabilitation homes, 36 emergency shelters, and 36 community service centres for female victims of gender-based violence, including trafficking, in the whole country.[237]

Services available to men and boys are even more limited and the referral of all victims of trafficking is inadequate and inconsistent.[238] Furthermore, there is a lack of services targeting adolescent survivors of trafficking, and wider related services are not often child-friendly. The government also lacks an adequate national repatriation policy and system, including an efficient repatriation information management system.

Law enforcement and prosecution

The Government of Nepal has criminalised a number of exploitative practices, both in the recruitment pathway and the employment context. The new constitution drafted in 2015 includes the right to not be exploited and the right to not be trafficked, both of which the government is now accountable to in annual reviews, and it has signed most international protocols and agreements to address unsafe migration and trafficking.

However, Nepal has not yet signed the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, or the ILO Convention 189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011[239] – key pieces of international law that are particularly relevant to the Nepalese context.

The government has also increased anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts to tackle some forms of labour and sex trafficking, criminalised under the 2007 Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act (HTTCA).[240] The HTTCA, however, does not include forced labour within its definition, a significant gap in the legislation that is not in line with the Palermo Protocol.[241] Inconsistent with international law, the HTTCA also requires a demonstration of force, fraud, or coercion to constitute a child sex trafficking offence, and therefore does not provide protection against all forms of child sex trafficking.[242]

Despite this misalignment between domestic legislation and international law, key informants to this research reported that prosecution was a central part of the Nepalese government's plan to combat human trafficking:

> **"The matter of human trafficking is [an] inexcusable crime. Nepal being [...] one of the signatory countries of [the] international treaty against human trafficking, [it] is trying to bring all those criminal [offences] under the legal frame formulating the concerned laws."**
> *Key Informant*

Abina* was rescued from prostitution and now works to keep other women safe

The Nepal Police Women's Cells (NPWCs) conducted 313 investigations under the HTTCA during the 2018/19 fiscal year, compared with 227 and 212 cases in the previous two.[243] The majority of victims were women and girls, and prosecutions were initiated in 285 of the cases.[244]

Partnerships

Key informants interviewed for this research considered collaboration with international governments and other partners important for sharing good practices, learning, having technical support, transnational surveillance and policing collaboration:

"The problem would not be solved only with the single effort of any country; rather, the whole international community should [be] aware and should work jointly. While talking in our context, records show that most of the events of human trafficking are towards India. So, we cannot move forward, without the support of Indian police, Indian

government, provincial government there or other stakeholders there. I have mentioned it here just for example. This issue is also intercontinental, so we should work collectively. And IOM, UN agencies, and international organisations can play leading role for safer migration."
Key Informant

The Government of Nepal has signed bilateral agreements with five major destination countries, including Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Korea and Japan.[245] These agreements deal with issues of recruitment procedures, contracts, accommodation and other workers' rights. This international collaboration was seen by some key informants as having the potential to help identification and protection efforts.

"This is not only issue of one state or country: it is the international issue. There must be government to government coordination and [they] should work jointly."
Key Informant

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Human trafficking often occurs as an outcome of migration, particularly economic migration, when women and girls have limited bargaining power in their migration and work choices.[246] This research has found that most Nepalese trafficked women and adolescent girls had chosen or been influenced to migrate – often as a coping mechanism, livelihood strategy or aspirational endeavour. During their migration, women and girls often end up in exploitative work through deception or coercion.

While the Government of Nepal has made some progress and has made investments in the prevention of human trafficking, the country's enduring poverty and slow economic and human development continue to be important enablers of human trafficking. At a population level, mobility within Nepal has also been associated with development and often perceived as a mechanism to meet the growing aspirations of young people. Consideration is needed to devise a prevention strategy that reconciles adolescent girls' protection with economic development. While efforts are under way to achieve this in Kathmandu, clear gaps remain in rural areas of Nepal.

Understanding why and how some girls migrate and their experiences of trafficking is imperative for setting the agenda for prevention. Very little is known about the mechanisms by which adolescent girls are trafficked, although the drivers of trafficking go beyond individual determinants and are embedded within a complex and connected system of family and community members, recruitment networks and employers. The decisions, actions and interactions between these individuals influence key contextual drivers of migration. These need to be better understood and used to inform policies and programmes so they can respond to the lived realities of girls and young women.

Furthermore, research shows that on their return home, girls and young women may face stigma associated with migration, as well as restricted opportunities. Young women's migration decisions and reintegration are often affected by gender norms that construe female migration as a threat to family honour and social cohesion.[247] Women and girls often prefer to keep their trafficking experience secret to avoid being stigmatised and blamed by family and community members upon their return. This may lead to those close to them misinterpreting their anxiety and trauma symptoms as aggression and hostility.[248,249]

While an increase in the levels of support that has been made available to survivors is certainly welcome, it is not enough to meet the needs of survivors across the country. This is particularly the case for adolescents and young women who are less likely to access services that are primarily designed for older females. At a minimum, there is a need for integrated, inclusive adolescent and child-friendly services to be available to survivors of trafficking. Sustainable and long-term programmes are also needed to address the stigma associated with trafficking and support the successful reintegration of survivors.

TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN UGANDA

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Poverty and inequality

Uganda is ranked 162 out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index, and has a score of 0.523 in the Gender Inequality Index (where 0 represents equality between males and females and 1 is the lowest score).[250] Uganda has a population of 34.6 million (2016) that is projected to grow at an annual rate of three per cent.[251] This is the result of a high fertility rate of 5.8 children per woman.[252]

Uganda has reduced monetary poverty at a rapid rate: it has reduced the share of its population living on USD1.90 (purchasing power parity – PPP) per day or less from 53.2 per cent in 2006 to 34.6 per cent in 2013, primarily among households that rely on agriculture for a living.[253] However, the World Bank reports that households in Uganda remain vulnerable, with two Ugandans falling back into poverty for every three that came out between 2005 and 2009.[254]

Rapid urbanisation

In 2014, only 18 per cent of Ugandans were living in urban areas,[255] although the urbanisation process has been rapidly increasing since. The World Bank estimates that 20 million Ugandans will be living in cities by 2040.[256] Urban infrastructure has not accompanied this fast-paced growth and at least 60 per cent of the urban population lives in slums.[257]

Adolescent girls' and young women's rights

Adolescents and youth (10-24 years) represent approximately 34 per cent of the total population of Uganda.[258] There are around 7.9 million adolescent girls and young women in Uganda, 17 per cent of the estimated total population (45.7 million).[259]

One in four female adolescents aged between 15 and 19 have had a child or were pregnant, with 42 per cent of adolescent pregnancies being unintended.[260] Large numbers of adolescent girls in Uganda are poor and at high risk of child marriage, early pregnancy, and sexual and reproductive health problems, including sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

In Uganda, 10 per cent of girls are married by age 15 and 40 per cent by age 18. Uganda ranks as number 16 in the world for prevalence of child marriage.[261] Furthermore, sexual and gender-based violence against Ugandan adolescent girls is widespread,[262] with 41 per cent of girls aged between 15 and 19 years old having experienced physical violence and 10 per cent sexual violence.[263]

Adolescents and youth are disenfranchised and disproportionately affected by underemployment, informal employment and high numbers of working poor.[264] Just over one-third (33.47 per cent) of Ugandan young people aged 15 to 24 are not in education, employment or training (NEET).[265] Girls

and young women are disproportionately affected,[266] with 42.3 per cent of females aged 15-24 NEET, compared with 23.7 per cent of males.[267]

Compared to boys, girls' access to education is disproportionally affected by household income shocks, suggesting cultural norms that sustain family preferences for investments in boys' education. Universal primary education policies have increased access, but secondary education remains elusive for most. Thirteen per cent of Ugandan girls have never been to school, compared with 14 per cent of boys. While 76 per cent of girls transition from primary level (compared to 82 per cent of boys), only 15 per cent complete lower secondary education (compared to 17 per cent of boys).[268]

Plan International interviewed Ugandan adolescent girls who have experienced exploitation as part of its Because I am a Girl campaign

Child labour

Child labour involving children aged 5 to 17 is estimated at 14 per cent (15.4 per cent of boys compared with 11.9 per cent of girls).[269] Of those children and adolescents (7 to 14 years old) who are working, 96 per cent are in the agricultural sector.[270]

Conflict and insurgency

Poverty reduction has been slower in Eastern and Northern Uganda than in other parts of the country because of the civil conflict that affected the region for almost two decades. In 2013, 75 per cent of Uganda's poor lived in these two regions.[271] The insurgency of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda caused a humanitarian crisis that predominantly impacted the Acholi people. This conflict caused tens of thousands of deaths, the abduction of at least 20,000 Ugandan children and the displacement of approximately 1.9 million people.[272]

This conflict had a severe impact on agriculture, the main economic activity in Northern Uganda. During the humanitarian crisis, there was an important decrease in the wealth held in livestock (65 per cent of the average value of livestock holdings and 25.5 per cent of the mean annual consumption) and a shift towards the growth of crops with short maturation times.[273] This change in the composition of crops and the difficulty of local food markets functioning during conflicts may have had important long-term effects on adolescents' human capital.[274] Furthermore, boys and girls that were recruited into military action by the LRA as soldiers, porters or for sexual services[275] are more likely to experience economic gaps associated with the time they spent away from civilian education and labour markets.[276]

