

Beyond Relocation: Expectations and Concerns of Children and Caregivers

With the rapid expansion of Addis Ababa and other major Ethiopian cities, whole areas are being cleared to make way for urban development and business investment. At the same time low-cost condominium apartments are being constructed by the government, mainly in the suburbs, to re-house the people who will be relocated from the city centres. This summary reports on a study carried out with families in three urban communities that are due to be resettled when redevelopment of the city centres starts. It reviews the attitudes of children and adults towards the planned relocation, and their expectations, hopes and concerns about the move. The children and their caregivers anticipated many potentially positive changes in their lives if relocation happens. These include better sanitation in particular, better housing, and safer areas for bringing up children. However, they also voiced some concerns mainly regarding the availability of work away from the city centre, transport costs, and the disruption of their social ties.

Background

Young Lives has been working with children in 8 urban and 12 rural communities in Ethiopia since 2002. In two of the central study sites in Addis Ababa and one in Hawassa, residents were told some time ago that they would have to move. Families mentioned their concern about the planned redevelopment and relocation during the Young Lives household survey in 2009 and again during the fourth round of the survey in 2013, even though the exact timing is still unknown.

We visited the three communities plus a 'control' site on the outskirts of Addis Ababa in January 2012 and interviewed 466 caregivers and 451 children (almost 16% of all Young Lives children in Ethiopia and 40% of those living in urban areas). Of the 451 children, 299 are among the Younger Cohort (aged between 11 and 12 years old at the time), and 152 are among the Older Cohort (aged between 17 and 18). Of the total, 232 (51%) are girls and 219 (49%) are boys.

We also carried out in-depth interviews with 10 boys and 10 girls in each of the four sites and their caregivers. In Bertukan and Leku,¹ which are sites where we conduct our core longitudinal qualitative research, we interviewed the children who are part of that sub-sample (although one boy in Bertukan had moved and could not be located). In Duba and Menderin, a sub-sample was generated from the main survey sample. The selection criteria included the wealth level of the household, home ownership, and some social categories such as religion and ethnicity, in an attempt to include a mix of different groups and equal numbers of boys and girls from both cohorts. Interviews were also conducted with representatives from formal and customary institutions in each community. Focus group discussions were conducted in separate groups for boys and girls for each cohort, and were also held with their caregivers and with community representatives.

The objective was to understand the concerns and hopes of children and their caregivers on the prospect of relocation. The main topics of discussion include the information they have about relocation, whether they know other people who have been relocated people and how they fared, and what they view as problems and opportunities in the move.

Key Findings

- Children and their families are optimistic that relocation will give them cleaner, quieter and safer living conditions.
- The concerns families have could be allayed through consultation and phasing of the redevelopment process. Residents need realistic information about the timeframe and the options for resettlement.
- Reserving some land for housing in the city centre would maintain the current mixed settlement pattern and avoid the risk of creating marginalised areas on the outskirts.
- Many people are worried they will not be able to afford the payments for the condominium housing, so alternative options should be discussed with communities.
- As well as housing, basic infrastructure, health facilities and schools should be in place before people start to move, with provision for playgrounds, kindergartens and youth centres.
- Improved transport links, as well as income-generation schemes and credit programmes could help people make the transition to new areas.
- The planning time-scale should be clear and sequenced to allow families time to prepare, so that the move can happen smoothly to avoid families being separated or possessions lost or destroyed.

¹ The children and their families share a great deal of information with us over many years. For this reason, pseudonyms have been used – both for the children mentioned here and for their communities – to preserve anonymity.

Communities due for redevelopment

All four sites are in poor areas in either the national capital or a regional capital and they each present particular characteristics which are worth noting.

Bertukan is in the central part of Addis Ababa in an old quarter developed during the Italian occupation. It is close to a major market where many residents find casual employment. The site is heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity (Amhara and Gurage are the largest groups) and religion (with Orthodox Christian and Muslim communities included). Many Young Lives households rely on informal-sector activities, notably petty trade in the market, street vending, wage labour, the sale of food and beverages, and carpentry. There is a large proportion of female-headed households and some of the women concerned are involved in commercial sex work, for which the area is known. Several adjacent areas have already been demolished and are being redeveloped and this neighbourhood is also within the priority areas for redevelopment. Although most of the redevelopment is earmarked for commercial interests, three blocks of condominium housing have already been built in the area and about a dozen very poor families were able to move there with the support of NGOs, although none of these was a Young Lives household.

Duba is located on the outskirts of Addis Ababa in an area that was first developed as an industrial zone in the late imperial period. The area is close to a main road and a major river, which is polluted from the nearby factories. It is less congested than the two sites in the centre of the city. The area is mixed in terms of ethnicity, with Oromo, Amhara and Silte being the major groups, and the population is predominantly Orthodox Christian. The main forms of livelihood involve wage labour in the informal sector, retail trade and street vending, and some men work in factories. There is relatively good access to health and education services. There are no immediate plans for redeveloping the area, although there has been an increase in industrial development in the vicinity and along the main road through the area, which may well lead to some displacement along the road. It was included as a 'control' site for comparison with the areas where relocation is expected to take place.

