

“A dream come true”? Adolescents’ perspectives on urban relocation and life in condominiums in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Alula Pankhurst, Mesele Araya, Agazi Tiumelissan and Kiros Birhanu



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Summary

From 2006, the Ethiopian government embarked on a programme of urban redevelopment, moving people from inner-city areas to lowest cost condominium housing in the suburbs. This longitudinal mixed-methods study tracked adolescents before and after the move, with an eight-year interval in between, in three Young Lives sites in the capital city, Addis Ababa. The paper compares the views of those relocated and those who stayed behind, and the opinions of those relocated before and after their move.

Condominium housing mainly benefited low- and middle-income households in transitioning to home ownership, since the poorest could not afford the deposits and monthly mortgage costs and the richest preferred to build their own houses. Overall, the move appears to have led to better housing and improved sanitation. Nevertheless, students reported greater difficulties commuting to their schools in the first year; and the adolescents interviewed considered the schools and health centres in the condominiums to be of lower quality than those in their previous places of residence, and the markets and shops to be initially less well developed. In addition, there were fewer options for recreation. However, the adolescents felt that the changes were mainly positive and most soon adapted to the new social environment. They appreciated the condominiums with kitchens and toilets as modern forms of housing, though social ties in the new communities tended to be weaker. They also reported improvements in the physical environment, with less pollution and fewer security risks. There were gender differences in the decision-making abilities, leisure activities and spending habits of adolescents, with girls having less freedom in general. This lack of freedom was, however, somewhat compensated for by their better access to internet and social media.

1. Introduction

This paper begins with an overview of approaches to urban displacement, relocation and condominium housing, and reviews the evidence from Ethiopia. This is followed by a description of the methods used for this longitudinal mixed-methods study. The paper comprises four sections. The first compares the lives of those relocated in condominiums with those still living in the old neighbourhoods. Changes in housing, water and sanitation, and electricity and fuel use are reviewed. This is followed by a discussion on access to services, especially in education, health, markets, recreation and security. The second section compares the adolescents’ expectations prior to their relocation with their experiences afterwards regarding overall changes, problems during the move and the challenges of relocation. The third section considers their adaption to the new social and physical environments. The final section focuses on how adolescents’ gender influenced the changes they experienced and how the relocation impacted their agency. The paper concludes by drawing out the main implications.

1.1 Urban displacement and relocation

A framework for studying the effects of resettlement was developed by Cernea (1997) who proposed a risks and reconstruction model. He also wrote specifically about urban displacement (Cernea 1993) and predicted that urban relocation will become ‘larger in Africa than population displacements in any other single sector’ (Cernea 2005: 212). Limited tenure security of the urban poor makes them vulnerable to eviction, and their deprived living conditions are often used to justify ‘slum clearance’ to promote business investment (UN-HABITAT 2017). Impacts on poor households include on their property, productive assets, access to services, livelihood strategies, and social networks, as well as relocation having individual psychological effects (Du Plessis 2006). The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, distinguished between impacts on social organisation and on employment and finances (UNCHS 1991). In social terms ‘displacement can fragment and disperse communities, tear apart their social fabric, and dismantle social organisations and interpersonal ties,’ (Cernea 1997:1575) leading to the loss of networks that act as safety nets and provide solidarity, mutual assistance and help in crises (Bisht 2014).

Until recently urban relocation in Ethiopia had received comparatively little scholarly attention with the focus having been on rural resettlement (Pankhurst and Piguet 2009). However, the drive for urban renewal and consequent clearing of inner city areas and relocation of residents has resulted in several theses and publications. From 2009 to 2015, Addis Ababa city expropriated 392 hectares of inner city land and demolished over 23,000 houses in 23 sites (UN-HABITAT 2017). Some authors have suggested that the process is leading to gentrification and spatial inequality, with inner-city land becoming the preserve of the wealthy (Kloosterboer 2019). Studies also point out that compensation is limited, the procedures are often unclear and some categories, such as private tenants and illegal or informal residents, are excluded contrary to international legal provisions (Kloosterboer 2019, Yntiso 2008, Gossaye 2000).

Relocation to new areas impacted various aspects of people’s livelihoods. This included reduction in income and use of savings, disruption of businesses and loss of customers.

Since most households in the inner cities relied on informal work, notably food and beverage production and sale by women from their homes and at local markets (Abebe and Hesselberg 2013, Megento 2013), relocation to newer and less developed neighbourhoods in the outskirts represented a ‘locational disadvantage’ (Charitonidou 2021). To cope, household members pooled financial resources to share costs; used remittances, pensions or loans to supplement their income; and cut back on other expenses, such as food or healthcare (Charitonidou 2021). For those seeking to continue to work in their previous areas, limited transport networks and the time and cost involved in travelling there were major constraints (Yntiso 2008). Higher costs of living in the outskirts of urban centres were also mentioned, with households travelling to the centre of town to purchase cheaper food and goods (Planel and Bridonneau 2017).

Relocation also affected access to services including transportation, education, health and shops (Charitonidou 2021), which were initially less well-developed in the new suburbs. In social terms, several studies pointed out the risks of family separation and divorce, with potentially serious mental health effects. Moreover, studies highlighted the attendant disruption of social networks, notably funeral, credit and socio-religious associations and the difficulties of re-establishing social ties (Weldemariam 2017, Megento 2013). However, few studies addressed the effects on children and youth (Pankhurst and Tiumelissan 2014), although problems for students commuting to school and the risks of them dropping out were mentioned (Weldemariam 2017, Kloosterboer 2019).

1.2 Condominium housing

International human rights law recognises the right to adequate housing (UN-HABITAT 2011) and governments take different measures to promote citizens’ access to decent housing. Though states used to be the major providers of housing stock, there has been a major shift towards the private sector even in developing countries (Keivani and Werna 2001). However, the government of Ethiopia, with its Integrated Housing Development Programme, embarked on the provision of affordable housing for low- and middle-income households largely in Addis Ababa (UN-HABITAT 2011).

Despite government subsidies and pro-poor intentions, poorer households are often unable to afford housing costs, given the requirement of first providing a 20 per cent down payment and then monthly mortgage payments for 15 to 20 years (Abdulselem and Belay 2018, Keller and Mukudi-Omwami 2017). As a result, some households have ended up renting out their apartments to cover monthly payments. Research on urban relocation and housing is often framed in terms of ‘Rights to the City’ (Planel and Bridonneau 2017). As Weldeghebriel (2020) argues, residents are dispossessed of their housing and disadvantaged by being relocated from the city centre to the suburbs. Pedrazzini et al. (2014) suggest that the process resulted in the poor being forced to move into the peripheries to accommodate neo-globalisation. Ejigu (2014) concluded that an exclusive focus on housing does not address the residents’ livelihood needs, and suggests that they must be involved in the decision-making for the programme to succeed. Some studies have emphasised that condominium housing has led to a privatisation of ownership (Duroyaume 2015), providing the option for those who can afford it to acquire private condominium apartments. However, this indirectly favours

better-off households who are able to afford the costs. Given that those in *Kebele*¹ housing were paying very low rents, the move led to increased expenses for mortgage payments, as well as high costs necessary to finish the interiors of the apartments (Yntiso 2008).

Many studies highlight the negative consequences of relocation to condominiums on livelihoods, access to services and social relations. However, some studies suggest that households who moved to condominiums experienced improvements in housing and sanitation since most residents had been renting dilapidated *Kebele*-owned government houses. Few studies have raised the implications of condominium rehousing for children and youth. The new locations in the suburbs were mentioned as being better for children’s health, though respondents also mentioned risks of children falling from staircases (Tiumelissan and Pankhurst 2013).

2. Methods

In 2020, three years after the relocation this mixed-methods longitudinal study re-interviewed adolescents who were approximately 19 years old and who had been interviewed eight years earlier in 2012 in three sites in Addis Ababa when they were about 11 years old prior to the relocation. The study involved both quantitative surveys and a sample of qualitative interviews.