MIGRATION IN UGANDA

The number of Ugandan international migrants has significantly increased in the last decade, from just under half a million in 2010, to 1.73 million in 2019.[277] In 2019, girls and young women (0-24 years) comprise 34 per cent (585,245) of the total international Ugandan migrants. Most of these (416,534) are girls between the ages of 0 and 14.[278] Drivers of migration include environmental shocks, population growth, high youth unemployment rates and the lack of attractive employment options in the country.[279]

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN UGANDA

Uganda is known to be a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to several forms of trafficking including forced labour and sex trafficking.[280] There is however a dearth of literature that elaborates on the specific experience of trafficked adolescents in Uganda. In general, however, trafficking in children is a major concern in Uganda with vulnerable children (for example, orphaned children, children from poor households, children out of school, children who live or work on the street, children who are separated from their parents, children with low education, and those living in violent households) at higher risk of being trafficked.[281]

Children as young as seven are exploited through forced labour in a number of contexts and industries including agriculture, street vending, begging, hospitality and domestic service. Both boys and girls have also been exploited in prostitution with recruiters targeting girls and women aged 13-24 for domestic sex trafficking, particularly near sports tournaments and road construction projects. Young women are also known to be the most vulnerable to transnational trafficking, usually through seeking employment as domestic workers in the Middle East and elsewhere. Young women in these situations are often fraudulently exploited for forced sexual exploitation,[282] or are vulnerable to rape, sexual abuse and physical violence as female domestic workers.[283]

IN 2019, GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN (0-24 YEARS) COMPRISED

34%

OF THE TOTAL INTERNATIONAL UGANDAN MIGRANTS

UGANDA FINDINGS

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

Among victims from Uganda in IOM's Global Victim of Trafficking Database (VOTD), **73 per cent** are women or girls. **Fifty-six per cent** of these women and girls were 24 years old or younger at the time of registration, and **36 per cent** were under 18. For the women and girls with data available, **40 per cent** of young women were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The figure drops to **22 per cent** when the sample is restricted to girls and young women aged 24 years and under.

The VOTD dataset for Uganda contained **33** cases of trafficked young girls (under 10 years old), **34** cases of adolescent girls (10-18 years old) and **28** cases of trafficked young women (19-24 years old). The reported age ranges at the time of entry of these girls and young women into the trafficking process were 0-8 (31 per cent), 9-11 (11 per cent), 12-14 (20 per cent), 15-17 (7 per cent), 18-20 (5 per cent), 21-23 (23 per cent) and 24 (3 per cent). Data on age at the time of entry into trafficking was missing for 21 per cent of the cases in the Uganda dataset.

DISTRIBUTION AND GEOGRAPHY OF TRAFFICKING CASES IN THE VOTD

Most younger girls in the IOM's VOTD were trafficked internally within Uganda and the remainder to Thailand. Data was missing for 15 per cent of this age group. Adolescent girls were also trafficked mainly within Uganda, but there was also one girl trafficked to Turkey (Data was missing for 11 per cent of this age group). The majority (**62 per cent**) were unaccompanied children during the trafficking process (data missing for 19 per cent of this age group). Malaysia was the main destination for young women (**36 per cent**), followed by Thailand (**16 per cent**) and Iraq (**four per cent**).[284]

All the young and adolescent girls in the dataset were single, compared with **75 per cent** of young women. Of the remainder of the young women, **7 per cent** were married and **four per cent** were divorced (data is missing for four per cent of cases).

The results from the qualitative study reveal a similar picture to the quantitative. **Seven of the eight** adolescent girls (aged between 14 and 19) were trafficked within Uganda. **One** was trafficked from Rwanda into Uganda. The shortest period of trafficking was **three months** and the longest was **one year**. Three participants did not however reach their expected place of employment and instead were referred through the police to post-trafficking services.

73%
OF IDENTIFIED UGANDAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS IN THE IOM'S GLOBAL VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING DATABASE ARE WOMEN AND GIRLS

DRIVERS OF MIGRATION AND RISKS OF TRAFFICKING AMONG GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN UGANDA

Poverty and inequality

Deep regional socioeconomic inequalities within Uganda, as well as global inequalities, are likely to influence adolescents' desire to migrate from rural settings to urban locations, or to engage in international migration, in search of material gains.

Information on family economic status was not available in the VOTD on nearly all the young and adolescent girls and almost half (46 per cent) of the young women. Among the 15 young women who reported, 53 per cent were from poor families, 33 per cent from very poor families, and 13 per cent from families with an average wealth status. Poverty was reported in the qualitative data as a dominant feature of the households from which many of the study participants migrated, and was cited as a key driver in the key informant interviews:

> **"It is an issue of poverty... the aspect of not getting enough education... so you do not have the required skills and if someone comes and says, 'This is a better opportunity', you want to take it up, because you want to see yourself with some little money and probably supporting your families back home."**
> *Key Informant*

The desire to improve living conditions and increase economic opportunities in line with aspirations and hopes for the future can influence migration decisions and is a factor in children migrating from rural areas to urban centres. Specifically, the promise of access to education can feed into parents' aspirations to provide better life opportunities to their daughters:

> **"People who are in Karamoja envy people living in Kampala, to also come in Kampala and have a good life... go to school... children will leave villages... [go from] rural areas to the urban areas in search of better life."**
> *Key Informant*

> **"If the trafficker goes and says, 'I am taking your child to school... I will give them a better life...', the parent will willingly give them the child..."**
> *Key Informant*

Family breakdown and neglect

All the adolescent girls interviewed for this research came from challenging backgrounds, including family breakdown, child abandonment and neglect, alcoholism, abuse and/or violence. Experiences of poverty, violence or abuse often motivated the decisions of adolescent girls to migrate.

One girl, for example, described how, following the death of her father and the departure of her mother, she lived with her paternal uncle who was unable to afford her schooling, although all his own children were studying:

> **"He paid my school fees but when he realised that he [could no longer afford my] school fees because he had so many children of his own, he stopped paying [them] so that he could pay school fees for his own children. So I stopped schooling and up to this day I have not gone [back] to school."**
> *Adolescent girl, 14 years old*

Informal fostering of children by kinship networks is common in Uganda. However, since the 1990s, with an increasing number of orphans due to the HIV epidemics, these networks have become overburdened.[285,286] Girls interviewed for this study reported challenging circumstances while living with extended family, including violence and abuse. They described being treated poorly, including being denied food or medical treatment:

"They would always insult me and... at times they would not give me food; they would discriminate against me... Even when I would be ill, they would not take me for treatment; I would go to the neighbours and ask for tablets."
Adolescent girl, 14 years old

These difficult situations described by adolescent girls coexist with the opportunities they often identify in migration.[287]

Fictional case example 5 – Patience

Patience[288] was ten years old when her mother died. Her father abandoned her and married another woman. She moved between relatives in rural Uganda, attending school intermittently whenever her relatives had money to afford the school fees. In the last house she was living in she was regularly insulted and mistreated and decided to move away.

She dropped out of the first year of secondary education and moved to a cousin's house in a neighbourhood in the outskirts of Kampala. The house was small and overcrowded. Her cousin was married and had four children and her family struggled to make ends meet. Patience felt like a burden to her cousin and decided to try and find work. She was 17 years old.

Patience imagined herself working at a shop, but instead was offered a job as a domestic worker. She didn't want that kind of work but felt she was in no position to refuse it. She started working in a large family house in Kampala. She worked long hours trying to deal with an unmanageable workload. She was not paid. She was verbally, physically and sexually abused by her employers. She stayed in this job for six months.

Patience was approached by a door-to-door saleswoman who asked her about her situation. She helped Patience to register with the local council and she was referred to a post-trafficking assistance service. When she was interviewed for this research, she reported she had regained hope. She was planning to use the skills she learned in the post-trafficking assistance service to find a decent job.

Youth unemployment

Situations of poverty, family instability or crisis often prevented the girls and young women in this study from attending school or led them to drop out because they could not afford school fees. Lower levels of qualifications, social capital and assets mean that girls and young women are less likely than boys and young men to find decent work, making them more vulnerable to human trafficking:[289,290]

"They [victims of trafficking] are normally school dropouts… [the] majority cannot speak English and they are not educated and are not aware of their rights."
Key Informant

In Uganda, unemployment rates are higher among youth in urban compared with rural areas.[291] Disproportionate rises in employment in urban centres when compared to rural locations have historically driven rural-urban migration trends in Africa.[292] These trends may attract adolescents despite the very high rates of youth unemployment in Uganda.[293]

These high rates of youth unemployment pose great challenges to the social and economic inclusion of young people in Uganda and are likely to contribute to their vulnerability to different forms of exploitation. Key informants recognise the impact of youth unemployment in increasing adolescents' risks of being trafficked.