Menderin is in the centre of Addis Ababa in a very congested area which has a reputation of being one of the poorest parts of the city, with badly constructed make-shift dwellings. The area is polluted by open sewers and waste in the streets and air pollution from a cigarette factory. The site is mixed in terms of ethnicity with four major ethnic groups, the Amhara, Gurage, Oromo and Tigraway. The majority of the population are Orthodox Christians, although there are large Muslim and smaller Protestant minorities. There is an important market in the area. The main forms of livelihood are based on informal-sector activities, including petty trade, street vending, retail selling, woodwork and daily labour, and some residents earn wages in government or private organisations. Several adjacent areas have already been demolished and are in the process of being redeveloped and some condominiums have already been built. The area has been designated for redevelopment and the residents have been informed they will have to move.

Leku is located in an old neighbourhood in Hawassa, the capital city of SNNPR. The ethnic composition is heterogeneous, with three major groups among the Young Lives sample being the Wolayta, Amhara and Oromo. There are also a few Gurage and some Tigraway and Sidama. In terms of religion the site is also mixed, with Orthodox Christians and Protestants representing the largest groups. Most people in the community are engaged in informal-sector activities, notably petty trading, daily labour, street vending, or other forms of self-employment. Children are also involved in such activities. There is a high prevalence of female-headed households. The community is considered to be very poor and a few NGOs have been engaged in distributing aid and educational materials. Some parts of the area are expected to be demolished for renovation, although the boundaries are not yet clear.

Knowledge about the redevelopment and relocation plans

Rationale for the move

Most of the children and their caregivers were aware of the different rationales for the relocation. These include urban development and the need to free the area for investment, construction of new housing, and construction of high-rise building for businesses. Even in the control site, Duba,

some people mentioned the clearance of some areas for investment, road and railway construction on the outskirts of the city near the industrial zone.

Information about relocation

Overall almost half of the children and their caregivers had heard that their neighbourhoods will be demolished sooner or later. The highest proportion was in Menderin with 83%. The time when they heard about relocation also differed. Some of the children, especially in the Younger Cohort, only



Photo: David Styan

heard about the prospect of relocation during our interviews, while others had heard just before then. However, there were also people who had known for four to five years. Two people in Bertukan had heard about it ten and sixteen years ago, and they thought it might never happen as it had been talked about for so long. The sources of the information regarding relocation also differed. Some people heard from Kebele or Wereda representatives, while others had heard from friends or at meetings of social institutions like Iddir funeral associations, and some children had heard at school.

Resettlement promises

Overall 46% of the caregivers said that promises have been made, the highest being in Bertukan with 64%. The most common promises mentioned (by almost 60% of caregivers) was provision of housing for people who currently lived in housing owned by the Kebele. Other promises mentioned included monetary compensation, access to electricity, water, health care and education. However, families living in privately rented houses or who are *debal* (sub-letting), said they had no hope at all if relocation happens because they will not be eligible for replacement housing

Timing of the relocation

Although the relocation has been on the cards for long time, the exact timing is not known and 72% of the caregivers had no idea when it might be. The uncertainty was highest in Bertukan where 95% of the caregivers did not know when it might take place. Most thought it would occur after a year. In our in-depth interviews, some people said that relocation might happen within five years

Experience of other relocated families

Overall, about half of the caregivers knew people who had already been relocated. The proportion was higher in the two city-centre sites in Addis Ababa (68% in Menderin and 64% in Bertukan). This suggests that relocation is fairly common in the two cities. However, in Duba, the control site, only a fifth of the caregivers knew people who had moved.

Residence of relocated people

Most of the children and the caregivers said the relocated families live in condominiums (79% and 73% respectively). Most are living on the outskirts of the city, and only about a fifth live in their original area. The proportion who knew relocated families living in Kebele houses was much smaller (23% of caregivers and 15% of children). Only a few respondents knew relocated people living in rented accommodation in the city, or who had moved to another urban area and only one caregiver knew a family now living in a rural area. In Bertukan some knew people who were relocated into their neighbourhood due when a nearby area had been demolished.

Changes in the lives of relocated people

More than half of the children and 44% of the caregivers said the life of the relocated families changed for the better. A fifth of the children and 16% of the caregivers said the change was mainly positive. Only 10% of the caregivers and 8% of the children said the change was negative. Menderin has the highest proportion of both caregivers and especially children mentioning positive change. Both children and caregivers mentioned improvements in housing and infrastructure, but they had also heard concerns about distance from the city centre, loss of social ties, loss of work opportunities, and inadequate housing and services.



Photo: Alula Pankhurst

Expectation of change after relocation

Overall expectation

A quarter of the children and a fifth of the caregivers said they did not know what to expect. About 40% of the children and of the caregivers expected positive change (the highest proportions being in Menderin), and about a fifth anticipate mainly positive changes even when there might be some negative aspects. Less than a fifth of the children and the caregivers expect the move will result in worse conditions or that is mainly negative for them.

Problems anticipated in moving

Almost half of the children and 50% of the caregivers mentioned finding a place to live as the most serious challenge. Some also mentioned the cost and practicalities of moving. Other concerns were the possibility of theft and potential damage to property during the move.