2.1. Research sites

The study was undertaken in three communities that are part of the Young Lives longitudinal research. Two of these communities are in Addis Ababa city centre and the third is in the suburbs. Menderin² is located in the city centre in an area known for its poverty and congested settlements. Bertukan is near a major market place and most residents’ livelihoods are in the informal sector. Duba is on the outskirts of the city in an area that was developed as an industrial zone. At the time of the initial study, residents in Menderin and Bertukan were told by the government to expect to be relocated. In practice, significant relocation only took place in Menderin, though some households in Duba were moved following road expansion and a few households from both Bertukan and Duba moved of their own accord to condominiums, rental accommodation elsewhere or houses they built.

2.2. The quantitative survey

The survey was carried out in February and March 2020. The interviews were undertaken by experienced field workers and supervisors who had worked with the main Young Lives surveys for more than three rounds. The data were collected using tablets with CAPI software. The survey re-interviewed 215 younger-cohort adolescents aged approximately 19 (118 boys and 97 girls (see Table 1)). They represented 81 per cent of a total of 266 younger-

1 The *Kebele* is the local administration, which rents houses to poor households.

2 To protect the anonymity of respondents, pseudonyms have been substituted for site names, and the exact locations are not specified.

cohort children who had been interviewed in the three sites in 2012 when they were 11 to 12 years old.

Of the 51 adolescents who were not re-interviewed, 19 could not be found, 14 had moved to locations outside Addis Ababa, eight had gone to university, two had migrated abroad, one had died and seven refused to be interviewed as they had already been interviewed multiple times.

Among the total sample a large majority (71%) had not been relocated (Table 1). Among those relocated nearly half (48%) had moved to condominiums; most of those who were not relocated lived in rental accommodation and only two households lived in condominiums.

Table 1 *Relocation status*

Sites	Menderin	Bertukan	Duba	Total
Numbers	65	75	75	215
Percentages	%	%	%	%
Relocated in condominium (n=29)	36.92	5.33	1.33	13.49
Relocated NOT in condominium (n=31)	27.69	9.33	8	14.42
NOT Relocated in condominium (n=2)	1.54	1.33	0	0.93
NOT Relocated NOT in condominium (n=153)	33.85	84	90.67	71.16

The survey focused on issues relating to relocation and living in condominiums. Some questions asked in the earlier survey enabled an analysis of the changes to understand whether the adolescents’ earlier expectations matched their subsequent actual life experiences after relocation.

2.3. Qualitative interviews

In-depth interviews were carried out with a sub-sample of 59 adolescents, of whom 31 were girls and 28 were boys. From this sample 21 were from Bertukan, 20 from Duba and 18 from Menderin. Of the 14 households that had moved, 12 were relocated from Menderin, one household from Bertukan had moved to a condominium and one from Duba had moved to a house they had built. Out of 13 households that had moved to condominiums, three had subsequently moved again. One family rented out their apartment and moved back to rented accommodation in Menderin, another left a government apartment they were allocated and moved to a house they had built, and a third sold their condominium and were living in a cheaper apartment while building their own house. The 10 households living in condominiums at the time of the interviews were in eight different locations, all except one of which are in the city’s outskirts.

3. Relocation and housing

This first section starts by reviewing the implications of moving to condominiums for different wealth categories, and the changes this has brought about in housing, water and sanitation, and electricity and fuel use.

3.1 Condominiums and housing entitlements

Condominium housing has brought about substantial changes resulting in unprecedented property ownership for poor to middle-income households, enabling them to move from renting to owning their own apartments. For many, this would have been hardly imaginable otherwise and they spoke of it as ‘a dream come true’. (Pankhurst et al. forthcoming). However, for the poorest the mandatory down payment and monthly payments were unaffordable, while the richest often preferred to build their own houses. Sara, whose family could not afford the monthly payment for the condominium they received, explained:

A condominium is good for those with middle income, as the monthly fee does not harm them, but the rich want a better quality house.

Among the case studies two wealthy households had finished constructing private house and three had moved to condominiums while building their houses, as Etalem³ recalls:

My father is a government employee and also does part-time work as a lawyer. We sold our condominium in Bole Bulbula and bought land near CMC and started to build a house; in the meantime we rented a house in Mekanisa, and later moved to a condominium.

However, some poorer households could not afford the mortgage payments and sold the apartments they had been allocated,⁴ while others decided to downsize by selling larger flats and moving into smaller one-bedroom ones, as Rahel explained:

My father is a tailor and a guard. We paid a 70,000 birr⁵ down payment; since our family has more than five members we were allocated a two-bedroom flat in the Ayat area. But the monthly payment of 3,300 birr was too expensive, so we sold the flat and bought a one-bedroom one in Bole Arabsa where the monthly payment is only 1,100 birr.

Other families rented out their apartments to cover the monthly payments and still others moved back to rented accommodation in their old neighbourhoods, as Mamo recalled:

We were allocated a one-bedroom flat in Bole Bulbula, but the cost of the monthly payment was high and my mother works as a street cleaner and has early shifts so she would often stay over with her sister in our old neighbourhood.

3 All names used are pseudonyms to protect the respondents’ identities.

4 In principle, condominium owners are not supposed to sell their flats until the full payment has been made, but various informal agreements such as long-term loans are often reached. The city administration is aware of the practice and turns a blind eye to it (Kloosterboer 2019).

5 At the time of the fieldwork in February 2020, one Ethiopian birr was worth about US\$ 0.032 dollars.

3.2 Initial down payments and monthly mortgage payments

In order to benefit from the government condominium housing scheme, families have to be able to afford both an initial down payment and a monthly payment for up to 20 years, with the amounts depending on the size of the flat and the number of years depending on the rate of payment. Some were able to afford the payments through remittances from relatives. For instance, Sisay’s father lives in England and sends the money they need for a one-bedroom condominium in which he lives with his grandmother, mother, two aunts and two sisters. Similarly, Maji has a brother who lives in South Africa who helped, including helping to finance the work required to finish the apartment before they could move in.

In some cases families borrowed money for the down payment and were unsure if or when they would be able to pay it back. Rahel explained:

I live with my grandparents, my aunt and my seven-year-old cousin in a two-bedroom apartment. We borrowed from a relative to pay the down payment of 78,000 birr, and have to pay 3,500 birr monthly; we are finding this very difficult, since both my grandparents are elderly and my grandfather only gets a pension of 900 birr a month, and my aunt works as a guard. I don’t know how we will ever be able to pay it back.

Even when the down payment has been made, affording the monthly payment is another serious constraint for families with low incomes, especially since those in government *Kebele* housing pay very small amounts of rent, often under 50 birr a month, whereas the monthly mortgage payments range from 500 to over 3,500 birr. Ayda lives in a one-room flat with her mother who is the sole breadwinner and she worries that they will not manage to keep up with payments.

We used the 42,000 birr compensation mainly for the down payment, but we need to pay over 1,000 birr monthly. My mother works as an accountant in a travel agency and my parents are divorced and my father does not contribute, so my mother is finding it very difficult.

3.3 Housing improvements

Overall in the survey almost one-fifth of households (19%) had invested in housing improvements in the two years prior to the interviews. However, this proportion was much higher, at one-quarter (25.81%), among those in condominiums (see Table 2). Moreover, the average amount spent on maintenance work by those in condominiums was considerably higher (an average of 47,487.50 birr for those in condominiums and 30,299.10 birr in their old neighbourhoods). Overall, in terms of the types of improvements made, the most important renovations were to the walls (67%), the floor (47%), the roof (27%), the kitchen (14%), the bathroom (8%) and the bedroom (8%). However, for those in condominiums the order of importance was different, with the floor (88%), walls (75%), kitchen and bathroom (38% each) much more important and the roof much less important (13%).