"Some of the youth have studied, but they don't have jobs… When we talk to them, even those in transit… they say that, they would rather be exploited than unemployed."
Key Informant

"You have a country where you have a big number of youth who are not employed… we are struggling for the same little opportunities, we are not creating jobs, we are not even training them to … create their
own jobs. So, you practically have a [large] population that is very easy to traffic… because everybody is vulnerable, and they are trying to get a better life for themselves."
Key Informant

Gender and age

Deep gender inequalities persist in Uganda both in access to education and the labour market, and in land and asset ownership. Women also experience greater levels of violence than men.[294] The patriarchal structure of Uganda's society limits women's access to the financial resources needed to secure their children's livelihoods. In addition, their roles as carers for extended family members often mean that they have reduced means to meet their family's needs.[295]

Differences between the work girls and boys perform were noted by the girls who were interviewed as an important contextual factor that makes girls more vulnerable to certain forms of exploitation, including in domestic work:

"The boys whom I have heard say that they want to work do not say that they want to become house girls [domestic workers]: they say that they want to go and work as builders or work as casual labourers at shops but they do not interest themselves in working as house girls; but the girls pride themselves on it."
Adolescent girl, 15 years old

"The little girl grows up feeling that, 'Everything I do is to please a male' […] …the girls are more at risk; some people feel the girls are the weaker sex, or sometimes the girls have been the less skilled in a family than the boys… so there is still some uniqueness there."
Key Informant

However, not all key informants perceived adolescent girls to be more at risk of trafficking than boys. They highlighted instead the differential visibility of the cases involving girls compared with boys:

"It is kind of silent there for the boys... it is very difficult for them to come out... so we see more girls who would be affected by trafficking than boys."
Key Informant

"The factors apply to both sexes, it is just that the boys... traditionally we are told that boys don't cry, and so they have to keep their feelings of fear, tears, every emotion [inside]... But when something is happening deep inside, we have also seen men who do not want to come out and speak about it, but that does not mean that trafficking is not involving men, or they don't traffic men."
Key Informant

"We deal a lot with the internal trafficking, simply because we are seeing a lot of movement of girls from the villages to the main centres, and then they end up in bars as karaoke girls... or they are harboured in one particular brothel and they are being forced to engage in sexual activities... Although of recent we have also started seeing boys, who are being forced into [situations of] sexual exploitation... they play a role of protectors within these brothels, but somehow, find themselves also engaging in the sexual activities as well."
Key Informant

These remarks remind us that, although girls might be at increased vulnerability of trafficking, anti-trafficking efforts also need to also focus on sectors where boys are likely to be exploited. More research with different population samples in a range of sectors is needed to describe the patterns and trends of trafficking in adolescents in Uganda.

Child, early and forced marriage

The legal age for marriage in Uganda is 18. However, child marriage still persists on a wide scale. Child, early and forced marriages[296] are common in Uganda, with 40 per cent of girls married by the age of 18 and one in ten by the age of 15.[297] Girls who are victims of forced child marriage can find themselves subjected to abuse, sexual exploitation and control, with little or no power over their own movements. Often, the girl will be controlled through violence or threats and unable to safely leave the marriage.

One key informant describes how child, early and forced marriages increase risks of abuse and exploitation for young girls, whose parents often negotiate their dowry when they are still too young to understand or decide about marriage.

"Under sexual exploitation, girls are normally forced into early marriages, there are forced marriages... You are forced to work against your will for someone else and the payments are given to your parents. In other words, you're not benefiting."
Key Informant

One participant in this study also highlighted, from her own experience, the risks of girls being trafficked into 'marriage' or, in other words, sexual exploitation:

"He told us that he had a hotel in Uganda; that he had friends who had hotels in Uganda and that he was bringing us here to work for them and earn money... When we got here, he mentioned 'marriage' and I said, 'Oh my God'; I thought I was going to work, but marriage?!"
Rwandan adolescent girl, 18 years old

RECRUITMENT AND ENTRY INTO TRAFFICKING

Family and community members

Family members were involved in the trafficking of almost two-thirds of younger girls (64 per cent) and 44 per cent of adolescent girls. More than half of young women (54 per cent) were recruited into trafficking through labour migration. Approximately half of the adolescent girls and young women in the qualitative sample described being encouraged or facilitated to migrate by others whom they described as 'friends' or 'people from their village' such as neighbours. Only one girl paid her recruiter to facilitate her migration.

"This woman [the recruiter] came and told my stepfather, 'Why don't you give me that child and I take her to Kampala, to work'?... I told him, 'Yes, I want to go and work.'... I bid farewell to my little sisters and told them that once I earn a lot of money, I will send them some money that will sustain them..."
Adolescent girl, 15 years old

Key informants also highlighted the central role that community members play as informal recruiters who are sometimes employed by the trafficking networks:

"In Oman they even get fellow Ugandans to help in recruiting, they are the ones who come back home ... you know, well dressed, posing around... that their life is very good and everything, and thereafter they come and recruit people."
Key Informant

"Some of them got connections through Facebook, through WhatsApp: someone outside there will accept her to be a friend on WhatsApp. [...] One assures that she is

making a lot of money and will lure others into modern slavery."
Key Informant

This finding is in line with previous research on young domestic workers in Uganda who were often linked to employers by family members or friends.[298]

Recruitment agencies

Most young (82 per cent) and adolescent (71 per cent) girls, and almost a third of young women (36 per cent), were recruited into trafficking. One key informant highlighted the risks associated with illegal recruitment agencies, claiming that legal agencies or recruiters rarely knowingly participate in exploitative work arrangements:

"The only difference when we talk about trafficking is that, the purpose of recruitment, the one who recruited must have known that you are going to be exploited... so now the legal recruiters may not know that someone is going to be exploited. The illegal recruiters are aware that this girl is going to be exploited and that person benefits at the expense of another person."
Key Informant

When questioned about how cases of exploitation involving legal recruitment were dealt with, the interviewee replied:

"We go in for the final exploitation that took place; if it is rape, we go for the case of rape, if it is assault, we go for assault. We do not go in for trafficking in persons because he couldn't have known that this person is going to be exploited."
Key Informant

While cases of the involvement of formal recruitment agencies in trafficking in persons are not common, their lack of involvement is taken for granted by this key informant. This suggests that in potential cases where they knowingly facilitated trafficking, the authorities would not necessarily respond to this crime, even though the internationally-accepted definition of human trafficking does not preclude formal agencies from involvement in criminal cases.[299]

Another key informant calls attention to some political complexities in the organisation of recruitment agencies in Uganda that may hinder ethical recruitment initiatives:

"The recruitment agencies... some are legitimate but at times they also have back door activities, illegal activities, and they are owned by people who are in the government, so there is a conflict of interest, and it is a little tricky and challenging to address the issue... It is also generally a syndicate not a one man show – there are many players involved making it challenging to implement the policies."
Key Informant

The role of religious organisations

One key informant also described the important role of religious organisations in facilitating trafficking. Girls and young women will often trust religious officials – community leaders – some of whom are reported to use this position of power and influence to facilitate the exploitation of adolescent girls:

"In the Western part of Uganda, we have gotten a lot of cases where young people are being recruited through religion, by pastors,

In Uganda Namusanza* experienced exploitation in her workplace

under the disguise of 'We will get you a better life, if you join my church,' or 'We will get you a ticket to go abroad, if you are part of this fellowship.' So, you find pastors are ferrying people out of the country under the disguise of church and then they end up either as domestic workers or are sexually exploited."
Key Informant

In such situations, girls often migrate without clear work arrangements at their destination, often relying on a sole contact from home. In this sense, they have very little control over the outcome of their migration, and often depend for survival entirely on the person who recruited them.

EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND FORCED LABOUR

Girls and young women reported three main types of exploitation, which were quite sharply determined by age (see Figure 9). Young and adolescent girls overwhelmingly reported experiencing forced labour while young women more commonly experienced sexual exploitation. More than **one in four** younger girls and **nine per cent** of adolescent girls were forced into criminal activities. There were no cases of forced criminal activity among young women.

Many of the adolescent girls interviewed for this research described having had traumatic experiences during their migration. Several did not tell their family that they were leaving, many left with very limited funds, and most travelled alone. For two of the girls, the failure of their contacts to meet them as planned resulted in them being left alone. Both were raped:

"I reached Kampala at around midnight but there was nowhere I could go... I was just walking around. Then a bodaboda [motorcycle taxi] man came up to me... He told me 'You are lost, come and I take you to the police station.' I thought that the bodaboda was taking me to the police station, yet he was taking me to his home, and he locked me inside his house and went back to work in town. He came back late at night and he raped me. [Afterwards,] he chased me away and told me never to return to his place. Yet it was my first time to go there, I did not even know where I was."
Adolescent girl, 17 years old

