The effects of childhood work on migration decision during adulthood in rural Ethiopia

Mussa, E.C.*, Admassie, A.*, Mirzabaev, A. and Rukundo, E.N.*
*Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany
*Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Key Messages
1. Village proximity to thriving urban areas and highways associated with youth rural out-migration in Ethiopia.
2. Childhood work and schooling circumstances could also affect individuals’ migration decision later in life.
3. While village out-Migration in general was female-dominated, economic migration was mostly male oriented.
4. Marriage has been the main reasons of migration, multi-task children dominated the economic migration.

Background
- Ethiopia has been experiencing an overwhelming migration of the youth out of the rural areas since 2000s.
- However, spatial and sectoral wage-gaps fail to provide important insights regarding the youth out-migrations witnessed.
- We examined the effects of childhood work among 4-14-year-old children in 1999/2000 on migration decisions as adults in 2015/2016.
- We found that childhood work could affect migration decisions later in life.

Research Questions
1. Who migrated and who left behind?
2. Does childhood work affect migration decisions in the long-term?

Econometric modeling
1. Logistic regression: to identify the correlations between childhood work and migration decisions during adulthood, controlling for other factors.
2. Inverse Probability Weighting with Propensity Scores (IPW-PSM)
   - Treated group: Children who combined work with schooling
   - Control 1: Work-only children, treatment is “Schooling participation”.
   - Control 2: School-only children, treatment is “Work participation”.

Type of Data: Individual level panel from five rural districts in Ethiopia.

Results and discussion
(1) Characterizing long-term migrants and non-migrants

Figures 1: Migration characteristics after the baseline survey (1999/2000)
- Females are more likely to migrate (about 45%) than males (25%).
- About 15% of non-migrants intend to migrate, slightly more among males.
- Other districts within regions, mainly urban areas, were main destinations.
- Gender differentials in migration destinations mainly when out-of-region.

(2) Childhood work, migration status, and migration reasons

Figure 2: Migration status by gender on childhood work conditions
- Migration among school only and multi-task females is above 50%.
- Less migration among Inactive children.
- Working-only male children tend to stay in the villages when grown-up.

Concluding remarks
- Children’s working participation while schooling could facilitate the long-term changes in rural social landscape.
- However, lack of access to schooling among rural children may lead to less mobility, leaving behind in rural areas and working in agriculture.
- On the other hand, access to schooling seems to promote youth leaving rural areas and working in non-farm activities.
- The child work and schooling dynamics coupled with village accessibility may contribute to youth-led rural socio-economic transitions.