Table 2 *Maintenance and improvement of the dwelling on the houses*

	Condominium (n=31)	House (n=184)	total (N=215)
Household carried out any maintenance on the condo/house in the past two years, yes (%)	25.81	17.39	18.6
If yes, amount spent in the last two years? (Birr)	47,487.5	26,002	30,299.1
Household invested in improvement of the dwelling in the past two years, yes (%)	25.81	23.37	23.72
If yes, what was invested in? (n=51) ⁶			
New/renovated bedrooms	13%	7%	8%
New/renovated kitchen	38%	9%	14%
New/renovated bathroom	38%	2%	8%
New/renovated living room	25%	5%	8%
Improved floor	88%	40%	47%
Improved wall finish	75%	65%	67%
Improved roof cover	13%	30%	27%
Rebuild dwelling	0%	9%	8%
Electric rewiring	25%	2%	6%
Central heating/gas servicing	0%	0%	0%
Sanitation	13%	2%	4%
Water supply	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	2%	2%

In the qualitative interviews families moving to condominiums mentioned incurring substantial costs for finishing the interiors of the flats. This involved painting, putting doors on to the rooms, toilet ceramics, improving the floor using tiles and adding gypsum to ceilings. Ayda recalled:

We moved in and had to improve the wall, floor and ceiling. It cost us about 30,000 birr for the ceramics for the floor and more than 20,000 birr for the ceiling, so overall more than 50,000.

Families moving to condominiums also spent a lot on furniture including beds, sofas, tables and cabinets, and equipment including fridges, stoves, washing machines, water-filtering machines and TVs, and some said their old furniture would not fit in the flats. Households also often made partitions to be able to use the living room partly as a bedroom, some altered the kitchen to be able to sleep in it and many made bunk beds. Some received assistance from relatives or remittances from abroad to help with the costs. Zenebe recalled:

We bought a new sofa and TV, painted the walls and improved the ceiling, and bought kitchen equipment especially a stove. We spent about 80,000 birr and my aunt and uncle helped.

Adolescents whose families had moved to condominiums generally commented favourably that apartments had separate bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and a bathroom with a toilet and shower. However, since many families could only afford one- or two-bedroom flats, most

⁶ The sum of the percentages in each column may exceed 100% as a household can invest in more than one component.

families were sharing rooms as they had done in their previous homes. Adolescents shared beds, girls often shared with their mothers, and children slept in bunk beds with siblings or on mats on the floor. Despite the crowded living conditions, however, Rahel felt there was more space:

I share the bedroom with my grandmother, my aunt and cousin. I sleep on a mat and my aunt on the bed with her daughter. We each have a bag for our belongings. We use the outdoor balcony to store things. But it is still more space than our house before where the single room was small and narrow.

3.4 Water and sanitation

Improvements in access to water, sanitation and privacy are the main things that those who relocated said had improved considerably, although water shortages in some areas continue to be a major constraint. In the survey, 70 per cent of those in condominiums said their water access had improved (see Appendix Table 1A). The apartments have several water points in the bathroom (with a washbasin, shower and toilet) and in the kitchen, which was much appreciated by participants in the survey. In contrast to the old neighbourhood, while some families had taps in their houses, many shared taps in the compounds; three-quarters (76%) relied on neighbours, and almost one-fifth (19%) on public standpipes or wells (see Table 3).

However, there were problems with water availability in all locations; overall, only about one-quarter (26%) reported having access to water all the time. Those in condominiums were more likely to have reliable access: over one-third (34%) did, compared to only one-quarter of those not relocated (25%). Moreover, 30 per cent of those not relocated got water only once a day compared to only 10 per cent of those in condominiums. Nonetheless, there were also serious water shortages in some condominiums and the proportion of respondents receiving water only once a week (7%) was similar for those in condominiums and those not relocated (see Table 3).

When families first moved into new condominium areas, there were shortages as the water systems had not yet been established, but this soon improved. Nonetheless, some said they received water only at night, every other day or twice a week and had to store it in barrels. There were also reports of interruptions of up to a week. In some cases, those living on the higher floors complained that the water often did not reach their floor.

Table 3 Availability of water and sources

	Do you get water coming into your condominium/housing?	If yes, how frequently					If not, what is the main source of drinking water for members of your house			
		All the time	Once a day	Every other day	Once a week	More than once a month	Bought water (delivery or bottled)	Piped into neighbours' dwelling/year d/plot	Piped into relatives' dwelling/year d/plot	Public standpipe/t ube well
	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)
Relocated in condominium (29)	100%	34.48	10.34	48.28	6.9	0				
Relocated NOT in condominium (31)	70.97%	27.27	13.64	40.91	18.18	0	11.11	33.33	0	55.56
NOT relocated NOT in condominium (n=153)	86.45%	24.63	29.85	37.31	6.72	1.49	0	76.19	4.76	19.05
Total (n=213)	86.05%	26.49	24.86	39.46	8.11	1.08	3.33	63.33	3.33	30

Improvements in sanitation was one of the most important gains mentioned by those who had relocated. Only three per cent of those who had not relocated had flush toilets compared to the vast majority in condominiums. Moreover, over two-thirds (68%) living in the old neighbourhoods used communal pit latrines and more than one-fifth (22%) used household latrines. Furthermore, less than one-fifth (18%) had washing facilities close to the toilets compared to almost all (97%) of those in condominiums (see Table 4).

Table 4 Toilet facilities and disposal of solid waste'

	What kind of main toilet facility does your household use?						Are there hand-washing facilities close to the toilet?	How does your household dispose of solid waste?			
	Flush toilet/ septic tank	Forest/ field/ open place/ river	Neighbours' toilet	Pit latrine (communal)	Pit latrine (household)	Relatives toilet/ Simple latrine on pond		Burn	Take out for regular collection	Throw in field	In a municipality
							yes %	%	%	%	%
Relocated in condominium (n=29)	79.31	0	0	3.45	17.24	0	96.55	0	96.55	0	3.45
Relocated NOT in condominium (n=31)	25.81	0	3.23	32.26	35.48	3.23	29.03	3.23	90.32	3.23	3.23
NOT relocated NOT in condominium (n=153)	3.23	3.23	2.58	68.39	21.94	0.65	18.06	1.29	96.13	0.65	1.94
Total (n=213)	16.74	2.33	2.33	54.42	23.26	0.94	30.23	1.4	95.35	0.93	2.33

The communal latrines were often dirty and smelled bad since many households used them. Moreover, they were not frequently cleaned, there was no running water or soap to wash and no lighting, as Fasil explained:

We use a communal public toilet and people do not clean it regularly and it has a bad smell which disturbs the family, and is unpleasant to use. There are eight households and about 30 people using it. The septic tank is pumped out every eight months. There is no place for washing hands after latrine use and a basket for tissues. There is no light inside and it is difficult to use at night.

In addition, in many compounds residents disposed of liquid waste in ditches and sewage often overflowed from these during the rainy season, leading to bad smells and health

hazards. In contrast, in the apartments each household had its own toilet and the bathrooms had washbasins so they could wash with soap after going to the toilet. Often it is the women who clean the toilets, with some of the adolescents also involved. Liquid waste is disposed of through the kitchen and toilet and does not present a problem.

3.5 Electricity and fuel use

In the survey 70 per cent of those living in condominiums said their access to electricity had improved (see Appendix Table 1A). When they first moved in, some did not have electricity until the supply was fitted. However, problems with power cuts remain a constraint, as in the rest of the city, especially during holidays, with families coping by using rechargeable or solar lights, torches and candles or their mobile phones as torches. Moreover, rising electricity costs are a major concern. The private ownership of the condominium apartments means that each household has a meter with cards for prepaid payment. In contrast, in the old neighbourhood households often shared electricity costs within a compound settling bills jointly.