Figure 9 Types of exploitation among girls and young women

Legend: ■ Young women   ■ Adolescent girls   ■ Young girls
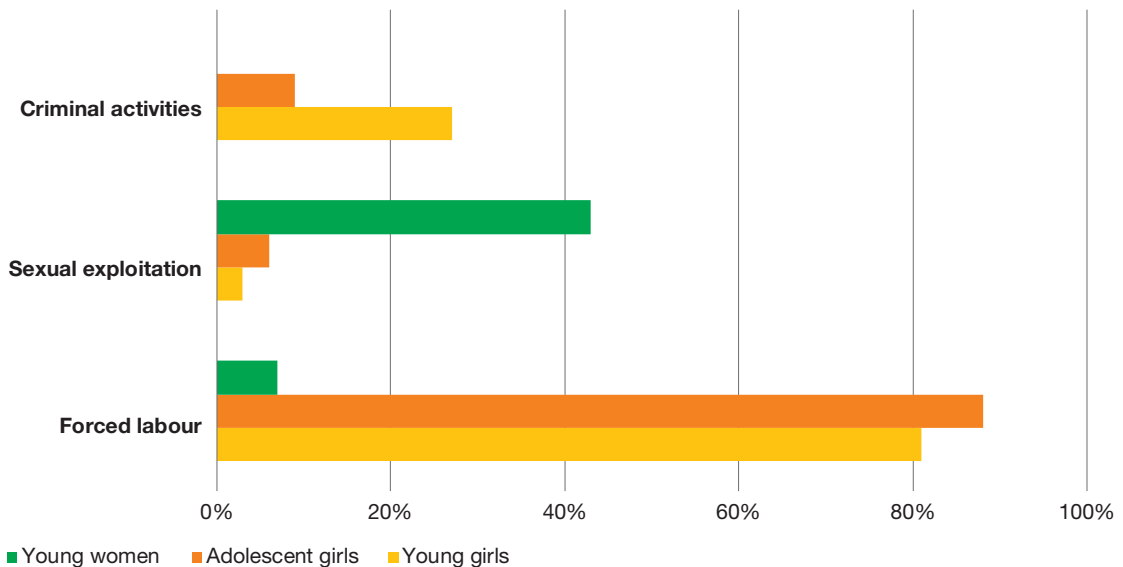
Fictional case example 6 – Dembe

Dembe[300] used to live with her mother and six siblings in a medium-sized town in Uganda. She lived in extreme poverty and never attended school. Her mother was a sex worker who suffered from alcoholism. Dembe's mother brought her clients home to her one-bedroom house with her, sometimes multiple men at a time. Her sister ran away from home after she was sexually abused by one of these men.

The family lived in very insecure conditions, sometimes without enough food to eat. When she was 11 years old, Dembe started working in a shop where she received food and a small amount of money that she used to support her family. She was overworked and still unable to bring enough food home or pay the rent. Her mother repeatedly stated that she did not love her and when Dembe was 12 years old she became very depressed and tried to commit suicide.

One day, a neighbour offered to Dembe's mother to take Dembe to Kampala to work as a nanny. Dembe was happy to go. She wanted to earn money to pay her sister's school fees and buy some nicer clothes for herself. She packed her four dresses in a plastic bag and went to the city in a taxi. When they reached Kampala, the driver told her to get out and wait for her employers. She waited for five hours, but no one came. It was getting dark and she started walking aimlessly. She was dragged into a shed by security personnel and gang raped. She was a virgin and bled considerably.

Later on, a local woman asked her what happened. Upon hearing her story, she took her to the local council who referred her to a post-trafficking service. She has been there for seven months receiving medical assistance, counselling and skills training.

Means of control

The majority of adolescent girls interviewed for this research described being trafficked into forced labour, mostly as domestic workers. Many described how they were expected to work long and excessive hours and were either not paid at all, not paid what they expected, or not paid regularly. Some adolescent girls described how the heavy workload and poor treatment had a negative effect on their physical and emotional health.

"There was a woman from Kampala. When she saw that I was mistreated she 'stole' me from home and took me away and then she told me that I am going to start working for her. I asked her that will you give me money and she told me that I will give you 20 thousand shillings. Whenever I would ask her 'Where is the money that I am working for?' She would tell me that 'I sent the money to your home.'"
Adolescent girl, 14 years old

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"When I would tell them that there are certain things that I need, they would say that we shall pay your money – be patient. They would harass me and yet payment was a problem... I worked but I did not get the things that I had hoped to get. At times I would even fail to get [small items such as] Vaseline and yet I was working, I was working to get the things that I needed however I remained the same; I did not even have Vaseline."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

A number of adolescent girls also described how, while working, they did not receive medical attention for sickness or injury:

"The injury that I got is that I burned my leg with hot oil and it swelled... I did not receive treatment and at times I would nurse it with hot water, but it kept on swelling. I nursed it

with hot water until it dried up."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

These experiences were reflected in the VOTD, where data about the means of control used by the traffickers or exploiters was available for **six** of the 33 young girls, **13** of the 34 adolescents and **22** of the 28 young women in the dataset.[301] Common means of control included physical abuse deception (see Figure 10).

Sexual abuse and deception

Only four survivors reported sexual abuse as a means of control: **one** young girl and **three** young women. However, it must be noted that sexual violence may be under-reported because of the shame, fear and stigma that survivors experience.[302]

The adolescent girls interviewed in the qualitative study echoed these findings. In addition to being forced to work with little or

Figure 10 Means of control: Uganda

Legend: ■ Young women ■ Adolescent girls ■ Young girls
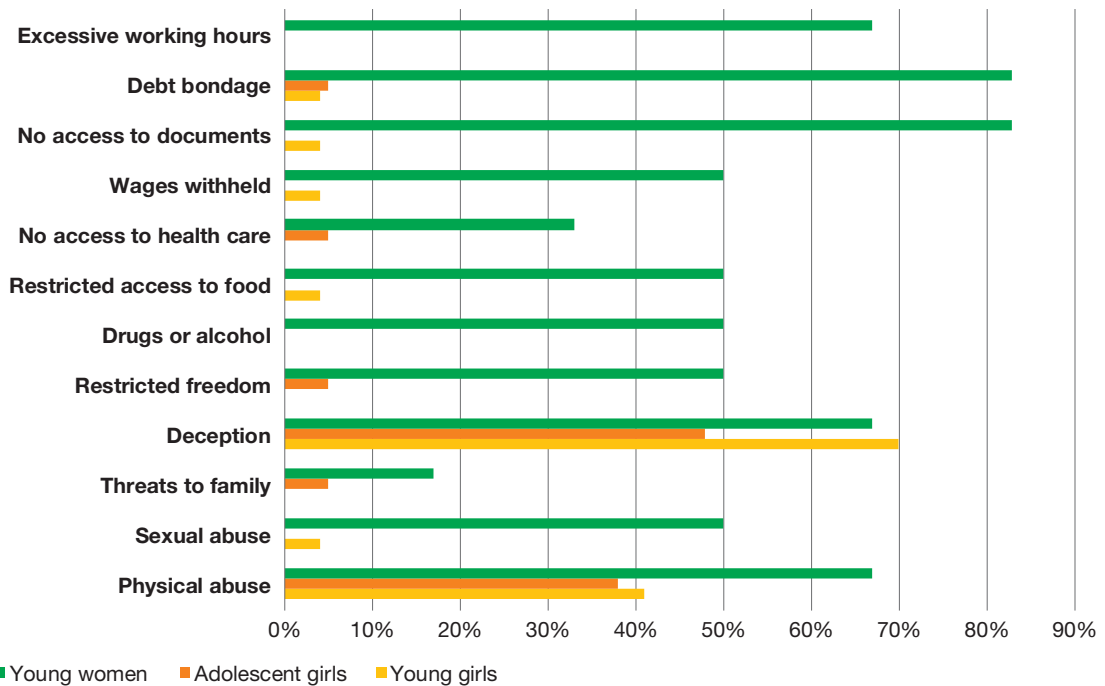
no pay, some described suffering physical, psychological and sexual abuse from their employer or their employer's family. Others also narrated being confined to the house, and not being allowed to leave the house or socialise with anyone outside of the household.

Two of the adolescent girls interviewed for this research were working as domestic workers. They described being sexually harassed by male members of the household where they worked. **One** described, for example, being constantly harassed by the four adolescent boys who lived in the house where she worked:

"It was around ten o'clock in the night and I was alone in the house and so he came... He tried to force me [to have sex with him] but I was lucky that I had a small pipe, I don't know how it got there but it is what I used to defend myself. I chased him and he left. That used to happen a lot, it was not once or twice... they tried to rape me, there are so many problems that you can encounter with such [domestic] work."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

They both noted, however, that they were afraid to report the harassment to their female boss for fear that they would not be believed or would be accused of having pursued the men.

Many of the adolescent girls who suffered this abuse described the negative effect that it had on them and their well-being, often emphasising the hopelessness and regret that they felt for having left their homes, even though the situation in their homes had not been good.

Key informants also noted sexual and reproductive health problems, substance abuse, and other severe physical and mental health consequences that survivors suffer with:

"They were sexually exploited and psychologically tortured... they are no longer the same, they cannot live up to the expectations of their youthful life."
Key Informant

"You will find that there is a lot of trauma and mental health problems that adolescents have faced. Some of this has to do with withdrawal from people, sleepless nights, not being able to fit within a social setting... not being able to belong within a community because they have certain behaviours that they have acquired or that they have learned during the situation of trafficking that may not fit within the day-to-day society or communities where they may be reintegrated."
Key Informant

"We are seeing a lot of sexual [and] reproductive health problems, especially for those that become teenage parents... We have also seen cases where young people are addicted to drugs and substance abuse and it is quite difficult for you to rehabilitate them properly."
Key Informant

In particular, the risk of HIV infection may be higher for vulnerable girls who are sexually abused or forced into prostitution. HIV positive clients may be particularly attracted to girls who have had no or limited sexual relationships in the past, as explained by one key informant:

"There are fallacies that people believe in that, you know, when you sleep with a virgin or when you sleep with a child it reduces the rate of HIV in your body, or some people think when you sleep with a young child, for them, they are free from HIV and so they are safer."
Key Informant

ANTI-TRAFFICKING POLICY AND INTERVENTIONS IN UGANDA

While there are gaps in addressing human trafficking in Uganda, significant efforts towards the protection of survivors, as well as prevention, and prosecution, have been achieved. A National Action Plan (NAP) for the prevention of trafficking in persons was launched in 2013. The next NAP is currently being drafted and is due to be finalised in 2019.[303] In addition, the Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations, 2005 are also being revised, to provide for stronger protection for migrant workers.[304]

Uganda has also joined Alliance 8.7 as a 'Pathfinder Country', committing it to accelerate efforts to achieve SDG 8.7.[305] As part of these efforts, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development recently held its first Pathfinder Country Strategic Workshop where it launched the government's National Strategic Plan to eradicate child labour in Uganda.[306] Despite this progress, however, the Government of Uganda is yet to sign the *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*.