Problems anticipated in new area

Adapting to the new area, finding friends and support networks, and establishing good relations with neighbours were the three main concerns expressed by the children and their caregivers. Finding work nearby or the cost and availability of transport to areas where they had previously worked were the next concerns. Access to education, water

and health care were also mentioned. For the children access to places to play was also a major concern.

In our in-depth interviews concerns regarding housing, infrastructure and the increase of costs of living were raised. Some people knew of families now living in makeshift dwellings or had themselves lived in such temporary shelters and were currently worried that they might not find a place to live. Livelihood concerns centred on fears of not finding employment or a means of generating income since most people were working in the informal sector in the city centres. Finally, the disruption of social ties and support was a key concern for both the children and their caregivers.

Opportunities in the new area

Improved sanitation and housing were what the children and their caregivers were most looking forward to. Less pollution, a better environment for bringing up children, a safer environment and less crime, and improved water came next in the list. Unsurprisingly, better health and education facilities and new work opportunities were lowest down people's list of priorities. Children mentioned their hopes for cleaner and quieter area, less air pollution and noise, a safer to play, and fewer risks of violence and accidents. Similarly, some caregivers emphasised the chance of finding a suitable place to bring up children free from crime and addiction. Some anticipated improvements in their family's health as they expect sanitation to be better. In general the outlook was hopeful: 63% of the children and 53% of the caregivers expected positive change if relocation happens.

Policy implications

Urban planning: Given the government and city authority's need to generate revenue, current urban redevelopment programmes have tended to prioritise the interests of commercial investors and businesses over housing. Reserving at least an agreed proportion of land for condominium or alternative housing projects within the areas to be redeveloped would be welcomed by residents, who have a strong preference to remain living in the centre of the city where there are more work opportunities. This would have the advantage of contributing to maintaining and enhancing the mixed settlement pattern which has been a positive feature of the social and economic landscape of Addis Ababa, and thereby avoid the risk of creating marginalised settlements on the outskirts of the city.

Housing ownership: The ongoing programmes to provide housing-ownership opportunities for the urban poor are commendable. It is important to ensure that all eligible households are registered and considered for rehousing and/or compensation, to allay the fears of residents who currently own their own dwellings. Moreover, provisions for those living in private rented accommodation and in temporary housing should be considered. Given that many people living in the areas to be redeveloped are among the poorest urban residents, who may not be able to afford the down-payments or monthly instalments required for condominiums, alternative housing options should be planned and discussed with them.

Consultation and communication: There is a need for greater transparency in the planning of urban redevelopment. Residents living in areas that are to be cleared should be involved in the process and should be given realistic information about the timeframe and the options for resettlement, replacement housing and compensation. This would enable residents who are to be re-housed or relocated to participate in the planning process, consider their options and prepare themselves for changes.

Phasing: The process of redeveloping large areas should be conducted in stages, with the involvement of the residents, allowing time for some new housing to be constructed both in the areas to be demolished and in alternative locations, thereby avoiding uncertainty and excessive disruption to the social and economic life of city residents.

Improved infrastructure: In planning housing programmes, it is important to ensure that basic infrastructure, notably electricity, water and sewerage facilities are in place before people start to move. Moreover, ensuring that redevelopment is not restricted simply to housing and services but also considers healthcare facilities and schools in an integrated manner is crucial to ensure that resettlement results in improvements rather than deteriorations in living standards and to avoid the risks of service shortages or inadequate or inferior quality of provision.

Employment: Linkages between housing, services and employment opportunities need to be planned and built into the design and implementation of new housing projects. This is especially important for the urban poor who rely on livelihood opportunities in the informal sector which may not be available in newly redeveloped areas. The current emphasis on improving transport links from the outskirts and suburbs to the city centre is commendable, and further improvements could alleviate employment problems. Income-generation schemes and credit programmes, particularly for young people and women, should be planned and incorporated into the planning process.

Community spaces: As an integral aspect of the design of new housing, provision should be made for spaces and facilities for children to play, and also kindergartens, youth activity centres, open and green spaces, and parks for family recreation and for gatherings of social groups, to ensure that this major concern of both children and their caregivers is addressed.

Social cohesion: Where relocation is inevitable, families, relatives, friends and members of closely knit groups from within the same neighbourhoods should, as far as possible, be offered the option of being resettled together, close to one another, to avoid the risk of disruption to social support networks and institutions.

Timing: Where relocation is envisaged, the planning time-scale should be clear and sequenced, and the residents who are to be moved should be informed and allowed time to prepare for relocation. This requires sufficient time for the construction of housing, infrastructure and other facilities to be completed before the move. This would avoid the need to place relocated people in temporary shelters and would ensure that they benefit immediately from improvements from better housing and services. Care should be taken to ensure that the actual move is carried out in a smooth manner, to avoid the risk of family separation, and the destruction or loss of possessions.

This study has given us much opportunity to learn from communities and for reflection about how best to include them in the urban development and relocation planning and to improve the implementation process.



Photo: Konjit Seyoum

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