In terms of fuel sources, there has been a significant change with those in condominiums generally using electricity (97%), whereas the proportion for those not relocated doing so was lower (80%). The remainder used charcoal (9%), wood (6%) and a few households used bottled gas, kerosene or even branches (Table 5).

Table 5 *The main source of fuel for cooking*

	Electricity	Charcoal gas	Butagaz	Kerosene	Wood	Branches	None
	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)
Relocated in condominium(n=29)	96.55	0	0.00	0.00	0	0	3.45
Relocated NOT in condominium(n=31)	80.65	3.23	0.00	0.00	16.13	0	0
NOT relocated NOT in condominium(n=153)	79.74	9.15	0.65	0.65	5.88	0.65	3.27
All average (n=213)	82.33	6.98	0.47	0.47	6.51	0.47	2.79

4. Access to and quality of services

In this section we consider how relocation and life in condominiums has affected young people’s access to services and their views about the quality of those services with regard to education, health, markets and shops, leisure and recreation, and policing and security.

4.1 Education

In the survey most of the adolescents (62%) who were relocated to condominiums mentioned that access to education had been promised, whereas the proportion was less than half (42%) for those who moved to locations outside condominiums (see Appendix Table 1A). Generally, very high levels of satisfaction with education services were reported irrespective of location, although at all education levels satisfaction was higher among those who were not relocated, and among those relocated it was lower for those who moved to condominiums. Most significantly, however, almost twice as many adolescents dropped out of school in the condominiums (9%) compared to in the old neighbourhoods (5%) (see Table 13).

Despite high levels of satisfaction reported in the survey, the qualitative evidence reveals that relocation presented serious challenges for the adolescents’ schooling, especially in the first year, as the move took place in the middle of the school year. This meant that students were unable to join schools nearby. To complete the school year, they either had to commute or find friends or relatives to stay with in areas of the old community that were not demolished. The long commute meant that some students were late for classes, although teachers were often understanding and some students managed quite well, as Sara recalled:

I was attending eighth grade and continued to travel back there daily since the ICT facilities are good and the teachers much better. I had to leave at 6:30 in the morning and it took me an hour and 30 minutes each way and cost 15 birr. I was often late, so sometimes I stayed with a cousin who lives not too far from my old community. The teachers were understanding since they knew the situation. Despite this I still managed to obtain good results and joined ninth grade.

Given the distance, costs and difficulties associated with commuting, ultimately most young people moved to local schools the following year, but many felt that they were not as good as their old ones. Some suggested that their academic performance had suffered as a result. Moreover, whether students attended local schools or commuted to better private schools depended on their families’ financial capacities, as Maji explained:

I was attending a government school before we moved, but then I moved to a private school in the new area. However, when my parents were unable to afford the school fees, I moved again to a government school, but this time in the new locality.

Dawit finished ninth grade at his old school and moved to a local school, but failed his tenth grade exam. He could not find a job locally and commuting was too expensive:

I did not like the new community and school and classmates. I really missed my old school and friends. My results were also much worse and I failed the tenth grade so could not get into university. I could not find a job here but found work in a printing press in my old area.

But commuting was so expensive that I had little money left; I discussed it with my parents and we agreed it was not worth it, so I gave it up after a month and now just spend my time with friends here.

4.2 Health care

In the survey almost two-thirds (65%) of those who moved to condominiums said they had been promised access to health care as compared to only one-third (33%) who had moved to other areas. Although a large majority (71%) said their health care had greatly improved, there were significant differences, with almost three-quarters (74%) of those in condominiums saying so compared to two-thirds (68%) of those relocated elsewhere (see Appendix Table 1A). However, despite these generally positive views, when asked what conditions make their areas attractive only a small proportion (17%) mentioned access to health care (see Table 10). Most significantly, the proportion in the condominiums (6%) was almost three times lower than for those not relocated (17%), suggesting less satisfaction with health care among those relocated.

The qualitative evidence provides some explanations and nuances suggesting that few adolescents used health services, irrespective of location. While some reported favourable experiences, others were less satisfied. However, a major concern in the new areas was that the government health facilities were less well equipped and lacked basic medication, so many families preferred to incur the cost of going to private clinics. Dereje stated:

The health centre in the area we moved to does not have laboratory facilities so the medical personnel can only prescribe medicine on the basis of patients’ symptoms not test results. This means that many families prefer to go to private clinics that provide better services.

Some adolescents were dissatisfied with the government service and would have preferred to go to private providers were it not for the prohibitive cost, while several said they used private clinics despite the greater cost.

4.3 Markets and shops

The condominiums are mainly on the outskirts of towns in areas that are still being developed. It is therefore not surprising that when asked about what makes their area attractive, there was a smaller proportion of respondents in condominiums that mentioned access to markets and shops (13% each) as compared to in the old neighbourhoods (22% for markets and 20% for shops). However, a slightly higher proportion of those relocated to areas outside condominiums found market access (24%) and shops (21%) attractive in their areas (see Table 10).

The qualitative evidence shows that many adolescents felt the situation had improved but there were differences between condominium locations. In some more developed areas adolescents were pleased with the greater market opportunities as Zenebe explained:

I live in Jemo; we have all kinds of facilities including health and education, minimarkets, and supermarkets and boutiques. In my old community there were few shops and they were all of the same kind.

Families moving to condominiums usually found most things they needed in their new localities, but the prices were high and they usually travelled to other markets for their main purchases, as Eshetu mentioned:

At first there were not many shops but now there are more, but our family still prefers to go to other areas of the city where the prices are better.

In contrast, those who remained in their old neighbourhoods did not have to go far and felt the prices were reasonable, especially in the case of those living in Bertukan where there is a vegetable market close by.

4.4 Leisure and recreation

Very small proportions of the adolescents said they appreciated their areas because of recreation centres (7%) cafés (7%) or bars (1%), and almost none belonged to youth associations (see Table 10). The proportions who appreciated recreation centres were half those relocated in condominiums (3%) compared to those who were not relocated (6%).

The qualitative data provides some clues to explain why. The adolescents found the new environment of the condominiums much less attractive in terms of the available social life, with fewer entertainment opportunities and a lack of places where they could spend their leisure time, as Dereje explained:

There is no entertainment in the area and to have fun I go to Bole area or even travel to Debre Zeit town to find satellite TV houses to watch football.

Moreover, many said they have fewer friends and spend more time at home, as Sara recalled:

There is nowhere to go in the neighbourhood and it is boring. It was easy to go out in Menderin and I had many friends. I miss our former neighbourhood, and knew lots of people, and it was nice going out for errands or to buy things. Now I spend most of my time at home. It is not that I am not allowed to go out, it is that there is nothing to be gained.

Many adolescents mentioned that there were no libraries close by or youth clubs or sport clubs in the new area. Even in the old neighbourhoods such options were limited and some boys did not want to join youth associations as they felt they were politicised, as described by Fasil:

I do not want to go to the youth centre, as those who want to use the services need to be a member of the youth league.

Several youths mentioned that they spent more time watching films at home. Many of those relocated said the entertainment options were much better in the areas they came from and some of the boys went to other areas or downtown to watch satellite TV or movies. For example, Eshetu explained:

In Menderin we had a lot of options for entertainment close by, there were cafés, pool houses, and many places showing movies and football. Here there is only one DSTV station within the block showing Champions League, and that opened after we came here. So I often go to Bole to watch football; otherwise I enjoy walking in the evening and playing football with friends on Sundays.

Some of the adolescents said they began spending more time on social media and playing online games, as Sara told us:

I mainly stay at home, only going to the mosque on Fridays, though sometimes I visit friends or relatives in the old neighbourhood. In order to avoid getting bored I often play games on my mobile phone.

She added that she had noticed how some social media sites had changed to become less entertaining and more politicised.