Prevention

High levels of unemployment, low levels of education, and high fertility rates make Uganda a fertile ground for exploitative recruitment and employment. Trafficking prevention efforts need to tackle the conditions that impede young people, and especially adolescent girls, from completing their education and finding work.

"The longer the adolescent child stays in school, the safer they are... so if there is no access to education, you are idle, not in school... you are vulnerable... coupled with our expectations [that] if you are out of school... you should maybe go and work."
Key Informant

Since 2013, the Ugandan government has made considerable investments in the development and implementation of a wide social protection plan.[307] The National Social Protection Policy explicitly recognises gender vulnerabilities among girls and women, including poor access to financial services, employment and property inheritance, early marriage, violence and female genital mutilation.[308,309,310]

Despite this, access to the government's poverty reduction programmes remains difficult for some vulnerable groups and, in 2014, only three per cent of the population had access to formal social protection.[311] This limited coverage can both increase the vulnerability of young people to (re-)trafficking and impose important barriers to their reintegration, especially for orphans and fostered children.

Key informants also raised the important role that the government and civil society play in raising awareness about the risks of human trafficking. Community awareness may also help to increase identification of cases and prosecution of traffickers, as explained by one key informant:

"We are also now starting to see communities being aware and educating and reporting... because when you look at the trafficking helpline statistics for last year, you will see a lot of cases that are being reported on child trafficking and human trafficking... so yes, the communities are starting to be aware, and they are starting to report... but also you see a lot of advocacy on the side of civil society for policy change, but also support in terms of direct assistance and awareness creation."
Key Informant

However, in addition to using media and social media, awareness-raising interventions tend to be concentrated on Kampala rather than source areas within the country.

"They are coming from all over the country: Hoima, Gulu, everywhere. I feel the prevention efforts need to go to the other districts outside Kampala... because Kampala is like a collection point... because this is prevention, we must also prevent that movement, before they get to the hub."
Key Informant

In any case, these types of initiatives need to be monitored and evaluated to avoid investing precious resources in ineffective interventions and to prevent potential harmful outcomes.[312]

Law enforcement and prosecution

In 2009, Uganda enacted a domestic law – the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act, which aligns with the basic principles of the Palermo Protocol.[313] The law provides for the prohibition of trafficking in persons, the creation of offences, the prosecution and punishment of offenders, the prevention of trafficking in persons and the protection of victims of trafficking in persons.[314] However, the 2009 Act has also been criticised by one key informant because of the reduced penalties for traffickers:

"When you look at the Act of 2009, the penalties are really small. They need to be improved or worked on so that the traffickers feel the pinch."
Key Informant

Indeed, as most key informants suggest, the problem is not the lack of laws, but their poor enforcement:

"We cannot say that we don't have laws, but [that] poor enforcement of laws exposes the public to exploitation... For instance, we know that we have the Children Act in Uganda and certain ages are not supposed to be working, but aren't the boys in the stone quarries hitting the stones?... We are not supposed to have brothels, but there are minors in spaces that are like brothels. Why aren't we cracking down? [...] When the laws are broken, or they are not enforced, it provides an opportunity or creates cracks and loopholes in the system for people to exploit other people."
Key Informant

"We have had a lot of awareness, few convictions. Now we are in a situation where we have lots of cases, very few prosecutions."
Key Informant

Furthermore, Uganda has not yet institutionalised anti-trafficking training of law enforcement and front-line officials.[315]

Protection

In 2016, the Government of Uganda instituted a complete ban on Ugandans travelling to the Middle East for domestic work owing to reports of abuse. However, young women continued to migrate illegally, trafficked to the Middle East across the Ugandan-Kenyan border.[316] As a result, the government lifted the ban in 2017, following the signing of agreements with Saudi Arabia and Jordan that mandated the use of a Ministry-approved licensed recruitment agency.[317] The ban remains in place for Oman, as concerns remain over continued reports of abuse and trafficking.[318]

The government also provides oversight of labour recruitment agencies, requiring that

they are registered and vetted and maintain a minimum bank deposit and credit line to ensure the availability of financial resources to repatriate workers if they become victims of trafficking. In general, however, more efforts are needed to ensure the protection of migrant workers and prevent human trafficking.[319]

Recent efforts to promote fair recruitment have encountered many unforeseen

Meeting the needs of survivors of trafficking

Adolescent girls interviewed in the qualitative study described the various routes through which, after a period of between one month and one year, they had been able to escape and seek assistance from specialised NGO services. Upon arriving at the post-trafficking services, many participants described feeling alone and isolated, having lost faith and trust in others as a result of their experiences:

"When I came here, I felt so alone... I had developed such a bad attitude... because of these experiences of hard work and being forced into sex. Having gone through these experiences, I really felt that there was no one that I could talk to about it. I was hurt, I felt like I was alone in this world."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

Over time, and following counselling, many of the girls described how their trust and hope were restored, with many emphasising the value they placed on this:

"When I reached here [post-trafficking assistance service], they started counselling me and taking good care of me... they comforted me and told me that the good things are yet to come."
Adolescent girl, 15 years old

"I had lost all hope but when I got here, I started gaining hope and I realised that in future I can become someone responsible without going back to that, because then I used to feel that I had no use... I had lost all hope; however, here they restored my hope."
Adolescent girl, 18 years old

In addition to feeling listened to, having their essential needs met and learning to trust, some adolescent girls described the importance of receiving the medical care that they had been denied while being exploited. Many also described how they were learning new skills such as tailoring or hairdressing, through which they hoped to be able to earn an income.

"I hope to get a job, and also to become a powerful woman and provide support to other children that are going through the same conditions that I went through... I am hoping that I will own a big salon, that is, after I have attained some money."
Adolescent girl, 15 years old

challenges due to the extensive multinational nature of recruitment networks, and the widespread dissemination of local informal agents who are often embedded in local communities' social lives. A key limitation to the success of fair and ethical recruitment regulation is that licensing schemes in origin and destination countries are inward looking and do not place requirements on partner agencies at the other end of the labour supply chain to respect the regulations at origin.[320] Importantly, however, the role of local informal intermediaries, who often belong to the prospective migrants' social networks, remain neglected by initiatives attempting to promote fairer recruitment.[321]

Efforts to provide assistance to victims of trafficking have been undermined through inadequate funding and a lack of cross-government coordination in victim identification and support. For example, one key informant identified the lack of preparedness of the health sector for identifying survivors and addressing health issues among trafficked adolescents:

"I see that we get a lot of young people within the health system that have been trafficked... We have had a lot of efforts with civil society and the ministries and other partners, but we have not really gone ahead and created awareness within the health system, and yet most of the victims go through the health system... When you look at issues of mental health, we have really not empowered our health sector to be able to respond to the mental health issues of young girls or young boys who have been trafficked."
Key Informant

The government heavily relies on NGOs and international organisations to provide the vast majority of victim services via referrals to NGO-operated shelters.[322] However, key informants identified a lack of resources available to adequately provide the care needed to survivors of human trafficking.

"Sometimes I feel we need more human resources to give quality care... aftercare services are very resource intense and they are recurrent so they take a lot of money, like for medical, so you need of course shelters... sometimes adolescents need to be reintegrated in education, and education is expensive."
Key Informant

Partnerships

Uganda has made considerable investments and achieved progress in fighting human trafficking and the visibility of actions to curb the problem has increased. One key informant attributed this progress to the involvement of different stakeholders, including the government, NGOs and local media:

"There is a lot of sensitisation going on amongst the stakeholders... amongst the Coordination Office... the various NGOs and the various partners... Then at the airport they have kind of tightened people going abroad... they are always screened at the various border points... then even issuing of passports, it is not like ... [on previous occasions when] an agent would go with a hundred passports with a hundred application forms... [and say] 'I want a hundred passports...' So, all those are red flags that the Ministry of Internal Affairs does not take lightly anymore."
Key informant

The government has since elevated the Coordination Office for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (COPTIP) to an official department with a small permanent budget allocation. COPTIP serves as the secretariat to the anti-trafficking National Task Force, which coordinates anti-trafficking efforts in Uganda. While this increased political commitment has enabled the office to improve its anti-trafficking efforts, it remains underfunded.[323] One key informant emphasises the role of the National Task Force in promoting effective partnerships against trafficking:

"The partnerships that are working well are the National Task Force partnerships, where we have civil society coming together with the government, key stakeholders and responding together, working together and reporting within the same structure, so that gives us some kind of a uniformity in knowing which actor is doing what... but also having an office that is coordinating different kinds of efforts, so that is one of the key efforts that I see happening."
Key Informant

The lack of comprehensive mechanisms for cross-country collaboration is also seen by key informants as an important weakness in prevention and in responses to cross-border trafficking.

"If you are going to monitor labour abroad, or monitor migration abroad, and you do not have enough migration officers, or you do not have enough labour officers, or even the consulates in other countries abroad, do not have the manpower or human resources to monitor the Ugandan citizens that have come into that country, it would be very difficult for us to manage, that is where the traffickers keep beating us... they see where we have a loophole ... and say that ok, let us take them to this country, Uganda does not have a bilateral agreement with them, or the consulate there is very weak."
Key Informant

Plan International interviewed Ugandan adolescent girls who have experienced exploitation as part of its Because I am a Girl campaign

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The narratives of girls and young women in this report represent the tip of the iceberg. The practice of middle-class households employing unpaid adolescent girls for domestic work is widespread in Ugandan urban centres. These girls often work long hours, without breaks and with no freedom of movement.[324] It is likely that only a small proportion of these girls are ever identified as trafficking victims.

The Government of Uganda has made some progress in preventing and responding to human trafficking. Nonetheless, more needs to be done to address the structural inequalities that sustain the problem in the country. Particularly, rural poverty and gender inequalities need to be tackled. Attention also needs to be given to addressing the potential drivers of trafficking from the north of Uganda, where children may still be affected by the destruction of the social, economic and educational infrastructure, and lack protection of their fundamental rights.[325]

The quantitative data analysed in this report reveals that most Ugandan girls and young women who were trafficked reported they were from poor families. Adolescent girls describe a social reality marked with scarce work and education opportunities, widespread violence, and significant threats to their economic survival. Their despair at this situation is clear from the interviews, indicating that labour migration was for many the only way out.

A dominant feature that many adolescents described as having convinced them to migrate was the suggestion by the person who recruited them that they would live a better life, would earn money, or be able to escape any hardship that they were currently facing. In practice, for many adolescent girls this turned out to be untrue, with many realising that they were lied to.

CONCLUSION

Trafficking of girls and young women

Girls and young women often migrate in contexts of poverty, violence and gender inequalities. Some of them migrate by choice, others by necessity. Some young women and girls are sometimes forced to make impossible choices for their mere survival and general conditions of scarcity can be powerful motivations to migrate. Independently of their motivations to migrate, adolescent girls and young women very often encounter multiple risks in their journey.

Young women and girls may be deceived or coerced in different points through their migration and at destination. Faced with deep power imbalances in their relationships with male family members, labour intermediaries, migration officials, employers and clients, girls and young women have few available opportunities for safe migration and enforcement their rights. The power asymmetries between girls and the agents who facilitate their migration are exacerbated by gender, age, poverty, social class, nationality, ethnicity and religion.

Gender inequalities are pervasive across all three countries in this study. In these contexts, adolescent girls and young women may have limited agency in making choices and may even be forced directly into exploitation in invisible and feminised sectors, where they are often ignored or overlooked, economically devalued and legally unprotected.[326]

The existence of certain social norms reinforces these power imbalances and compounds the limited space of agency and opportunity for young women and girls. For example, male-child preference, the acceptability of child labour and child and forced marriage may force girls out of education and make them more vulnerable to hazardous work or human trafficking.[327,328]

Migration can also create situations of vulnerability that may be exploited by different agents and networks. Some girls and young women start their journeys with assistance by recruiters and intermediaries – often operating in the informal sector - who are known to them through family or social networks. However, even if these local agents were well-intentioned (and they not always are), the complex and multifocal nature of international recruitment networks drastically curtails any control that they could have over the migration process.

Along their migration journeys, different agents often facilitate the migration of girls and young women through dangerous migration routes and means of travel, including irregular and clandestine border crossings, with high migration costs exacerbating the cycle of debt and risk of abuse. Sometimes these agents are the perpetrators of physical and/or sexual violence against the migrants.

These vulnerabilities are heightened during conflict and humanitarian crises, where support networks, the rule of law, and other fundamental social and economic systems are disrupted.[329] Unaccompanied child migrants, refugees and girls and young women who have been forcibly displaced are at particular risk of labour exploitation and human trafficking.[330,331] Despite this, human trafficking remains largely overlooked and difficult to identify in crisis situations.

Recruitment and entry into trafficking

Family, friends, relatives and migrant networks are often involved in the migration and trafficking of girls and young women, either indirectly (resulting from 'shocks' that disrupt families and create conditions of vulnerability) or directly by facilitating trafficking and unsafe migration. The role of other types intermediaries such as religious leaders and informal and formal recruiters is less clear. The complexity of recruitment networks that drive this high-reward and low-risk crime needs to be better understood.

Awareness-raising, gender equality and empowerment programmes were raised by key informants as key interventions that support girls and young women to make informed choices around migration. They could help build the confidence and autonomy of girls and young women and support them to resist the pressure and excessive influence of community members, recruiters and family members. However, the lack of mechanisms that protect girls and guarantee their rights through their migration journey limit the agency of girls, their capacity to enforce their rights and, therefore, diminish the effectiveness of awareness initiatives in promoting safe migration.

Pre-departure interventions that aim to equip girls and young women with the necessary knowledge and information to navigate recruitment networks, understand the migration processes and paperwork, and seek support and access to justice may be valuable. However, awareness-raising efforts may have little effect if girls and young women do not have access to justice and support networks in their migration pathway.

Experiences of violence, abuse and forced labour

Trafficked girls and young women experienced widespread, multiple and overlapping forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation. This includes sexual abuse, rape, physical aggression, and psychological violence in their everyday lives – pre-departure, in transit and at destination.

Girls and young women forced into labour regularly worked long hours in poor conditions. Some women and girls from Nepal, for example, were forced to work 18-20 hours a day, seven days a week. Girls and young women were frequently controlled through false promises or deception, denied freedom of movement and remuneration, and were subjected to physical and sexual violence, or threats against themselves and their families.

The high levels of sexual abuse and sexual violence documented in this report highlights the importance of providing access to psychosocial and mental health assistance, in addition to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services to girls and young women. This could not only support them to make informed choices and have control over their sexual and reproductive health, but also potentially protect them from sexually-transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy during migration.

Anti-trafficking policy interventions

All the girls and women in this study managed to escape exploitation, but millions more remain trapped in abusive situations. Many might never speak about the exploitation, abuse and violence they experienced. A significant proportion of them are likely never to be identified by or self-refer to services assisting survivors of human trafficking. Poverty, mental health problems (such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety) and stigma commonly manifest for girls and young women who have been rescued or escaped exploitation.[332]

Esther* a trafficking survivor from Nigeria was interviewed as part of Plan International's Because I am a Girl campaign

While the Governments of Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda are committed to ending human trafficking, more needs to be done. Some key international legal instruments have not been ratified, domestic legislation does not always align with international law, and discriminatory bans on migration remain in place in some countries. Action to address these gaps should be prioritised alongside concerted efforts to ensure that laws, policies and strategies to address human trafficking are effectively implemented. To achieve this, significantly more human, financial and technical resources are required.

The drivers of the trafficking of girls and young women are structural. While efforts have been made to increase access to quality education, services, and decent work, marginalised girls and young women continue to be excluded. Accelerating efforts to ensure girls and young women have access to opportunities and services that

align, and keep pace with, their dynamic aspirations should be a priority. Addressing the root causes of human trafficking and mainstreaming migration and trafficking issues into development and humanitarian response plans is critical to supporting girls and young women to make choices around safe migration.

While all three countries have dedicated services for survivors of trafficking, these are sparsely available and referral mechanisms inadequate and inconsistent. Victim-centred responses and longer-term support and rehabilitation for survivors remain limited across the three countries. Meeting the psychosocial needs of survivors was raised by key informants as a gap. Those who do find assistance report improvements in their mental health and well-being, demonstrating the importance of expanding and adequately resourcing integrated adolescent- and child-friendly services for survivors of trafficking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED POLICY AND PRACTICE

Girls and young women are frequently subjected to violence, abuse and exploitation during the migration process. This is a significant challenge. Accelerated action and increased political momentum is needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 by 2030. Every opportunity, including the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2020, should be utilised to fast-track policy, programme and funding initiatives to end human trafficking and meet commitments set out in the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* and the *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking*.

Regional and international cooperation is critical to achieving these aims. A shared platform of experiences and accumulated knowledge may help in the sharing of best practice victim-centred and gender-and-child-sensitive responses, facilitating better data-sharing, and collaborating on victim identification, protection, reintegration and repatriation.

Nevertheless, meaningful cooperation can only be built on effective national and local efforts. In this regard, we suggest ten areas that the Governments of Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda can take forward with the support of donors, civil society, international organisations and other partners:

1 Strengthen and implement policy commitments to end human trafficking

Establish comprehensive policies and develop partnerships that provide vulnerable migrants, regardless of their migration status, with necessary support at all stages of migration through identification and assistance, as well as protection of their human rights. This might include efforts to develop, strengthen and implement national anti-trafficking strategies that have a central focus on girls and young women. Ensure that the voices of survivors are heard and that their experiences and recommendations are incorporated when designing policies, services and programme interventions.