I use Facebook, Instagram and Telegram, and follow many groups; this is useful for both secular and religious education. Before, many sites used to have more funny things, but nowadays there is a lot of politics including fake information and ethnic posts.⁷

4.5 Policing and security

The recent introduction of community policing represents an important change at a local level. In the survey most young people rated the police services as very good or excellent, irrespective of where they lived (see Appendix Table A2). When asked about what they disliked about their areas, 15 per cent of adolescents in all areas indicated that safety was a problem. However, regarding specific issues there were differences that implied that security problems were worse in the old neighbourhoods, especially drunken behaviour, street fighting and theft (see Table 11).

The qualitative data corroborated this and suggested that many adolescents relocated in the condominium areas felt that the new areas were safer, with less violence and with community policing ensuring relative safety, whereas theft and gangs presented risks in the old neighbourhoods. The interviews also suggested that while things improved with time in the condominiums after an initial period of insecurity, in the old neighbourhoods conditions were getting worse. For example, some relocated adolescents mentioned that there were no road lights when they first moved in but that the situation had improved. In contrast, some of those still living in the old neighbourhoods explained their worries about increased violence related to drug use and gangs and a sense that the police were not able to control the situation, as described by Leikun:

Our community is becoming more and more unsafe. There are people who chew khat [a narcotic plant] and drink alcohol. They are stealing mobile phones and other things from people. There are drunk people who disturb the community and also many fights between gangs. Though there is community policing in the area, they are not bringing about any change.

However, the qualitative evidence also revealed that safety was also a concern for those who had been relocated. In some of the more remote and recently inhabited condominium areas, young people expressed concerns that the neighbourhoods were not safe at night and in forest areas. Some adolescents, such as Rahel, reported incidences of attacks and theft, particularly of mobile phones:

There is an open place not far from our condominium and it is not safe during the night. Even during the day if there are no people on the road, those who go out alone would be in danger, their mobile and belongings can be taken.

Etalem, who is living in a rented condominium, mentioned a different kind of danger for girls and told us about the risks of young women being lured into prostitution under the guise of working in massage parlours. She said:

The number of massage houses is increasing and this is putting young women and girls in danger by involving them in sexual activities with customers.

⁷ This is a reference to posts promoting ethnic identities and sometimes inciting violence which has become a serious issue recently.

5. Expectations and experiences

This section compares the adolescents’ expectations as expressed before the relocation in 2012 when the children were approximately 11 years old, and their experiences after moving to condominiums in 2020 when they were approximately 19, with regard to overall life changes, problems they faced during the move and challenges they had adapting to the new environment.

5.1 Overall changes

Over half (55%) of those who had moved felt their lives had improved for the better, compared to just under half (48%) who had expected improvements (see Table 6). However, when we include those who felt the move was mainly positive, a considerable majority (80%) had a generally positive outlook compared to slightly over two-thirds (70%) beforehand. Nonetheless, the proportions of those who felt the move was negative or mainly negative were much higher after the relocation, suggesting greater discontent among a minority. With regards to condominiums, a slightly higher proportion had generally positive views, though a greater proportion felt it was positive with some negative aspects.

Table 6 *Expectations and experiences of life change between 2012 and 2020*

Sites	2012			2020					
	In what ways do you think your life will change after the move?			How has your life changed since relocating?			How has your life changed since moving to a condominium?		
	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites
Positive	41	57	48 (n=31)	73	50	55 (n=29)	40	42	41 (n=12)
Mainly positive and some negative	27	14	22 (n=14)	9	29	25 (n=13)	20	46	41 (n=12)
Negative	5	4	5 (n=30)	9	10	9 (n=5)	40	12	17 (n=5)
Mainly negative and some positive	5	0	3 (n=20)	9	12	11 (n=6)	0	0	0
Don't Know	22	25	23 (n=15)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number	37	28	65	11	42	53	5	24	29

5.2 Problems during the move

The adolescents surveyed were generally fairly optimistic before the move. Less than half (44%) thought they would face problems finding accommodation and less than one-quarter (23%) thought they would have difficulties moving their belongings (Table 7). However, afterwards, more than half (55%) said they had experienced accommodation problems and over one-third (34%) said they had experienced problems with moving belongings. Moreover, more than one-quarter (26%) mentioned the cost of moving belongings, compared to only 11 per cent beforehand.

Table 7 *Problems with moving: expectations and realities*

Date	2012			2020		
	Problems expected during the move (%) 2012 (n=71)			Problems faced during the move (%) 2020 (n=53)		
Site	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites
Finding somewhere to live	49	39	44 (n=31)	73	50	55 (n=29)
The practicalities of moving belongings	23	22	23 (n=16)	9	40	34 (n=18)
The costs of moving belongings	17	6	11 (n=8)	18	29	26 (n=14)
Don't know	11	33	23 (n=16)	0	7	6 (n=3)
Number	35	36	71	11	42	53

5.3 Relocation challenges and opportunities

Prior to the move, adolescents had expected that adapting to the new area would be their main problem, and afterwards it was indeed seen as the most serious problem by an even larger proportion (see Table 8). Social issues were mentioned by a large proportion of respondents before the move; over three-quarters mentioned their concerns about establishing good relations with neighbours and finding friends and helpers. However, subsequently less than half mentioned these problems, suggesting that most adolescents had managed to adapt to the social environment three years on. Other problems were mentioned by far fewer respondents, and the proportion of those concerned about finding work nearby and accessing services was much lower after the move, though more respondents mentioned the availability and cost of transport.

Table 8 *Anticipated and experienced problems*

Issues	2012			2020		
	What do you anticipate will be the main problem? (n=71) (%)			What problems did you face in the new area? (n=53) (%)		
Sites	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites
Adapting to the new area	77	86	82 (n=58)	91	93	92 (n=48)
Finding friends and helpers	77	78	77 (n=55)	27	50	45 (n=24)
Establishing good relations with neighbours	80	78	79 (n=56)	18	43	38 (n=20)
Finding work near living area	26	39	32 (n=23)	9	19	17 (n=9)
Availability of transport to previous work	14	19	17 (n=24)	27	26	26 (n=14)
Cost of transport to previous work	37	42	39 (n=28)	18	31	28 (n=15)
Access to education	23	19	21 (n=15)	18	10	11 (n=6)
Access to health care	26	22	24 (n=17)	0	14	11 (n=6)
Access to water	26	19	23 (n=16)	9	17	15 (n=8)
Access to places to play	34	17	25 (n=18)	0	2	2 (n=1)
N	35	36	71	11	42	53

Prior to the move, over three-quarters of those surveyed expected improvements in housing and sanitation. However, in practice less than half felt that these expectations had materialised, suggesting some discontent with housing and sanitation (see Table 9).

Regarding the environment, more than half expected less pollution and slightly less than half felt that the areas would be safer and better for bringing up children. After the move, the proportions of those who felt these expectations were realised were almost the same regarding pollution but considerably lower in respect to safety, though more respondents felt the new areas were good for bringing up children. In terms of education and health services, the proportions before and after who felt that new areas were better were roughly the same, though expectations of better access to water and new work opportunities were lower.

Table 9 *Expected and realised opportunities*

Issue	2012			2020		
	Expected opportunities and benefits of the new area (n=71)			Better opportunities after relocation (n=53)		
	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites	Bertukan	Menderin	Both sites
Improved housing %	97	64	80 (n=57)	45	45	45 (n=24)
Improved sanitation %	94	61	77 (n=55)	36	48	45 (n=24)
Less pollution %	66	42	54 (n=38)	82	48	55 (n=29)
Safer environment/ less crime %	60	36	48 (n=34)	18	31	28 (n=15)
Better environment for bringing up children %	57	39	48 (n=34)	27	48	43 (n=23)
Improved water access %	46	47	46 (n=33)	36	40	40 (n=21)
Better health facility %	43	14	28 (n=20)	36	29	30 (n=16)
Better education facility %	43	17	30 (n=21)	36	29	30 (n=16)
New work opportunity %	26	14	20 (n=14)	9	17	15 (n=9)
Number	35	36	71	11	42	53

6. Adaptations to the social and physical environment

This section reviews the adolescents' views about the positive and negative aspects of the social and physical environment in which they live, comparing those who were relocated with those who remained in the old neighbourhoods.