2 Ratify and implement international legal instruments and improve international cooperation

Where not already done, sign, ratify and implement the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* and the *ILO Convention 189 – Domestic Workers Convention*. Review and revise national trafficking laws to align with the Palermo Protocol and eliminate loopholes in other relevant legislation that leave room for abuse. Prosecute and punish persons or groups trafficking girls and young women or subjecting them to forced labour and abuse, especially in the informal economy.

3 Prioritise counter-trafficking efforts in humanitarian crises

Adequately fund and prioritise counter-trafficking measures before, during and after a humanitarian crisis. This should include the provision of targeted socioeconomic support to girls, women and other at-risk groups (including unaccompanied and separated children) as part of a multi-sector response. Put in place strengthened education, child protection and security measures to prevent and mitigate the trafficking of adolescent girls and young women and protect survivors. Where relevant, improve access to services in hard-to-reach areas through the provision of integrated mobile programming.

4 Work to prevent human trafficking through addressing the drivers of forced migration

Move beyond a security framework to place greater emphasis on rights-based, survivor-centred, participatory and gender-and-age-sensitive approaches that address the drivers of forced migration and risks of unsafe migration. This should include mainstreaming migration and human trafficking issues into development plans at all levels through strategies that promote gender equality, protect girls and young women from violence, and foster their access to education, healthcare, resources, and employment opportunities in line with their aspirations and plans for their future.

5 Strengthen the evidence and data on the trafficking of girls and young women

Strengthen the evidence base on migration and trafficking through enhanced data management and analysis. Investment should be made to better understand the dynamics of human trafficking in relation to humanitarian crises. The findings should be used to strengthen policy and programmes to end the exploitation of women and girls. Evaluating policy and programme interventions can also clarify promising avenues and investment priorities.

6 Strengthen cross-government coordination and capacity development

Strengthen cross-government coordination and increase national and local capacity to address human trafficking. This should include efforts to create greater coherence across migration, employment and social policies to prevent and respond to the trafficking of girls and young women. National counter-trafficking agencies should be strengthened through the allocation of adequate human, technical and financial resources to enable them to effectively undertake their activities. Local coordination offices should be opened, and local authorities and other relevant stakeholders trained and involved in the identification, referral and assistance of vulnerable migrants and victims of human trafficking through gender- and age-sensitive approaches.

7 Strengthen protection mechanisms in transit and at destination

Invest in policies, laws and services that support girls and young women to enforce their rights. Migrants can only benefit from increased awareness about trafficking risks or knowledge about migration and employment processes if their rights as migrant workers are ensured both in transit and at their destination. Enable migrants, potential migrants, and the community to make informed decisions on migration and promote safe and regular migration pathways. Provide information on the recruitment process, and information on channels through which migrants can seek assistance and access to justice.

8 Involve family and community members in anti-trafficking efforts

Strengthen the protective environment around children in the home and within the community. Key strategies to preventing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in the home and within the community should be scaled up. Such measures should be supported by wider efforts to strengthen the capacity of community-based structures to respond safely and confidentially to the trafficking of adolescent girls and young women. Accountability measures should be put in place to monitor the effectiveness of community-based responses.

9 Strengthen international cooperation to address barriers to safe-migration in high-risk migration corridors

Engage destination country governments to create rights-based, enforceable agreements that formalise a shared responsibility for labour recruitment issues, the protection of migrant workers, and the identification and repatriation of victims of trafficking. Efforts should also include the establishment of adequate national repatriation policies and systems. Governments also need to identify high-risk internal migration corridors and implement measures to identify cases of human trafficking and facilitate migrants' access to justice and remedy.

10 Increase the protection of and support to survivors of human trafficking

Expand and adequately resource integrated adolescent- and child-friendly services for survivors of trafficking. Such programmes should be victim-centred and gender-sensitive and offer community integration or reintegration support services to support the immediate and long-term reintegration and rehabilitation needs of survivors of trafficking. This could include reintegration back into the education system, the provision of skill building, access to shelters and community-based care, housing and job market support, legal, medical and psychosocial assistance, and sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services. Targeted efforts should be made to deliver sustainable, long-term programmes to address the stigma associated with trafficking and support the successful reintegration of survivors of trafficking.

ANNEX A: METHODS

The project adopts a mixed methods interdisciplinary approach to investigate the trafficking of girls and young women in and from three countries: Nigeria, Nepal and Uganda. These countries were selected by Plan International UK based on research interest and data availability.

Information on the data sources, analysis, limitations, and the ethical procedures followed for this research is detailed below.

DATA SOURCES

Quantitative analysis

Global Victim of Trafficking Database (quantitative)

Analysis was conducted on the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Global Victim of Trafficking Database (VOTD), which contains routine[333] data from cases of victims of human trafficking who have been assisted by IOM and its partner organisations in more than 100 destination countries. Specifically, analysis was conducted on the IOM VOTD on Nigerian, Nepalese and Ugandan girls (under 18 years old) and young women (18 to 24 years old) identified by IOM and its partners as having been trafficked.

All records of male survivors were excluded. Analysis was performed individually for each country, stratified by age, using the following categories: young girls (under the age of 10); adolescent girls (10-18 years); and young women (19-24), because of differences in the migration experiences and exploitation trends among these subgroups.

The VOTD for Uganda contained 33 cases of trafficked young girls, 34 cases of trafficked adolescent girls, and 28 cases of trafficked young women. The Nigeria dataset contained 14 cases of trafficked young girls, 14 cases of trafficked adolescent girls, and 118 cases of trafficked young women. The VOTD for Nepal contained only 13 cases of trafficked young women. Due to this limited number of cases, data from the SWiFT survey has been used as the primary quantitative data source for the Nepal chapter. The results from the analysis of the VOTD from Nepal are presented in Box 5.

IOM Flow Monitoring Surveys (quantitative)

For Nigeria, in addition to the VOTD, analysis was conducted on IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS). FMS data for 2016-17 was analysed for 35 girls under the age of 18 and from 241 young women aged between 18 and 25. Whereas the VOTD data contains information on identified victims of human trafficking from IOM's central case management system (MiMOSA), the FMS surveys were conducted in transit points in the Eastern and Central Mediterranean migration routes. The FMS surveys include trafficking, exploitation and abuse indicators and they were not designed to specifically identify victims of human trafficking. Results from the analysis of the FMS data are presented in Box 3. Due to the categorisation of age within the FMS data, the age range for young women was capped at 25 years.

Evaluation of the Work in Freedom Programme (SWiFT) in Nepal (quantitative)

Due to the limited number of adolescents and young women included in the IOM VOTD for Nepal, the empirical findings for the Nepal chapter are based on new analysis, undertaken for this report, of the data from the Nepal evaluation of the Work in Freedom Programme (WiF), which forms part of the wider South Asia Work in Freedom Transnational Evaluation (SWiFT).[334] The WiF programme was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by the International Labour Organization.

SWiFT surveys were conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), in partnership with the Nepalese research partner Social Science Baha (SSB)[335] in three of the five WiF districts chosen by the ILO: Chitwan, Rupandehi, and Morang. The questionnaire, which was developed by LSHTM and SSB, included questions on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics; dates, destination and sectors of previous migrations; decisions, plans, recruitment process and outcomes of the last migration; and outcomes of previous migrations.

Women aged between 15 and 49 were eligible for inclusion in the survey if they had worked abroad and returned. Women and girls who migrated internally in Nepal were not included because this was not WiF's focus. The original analysis conducted for this report looked specifically at the subsample of 105 women and 45 adolescent girls who migrated under the age of 24.[336]

Qualitative analysis

Semi-structured interviews with trafficked adolescents (qualitative)

In each of the three countries, semi-structured interviews were conducted, using a topic guide, with eight to ten adolescent girls who were receiving support through post-trafficking assistance services. The semi-structured topic guide included themes on socio-demographic characteristics, pre-departure circumstances, experience of migrating, gender, process of reaching assistance services and future hopes and expectations.

In Uganda, interviews were conducted with eight girls who were under the age of 18 when they migrated and who were receiving post-trafficking assistance services. They were sampled from NGOs that provide post-trafficking assistance to trafficking survivors. The usual referral pathway to these services is through the police, who contact the NGO once they identify someone as a victim of human trafficking. The services provided by these NGOs are accommodation, basic needs, vocational training skills, medical services, psychological and spiritual counselling.

In Nigeria, interviews were conducted with eight Nigerian girls who were under 18 when they migrated and who were receiving post-trafficking assistance in services in the North East, North Central and South West regions of the country.

In Nepal, interviews were conducted with ten adolescent girls who were identified as survivors of trafficking. They were temporarily residing in or receiving post-trafficking assistance services from NGO-run shelter homes. The girls were referred by field coordinators to IOM for the interview.

Semi-structured interviews with key informants (qualitative)

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with key policymakers and service providers in each of the three countries, which provided expert opinions on the national context and informed the analysis on the effectiveness of the response to human trafficking.