6.1 Adaptation to the social environment

Asked about what made their areas attractive (see Table 10), social relations were seen as the most important consideration, with greater proportions of respondents among those who were not relocated. This suggested less reliance on social support between households in the new condominiums. Higher proportions of boys valued friends and family irrespective of location, whereas more girls valued neighbours. The number of adolescents who valued funeral, religious and credit associations was generally low, but was slightly higher among those who had not been relocated. More boys mentioned funeral and credit associations, while more relocated girls and more non-relocated boys mentioned religious associations.

Access to services and markets were perceived as less important. A slightly higher proportion of those who were relocated valued education, and far more mentioned cafés and bars, and safety at night, whereas more of those who were not relocated placed value on health care, access to markets, shops and work. More boys mentioned health care irrespective of location, whereas more relocated girls and more non-relocated boys cited education. This may be explained by the fact that more of the relocated boys had left school. More girls mentioned access to markets and more boys access to shops, irrespective of where they lived. More girls among those relocated and more boys who had not been relocated mentioned work, cafés and bars, and recreation centres.

Table 10 *Conditions that make the area you live in attractive*

	Relocated %			Not relocated %		
	Male (n=32)	Female (n=28)	Total (n=60)	Male (n=86)	Female (n=69)	Total (n=155)
Friends	63	57	60	87	72	81
Family	63	50	57	78	75	77
Neighbours	34	43	38	78	83	80
<i>Iddir</i> funeral association	13	4	8	13	6	10
<i>Iqqub</i> credit association	3	0	2	6	3	5
<i>Mehaber</i> religious association	3	7	5	9	6	8
<i>Kebele</i> recreation centre	3	4	3	10	1	6
Access to education	28	36	32	33	25	29
Access to health care	16	14	15	23	10	17
Access to shops	19	14	17	23	19	21
Access to markets	16	21	18	26	22	24
Cafes	9	18	13	8	1	5
Bars	0	4	2	0	1	1
Access to work	6	11	8	16	10	14
Safety at night	19	18	18	9	7	8
Others	22	18	20	3	6	5

The qualitative data provide illustrations of the trends in the survey described above and a more nuanced picture of the importance of social relations. Several adolescents who remained in the old neighbourhoods emphasised the importance of friendly and neighbourly relations, as noted by a girl called Membere:

I like the social life, especially the way we celebrate during holy days eating together with our neighbours despite differences in language and religion. Muslims come for Christian holidays and vice versa. We help each other if someone faces difficulties, in sadness and in happiness.

However, there were also concerns expressed about the neighbourhoods being noisy, especially at night; about disputes among neighbours; youth involvement in drugs; and violence, especially between gangs. Azeb, another girl told us:

I dislike the frequent disputes among the neighbours and the things said to each other. Also there is often noise and quarrels at night.

This was echoed by a boy called Leikun, who stated:

There are many jobless young people; there are no recreational places or youth centres and youth take up bad habits because there are no places for them to spend their free time.

Some adolescents expressed the view that in the condominiums people do not interact as much with neighbours. Sisay said *‘the current area is quiet and everybody locks their door’* in a disapproving way, suggesting that people had started to value their privacy more than social interactions and cooperation with neighbours and in associations. However, some adolescents appreciated the privacy that condominium housing afforded. For instance, Rahel said:

I like the social life here because everybody keeps a distance. But in the previous community, everybody knew everything about everybody in the neighbourhood.

For most of the adolescents, adapting to a new social context took time. In particular, those who moved into condominiums where they did not know people were more affected and some, especially girls, did not go out much at first and found it difficult to make friends. Rahel recalled:

At first, I cried a lot as I felt lonely and disoriented. I disliked the new area, and stayed home a lot apart from going to church. Initially I had only one friend, although we began to get to know our neighbours and my family joined a burial and a religious association, and I began to make friends.

Some of the boys found it easier to make new friends, as Dereje reported:

I was sad and missed our neighbourhood and my friends, none of them came with me so this was challenging. I did not go out for a week, but later I made friends in other condominium blocks.

Many adolescents realised that others were facing similar problems and that encouraged them to make friends, even though for some it took several months and even up to a year to feel comfortable in the new setting. Eshetu recalled:

There was no place to go, no one to talk to, I had no friends in the new school, but the students were relocated from different areas and were mostly new to the area. But I was not the only stranger at all. After a few months I began to adapt, although it took me a year to feel more at home.

6.2 Views about the physical environment

Asked what they disliked about their environment, less than half expressed negative views (see Table 11). Smelly, dirty streets and crowded living conditions were most frequently mentioned especially by girls, and more so by those living in the old neighbourhoods. Much smaller proportions mentioned pollution; however, again the proportions were higher among those who were not relocated. Noise pollution was seen as more worrying than air or water pollution. More relocated boys mentioned air pollution, and more non-relocated girls referred to noise and water pollution. Girls were more worried about safety than boys, irrespective of location. Particular concerns were drunken behaviour, theft and street fighting, with greater numbers of adolescents citing safety concerns of all kinds in the old neighbourhoods. Overall, a smaller proportion of respondents felt the area was generally unsafe and one-fifth felt that it was not a good place to bring up children, though surprisingly this was more of a concern among those relocated, especially boys, possibly due to the risks for small children in the

condominium staircases, which had already been mentioned as a concern prior to the relocation (Tiumelissan and Pankhurst 2013).

Table 11 *Conditions that make you dislike the area you live in*

	Relocated (%)			Not relocated (%)			Total sample (n=215)
	Boys (n=32)	Girls (n=28)	Both sexes (n=60)	Boys (n=86)	Girls (n=69)	Both sexes (n=155)	
Smell in the streets	31	25	28	45	36	41	38
Dirty streets	19	25	22	36	49	42	36
Crowded living conditions	19	29	23	23	42	32	29
Noise pollution	16	14	15	21	23	22	20
Air pollution	9	7	8	14	10	12	11
Water/river pollution	13	0	7	6	12	8	8
Drunken behaviour	25	18	22	43	39	41	36
Prevalence of theft	25	25	25	35	20	28	27
Street fighting	25	11	18	34	20	28	2
Dangerous unsafe	13	18	15	16	14	15	15
Bad place to bring up children	25	18	22	27	12	20	20
Prevalence of prostitution	3	4	3	6	1	4	4
Other (specify)	28	21	25	12	6	9	13

6.3 Environmental quality

The adolescents were asked more specific questions about cleanliness in the streets and air quality (Table 12). Overall, rubbish in the streets was seen as a problem by over one-third of the respondents. However, the proportions who were worried were larger among those living in the old neighbourhood, and among those who had been relocated those in condominium were more concerned than those relocated to other places. Almost one-fifth of the sample felt that the air was bad to breathe. The proportion of those who felt the air quality was bad was twice as high among those living in the old neighbourhoods compared to those in condominiums, though the situation in condominiums seemed better than among those relocated elsewhere.

Table 12 *Street cleanliness and air pollution*

	Is there much rubbish on the ground/in the streets?			Is the air people breathe good, bad or average?		
	None/very little	Some	A lot	Good	Average	Bad
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Relocated in condominiums (n=29)	41	31	28	72	17	10
Relocated NOT in condominiums (n=31)	42	35	23	71	13	16
NOT relocated NOT in condominiums (n=153)	21	37	41	46	33	21
All average (n=213)	27	36	37	53	28	19

6.4 Leisure activities

The qualitative interviews suggest that the adolescents' main concerns with their environment related to entertainment and leisure activities. Many of those who were relocated complained that there were very few local places in which they could spend their spare time. Many went into town for leisure activities. Boys reported often going to watch football either at venues showing satellite TV or the central stadium; some girls reported going to cafés or hotels. A few adolescents also complained about the distance to education and health facilities and government offices.

Among those remaining in the old neighbourhood, several girls mentioned that they disliked the frequent disputes among neighbours, and fights and disturbances after young men drink alcohol, as Menna described:

I don't like the spread of rumours that lead to fights. At night there is noise that disturbs us. Young people get drunk from the groceries and they all drink and disturb the community.

Adolescent girls expressed worries about going out at night, especially in places where there was no street lighting; in the condominium areas some expressed fear of hyenas, and in the old neighbourhood fear of violence from drunk men. Some adolescents mentioned *khat*-chewing houses and pool houses, where young people become addicted to *khat* and waste time and money. In the old neighbourhoods some young men mentioned youth getting into fights, while some young girls in the condominiums said they felt uncomfortable travelling on crowded buses and trains.

6.5 Relocation and views about change

Condominiums were very closely associated with modernity and a new way of life since they provided kitchens, showers and toilets within the apartment. Some of those who were relocated also felt that their way of life and even their views had changed, whereas they felt that the lives of those who remained in the old neighbourhoods had not changed. For instance, Etalem, who was living in a condominium, stated:

If you live in that old location, your attitude can't be changed; your mind remains the same. But I can say many people's lifestyle and attitude towards improved life, towards better ideas in life have been changed.

She added that when she visited friends in the old neighbourhood they were stuck in their previous way of life.

I couldn't believe it when I saw the same lifestyle and the same way of living when I visited the neighbourhood recently. Nothing has changed even after years.

7. Relocation, gender and agency

This section reviews the impact of relocation on adolescents’ agency in relation to school and work, expressing opinions, decision-making, leisure activities, friendships and spending money. The first part considers changes by relocation status and the second by gender.

7.1 Relocation and agency

Adolescents living in condominiums appear to be much more assertive in making their own decisions, expressing their opinions or disagreeing with older people (see Table 13). Those who were not relocated were more likely to discuss important matters with friends and parents. Those relocated in condominiums were more likely to discuss matters with siblings, and those relocated outside condominiums with parents. Almost half of those living in condominiums had access to the internet compared to only one-quarter of those in the old neighbourhoods, although a higher proportion of the latter spent more money on mobile phone credit.

In terms of leisure time, more than half the respondents said they visited friends, with slightly lower numbers among those relocated to condominiums and higher numbers among those relocated elsewhere. Only those living in the old neighbourhoods went to clubs, and they were more likely to engage in sport, walking and going to church, suggesting fewer opportunities for leisure activities in the areas to which people were relocated. In contrast, those relocated to condominiums were more likely to spend time on video games and money on transport.

7.2 Gender and agency

Regarding schooling and work, the vast majority of the adolescents at age 19 were still in education, with a lower proportion of those living in condominiums (see Table 13). The number of girls in education was significantly higher, and more than twice as many boys missed school to work for pay, suggesting there is more pressure on boys to start working. Over three-quarters of boys expressed a wish to migrate abroad compared to under two-thirds of girls, implying greater disillusionment with local opportunities among boys, particularly in the old neighbourhoods.

Questions on agency and decision-making suggest that boys were much more able to make important decisions on their own. While the vast majority of adolescents of both sexes were comfortable expressing opinions or disagreeing with friends of their age, boys were slightly more at ease disagreeing with older people. Girls were more likely to discuss matters with parents and boys with siblings and friends.

Gender differences in access to internet and spending on mobile phones were very minor, with slightly more boys accessing the internet and girls spending on mobile credit. However, there were very clear gender differences in regards to leisure activities and spending. Boys were much more likely to take part in sports and play in clubs, go to cafés, play video games, and spend money on food and clothes. In contrast, girls were much more likely to go to church or mosque, visit friends and spend money on school equipment and transport; only girls spent money on make-up and only a few boys spent money on games.

Table 13 *Relocation, gender and agency of adolescents (%)*

	Boys (n=118)	Girls (n=97)	Both sex (n=215)	Relocated in condominium (n=29)	Relocated NOT in condominium (31)	ALL relocated (n=60)	NOT relocated not in condominium (n=153)
Currently enrolled in school or college/university?	81	92	86	83	90	87	86
Missed school to work at home in the past 12 months	14	14	13	14	13	14	14
Missed school to work for pay outside the home in the past 12 months	13	5	10	7	10	10	12
Wants to migrate abroad	76	65	71	69	63	65	73
Feels comfortable expressing an opinion to or disagreeing with people their age	90	90	90	86	87	87	91
Feels comfortable expressing an opinion to or disagreeing with older people	66	64	65	76	55	65	65
Able to make decisions on his/her own	86	80	84	90	81	85	83
Discusses matters with parents before deciding something important	61	75	67	52	74	63	69
Discusses matters with sibling before deciding something important	12	8	10	24	10	17	8
Discusses matters with friend before deciding something important	19	16	18	14	16	15	19
Decides something important without discussing with others	8	0	4	10	0	3	4
Spends money on mobile credit	54	56	55	45	42	43	59
Has access to internet during spare time	31	28	29	48	32	40	25
Plays at club	8	2	6	0	0	0	8
Visits friends during spare time	53	58	55	52	58	55	55
Able to go to cafés during spare time	11	7	9	10	13	12	8
Plays sport during spare time	75	16	49	45	35	40	52
Walks during spare time	35	24	30	28	29	28	30
Goes to church/mosque	35	43	39	31	45	38	39
Plays video games	26	22	24	31	19	25	24
Spends money on food	32	22	27	17	29	23	29
Spends money on clothes	32	29	31	17	45	32	30
Spends money on make-up	0	18	8	3	13	8	8
Spends money on transport	42	44	43	59	52	55	39
Spends money on school equipment	25	31	27	28	35	32	26
Spends money on soft drinks	22	22	22	17	32	25	21
Spends money on tea or coffee	34	33	33	24	35	30	35
Spends money on games	2	0	1	0	0	0	1

The qualitative data provided evidence on the different dimensions of decision-making and agency for adolescents regarding their independence from parents, freedom over how they spend their leisure time, choosing friends, schooling and spending money. The case material suggested that girls had less freedom than boys in their choices and that their parents make decisions in many aspects of their lives. In terms of their time use, parents often insisted that all adolescents returned home in the early evening. Some girls said they were expected to be

back at home by 7pm, while some boys mentioned a curfew of 9pm. For example, Membere said she can only come home later in the evenings if she has permission. Some boys have more freedom about how they spend their time as long as they notify their parents. For instance, Dereje only informs his parents when he leaves the house and does not tell them where he is going. A few boys seemed to have total independence, as though they were living on their own, and even made their own decisions to start work, such as Dereje who fixes satellite dishes.

While parents sometimes tried to control their children’s time use, mobile phones, the internet and social media offered them some freedom, as one of the girls, Tsehay, explained.

My mother controls most of what I do, and she advises me not to spend too much time in the evening on the Telegram app, fearing I will be late to school in the morning, and my sight will be affected. But in fact once I am at home she cannot control how I use my mobile.

Many parents, especially those with daughters, worried about their children’s friendships. Some girls accept their parents’ advice, as Rahel noted:

If my family have negative comments about any of my friends, I immediately stop my relationship with that friend.

Ayda said that she could choose her friends but had to inform her parents when she wanted to spend time with them. However, boys had more freedom over friendships, as Leikun explained:

I can choose my friends and how I spend my time, but my mother has strong opinions about them, and I understand this is for my own good.