In Uganda, five key informants from the government or NGOs were interviewed about issues related to adolescent trafficking. Three key informants worked in NGOs which specialised in human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and two in government departments responsible for the investigation and prosecution of crimes.

In Nigeria, six interviews were conducted with trafficking policymakers and practitioners who have diverse experiences in the government and NGO sectors.

In Nepal, five key informants were interviewed for this research. Three of these represented government ministries responsible for employment, labour rights, and women and children's issues. One key informant worked in a national NGO specialising in the trafficking of girls and women, and one represented the National Human Rights Commission.

Literature review

A narrative review of the peer-reviewed and grey literature on trafficking of adolescent girls and young women was conducted focussing on the three research sites (Nepal, Nigeria and Uganda) to understand the context of exploitation and migration trajectories, including social norms around gender, migration and work. This review did not include a systematic search strategy. The results do not provide an exhaustive account of the situations and topics investigated in each country. The review was meant to situate the debate around central issues in each country and support interpretation of the study's findings.

DATA ANALYSIS

This report presents the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the IOM (VOTD and FMS) and SWiFT data and thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis was undertaken on data relating to young women's and adolescent girls' experiences of labour migration and trafficking from different study samples (see Tables 1 and 2). The results from the datasets described in Table 1. Analytical tools Stata 14 and Matlab were used to analyse the quantitative data.

The findings from the semi-structured interviews listed in Table 2 are referred to as 'qualitative' in this report. All the qualitative interviews were audio recorded with informed consent from each participant and transcribed verbatim. An inductive thematic analysis of the qualitative data was conducted, allowing themes to emerge from the raw data instead of coding the data according to a pre-existing framework. The qualitative data was analysed using NVivo and QDA Miner Lite.

ETHICS AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

All research activities were undertaken in line with Plan International's Research Policy and Standards and the IOM's Data Protection Principles. Researchers were required to adhere to strict codes of conduct including child protection and safeguarding policies, and additional safeguarding measures were put in place including in the handling of data.

Participants were selected by the IOM's post-trafficking assistance services staff and invited to participate. They were informed of the nature and purpose of the study, and of the sensitive nature of some of the questions. They were assured that they had the option of declining to participate and, if they agreed to participate, they were told they could delay or terminate the interview at any time. They were also informed that declining to participate would not have any effect on service provision. All participants signed an informed consent form, which included use of personal data for research purposes.

Interviews were recorded in MP3 format and encrypted before they were transferred to the transcriber and translator. Interviews were conducted in private. All information from any qualitative work relating to specific cases was altered sufficiently in published documents to protect individuals' identity. Participants were asked for their permission to use anonymous quotes in published materials. All the names of people and places in the quotes were replaced by neutral names and any potentially identifying information was removed to ensure that identification of the interviewees was not possible.

Interviewers were instructed to delay or terminate interviews if the participant appeared too distressed to continue or reported any issue that required immediate attention, and to completely terminate the interview if requested to do so.

The six fictional case examples of the lived experiences of adolescent girls included in this report are loosely based on the narratives of the adolescents interviewed in this research. However, they do not provide a factual account of any of the individual's trajectories. Instead, they combine different elements of the interviews in fictitious narratives exclusively elaborated for illustration purposes. The research team were careful to sufficiently change all original details to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of participants in line with relevant ethical procedures.

Ethical approval for this study was granted in the UK by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (reference: 15204).

In Uganda, ethical approval was given by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) (reference: SS 4480).

In Nigeria, ethical clearance was granted by the Nigerian National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (reference: NAPTIP/IOM/49/T4/301).

In Nepal, ethical approval was granted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's Ethics Committee (reference: 8895) and by the Nepal Health Research Council (reference: 1040).

LIMITATIONS

The datasets used in this report are not necessarily representative of the population of trafficked persons in each country. They include persons who have been identified as trafficking survivors by the IOM and their partners in the participating countries. These cases should be understood as a sample of the identified population of victims which may be biased if some types of trafficking cases are more likely to be identified (or referred) than others. As in most human trafficking research, the ratio of survivors who have been identified versus the overall trafficked population is unknown.[337] That is, the sample could differ in important aspects from the overall population of trafficked persons. These limitations are common in human trafficking research because of the illegal, hidden and stigmatised nature of this extreme form of exploitation.

The SWiFT data is a population sample. Relying on the International Labour Organization's partners to identify migrant women and girls is likely to have facilitated self-identification of those female migrants who may have been more comfortable in disclosing their migrant status to local implementing partners than to an external research team. At the same time, however, the mapping and enumeration processes were not monitored and controlled by the research team, which may have led to a less systematic sampling frame and higher attrition rate.

In addition, the data in the IOM's VOTD dataset comes from IOM's direct assistance and case management activities, and completeness of data entry can vary depending on the demands of the operational context. Some data fields are not mandatory for case management and provision of services and can have a high number of missing values, meaning data completeness is higher for some operational locations than others. This reflects the fact that data is collected primarily to support victims' assistance. In line with academic research guidelines, the percentages of missing data for the variables described in this study are reported to aid unbiased interpretation of results.

There are additional limitations to IOM's FMS data. First, accurate results hinge, among other things, on the accuracy of answers from respondents. In addition, while IOM aimed to obtain a stratified sample based on nationality, sex and age, the dynamic and difficult environment meant that sampling has varied with the context and location in each country, and throughout the year. It should be noted that the age distribution of the sample is not aligned with that of the overall population, notably because children under 14 years of age were not interviewed, for ethical and practical reasons.

Finally, the surveys do not cover all the experiences that relate to human trafficking and exploitation and the level of detail provided by the surveys is also limited, restricting insight into the contexts in which human trafficking and exploitation occur.[338]

Despite these limitations, it is the researchers' belief that the VOTD, FMS and SWiFT data are probably the largest datasets and most systematic information available about these populations to date, offering much needed evidence to inform anti-trafficking actions in Uganda, Nigeria and Nepal.

Due to the challenges of recruiting young trafficking survivors into research, convenience sampling was used for the qualitative interviews with adolescents. This procedure may have limited the diversity of the population participating in the

study and introduced some selection bias associated with specific entry criteria in the post-trafficking assistance services which participated in the research. The number of interviews in each country was also limited for the same reason.

Additionally, the interviews with Nepalese trafficked adolescent girls are presented alongside findings from the SWIFT survey.

Whereas the first sample is limited to adolescent girls identified as trafficked, the second is a population sample who responded questions on forced labour (i.e. they were not identified as trafficked by any institution or organisation). The different nature of these samples limits comparison between quantitative and qualitative results for Nepal in a greater extent than for the Nigeria and Uganda chapters.

ANNEX B: DEFINITIONS OF COMMON TERMS

Terminology

Human trafficking	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation is considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means.[339]
Forced labour	All work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily.[340]
Forced marriage	Any marriage which occurs without the full and free consent of one or both of the parties and/or where one or both of the parties is/are unable to end or leave the marriage, including as a result of duress or intense social or family pressure.[341]
Child labour (prohibited)	Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.[342]
Worst forms of child labour	The term refers to (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.[343]

Sexual exploitation and commercial sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.[344]

As defined in the declaration of the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in 1996, commercial sexual exploitation of children is sexual abuse by an adult accompanied by remuneration in cash or in kind to the child or third person(s). Commercial sexual exploitation of girls and boys is one of the worst forms of child labour.

This report uses the term interchangeably with 'forced prostitution'. As defined in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, child prostitution means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration. |
Migrant	An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers (person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national); persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.[345]
Regular migration	Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.[346]
Irregular migration	Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the state of origin, transit or destination.[347]

ENDNOTES

1   The target for SDG 8.7 is: "Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms." https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8

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5   UK Government (2015) *Modern Slavery Act 2015*. http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted

6   The Call to Action was launched by world leaders on 19 September 2017 during the 72nd meeting of the UN General Assembly. https://delta87.org/call-to-action/

7   At the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting in 2019, Ministers said that: "We remain committed to promoting decent work for sustainable global supply chains and reaffirm our commitment to eradicate child labour, forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery in the world of work." https://g20-meeting2019.mhlw.go.jp/labour/jp/img/Ministerial_declaration_2019G20LEMM.pdf, 36, p.6.

8   The Commonwealth Heads of Government Communique included language that called for "effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking." Member countries were encouraged to endorse the *Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking* and to develop appropriate national strategies in this regard. They further agreed to take action to end child sexual exploitation online including through joining relevant international bodies and initiatives.

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Plan International UK interviewed Nigerian adolescent girls who are survivors of trafficking for its Because I am a Girl campaign

About Plan International UK

Plan International UK is a global children's charity. We work to give every child the same chance in life. Plan International UK is an independent development and humanitarian children's charity, with no religious, political or government affiliation.

About IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organisation, established in 1951 and, as of September 2016 a United Nations related organisation, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

IOM routinely generates statistics relating to its operational programmes and projects in over 133 countries.These cover a range of different migratory movements including repatriation and resettlement of refugees, and the voluntary returns of such migrant categories as highly qualified persons, victims of trafficking, stranded transit migrants, internally displaced persons, unsuccessful asylum seekers, and soldiers, as part of demobilisation programmes. In addition, data is collected on cases of redressing consequences of forced displacement through the claims and compensation programme.

About the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

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