Regarding schooling, some parents allowed their children including their daughters to choose which school they went to or which subjects they studied. However, some adolescents made up their own minds despite their parents’ views, as Mesfin, one of the boys, recalled:

My parents want to decide on everything and wanted me to study medicine, but I chose social sciences since I want to study law or management. They were not happy but there was nothing they could do.

Most adolescents depended on their families for pocket money, which limited their independence, though some could decide how to use that money. For instance, Leikun received money from his mother and could choose what clothes to buy, though he had to ask permission for everything else. However, some have more liberal families that provide room for discussion. For example, Elsa said that as long as she informed and convinced her parents they were very understanding, and Menna said she could make decisions about her education, purchases and marriage.

8. Conclusion

This paper has reviewed adolescents’ opinions about relocation and rehousing through comparisons between their views before and after relocation and between those who were relocated and those who remained in their communities. The study suggested that condominium housing has enabled poor to middle-income households to transition to owning their own homes. However, richer households sought to build their own houses, some moving first to a condominium, and the poorest were unable to afford the down payment and monthly mortgage payments, some having to sell their apartments, downsize or move to cheaper accommodation to cover the mortgage costs. Those moving to condominiums also had to cover the costs of finishing work on their apartments and spent much more on household improvements than those who were not relocated.

Housing comparisons showed that moving to condominiums resulted in improvements in water and sanitation, with residents having access to running water and flush toilets in apartments in contrast to the shared taps and pit latrines available in compounds. Those who moved to condominiums also experienced fewer water shortages, though in certain areas and for some households living on the upper floors serious shortages still occurred.

Relocation affected access to and quality of services in different ways. The greatest impact was on education, since the move happened during the school year. Relocated students could not join local schools, and the availability of transport, and the time and cost of commuting to their old schools was so challenging so that some stayed with relatives or friends in the old neighbourhood. Most, however, moved to schools in the new area after the first year, though whether they went to private schools or government schools (considered to be of lower quality) depended on parental means. Most adolescents felt that the quality of education and facilities was better in the old neighbourhood. Moreover, the number of adolescents missing school for work and dropping out was higher among those relocated. Adolescents seemed less concerned about health facilities, though some suggested that health care was not as good in the new areas, and that government health centres had limited equipment and medication; many expressed a preference for the private services but some were unable to afford the costs. Regarding markets and shops in some of the new condominium areas, there was less choice and goods were more expensive so some residents travelled to cheaper markets. However, over time markets and shops developed in the condominium areas, and some adolescents noted with satisfaction that there were also supermarkets.

The adolescents felt that there were fewer opportunities for recreation in the condominium areas, and many travelled into town for leisure activities; they also reported a lack of libraries and sports facilities, and were reluctant to join youth associations, some saying these were politicised. Many adolescents in condominiums spent more time at home watching films, playing video games and on social media, though some worried about fake news and the politicisation of social media. Safety was seen as a greater problem in the old neighbourhoods, including risks from theft, drunken behaviour, addiction and street fighting, with limited police control. While the situation was seen to be worsening in the old neighbourhoods, in the condominiums there were improvements reported. Initially a lack of street lights was a problem, though some respondents, particularly girls, were still worried

about walking at night and near forest areas with thieves known to snatch mobile phones and other belongings.

Comparing the expectations of adolescents prior to the relocation with their subsequent experiences, a large majority felt the change was mainly positive. Some adolescents who had moved even felt that their outlook on life had changed whereas the lives and views of those who remained in the old neighbourhoods had not changed. The problems they faced during the move, including costs and completing the internal finishing of the apartments were more of a challenge than the adolescents had expected. Adapting to the new environment was also more difficult than expected, though social issues including relations with neighbours and friends were seen as less of a worry, suggesting that most of those relocated had adapted fairly well three years on. Likewise, access to services including water, education and health care, as well employment opportunities and places for children to play, were reported as concerns by fewer adolescents after the move, though the availability and cost of transport was seen as a greater problem.

Social relations, especially with friends, family and neighbours, were seen as important, but funeral, religious and credit associations and services much less so. Regarding services education, markets and shops were viewed as more important than health care and access to work. Comparing the adolescents by relocation status, social support was seen as more important in the old neighbourhoods, suggesting that social ties were weaker in the new communities. Among the services available, education, policing and cafés and bars were seen as more important in the condominium areas, whereas health, markets, shops and access to work were more important in the old neighbourhoods.

Regarding gender differences, in social relations more boys valued friends, family, and funeral and credit associations, and more girls valued neighbours and religious associations, especially among those relocated. Regarding services Boys were more concerned about shops, and girls about markets, health care and shops; education was more of a concern among relocated girls and non-relocated boys, perhaps since school drop-out among boys was higher among those who had been relocated. Cafés and bars were seen as more important by relocated girls and non-relocated boys. The adolescents characterised the old neighbourhoods as noisy and violent but also vibrant and friendly, whereas the new condominiums were seen as quiet, affording greater respect for privacy but limited social interactions.

Regarding the physical environment, the adolescents expressed a dislike of smelly and dirty streets and crowded conditions in the old neighbourhoods, and worried about safety and the risks of theft, street fighting and drunken behaviour, but were less concerned about pollution. In contrast, in the new condominium areas they were more worried about safety for bringing up children. Girls were more concerned about dirty and crowded streets. Relocated boys were more worried about theft, street fighting, drunken behaviour and noise pollution, and non-relocated girls were concerned about safety, air and water pollution. Regarding the quality of the environment, rubbish in the street and air pollution were seen as the most important problems, and more so in the old neighbourhoods. The qualitative evidence suggested that adolescents were more concerned about leisure activities, though safety was a major worry in the old neighbourhoods, especially regarding substance abuse, fights and drunken behaviour, and in the condominiums girls were anxious about their safety at night.

Finally, regarding gender and agency, though most adolescents were still at school, boys were more likely to miss school and drop out, especially in the new areas, and were also more likely to want to migrate abroad, especially among those who were not relocated. Regarding decision-making, boys were more likely to make decisions on their own and disagree with older people, and to discuss matters with siblings and friends, whereas girls were more likely to discuss matters with parents. The major gender differences in activities related to leisure, with boys more involved in sports, clubs and video games, and girls in visiting friends and going to religious institutions. While boys spent more money on games, food and clothes, girls spent more on school equipment, transport and make-up. The qualitative evidence suggests that girls had less freedom since parents imposed more limits on how they used their time and were more concerned with who they were friends. Mobile phones and the internet gave adolescents some freedom over how they spent their leisure time, although since they lived at home and most depended on parents for pocket money their ability to make major decisions was limited.

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Appendix

Table A1 *Promises, replacements and access to social services*

	Relocated in condominium (n=29) YES %	Relocated in NOT condominium (n=31) YES%	Average (n=60) YES %
Were there any promises made?	58.62	38.71	48.33
Was replacement of housing one of the promises?	100%	83%	93%
Was monetary compensation one of the promises?	69%	50%	61%
Was access to water one of the promises?	59%	67%	62%
Was access to electricity one of the promises?	59%	58%	59%
Was access to health care one of the promises?	65%	33%	52%
Was access to education one of the promises?	62.5%	41.7%	53.6%
Was replacement housing provided?	76.5%	70.0%	74.1%
Was monetary compensation ⁸ provided?	54.5%	83.3%	64.7%
Has your access to water improved?	70.0%	75.0%	72.2%
Has your access to electricity improved?	70.0%	71.4%	70.6%
Has your access to health care improved?	72.7%	66.7%	71.4%
Has your access to education improved?	70.0%	80.0%	73.3%
Was transport provided to go to your new location? ⁹	37.0%	32.1%	34.5%

Table A2 *Rating access to social services in the current area*

	Boys (n=118) Excellent/ very good (%)	Girls (n=97) Excellent/ very good (%)	Relocated to condominium (n=29) Excellent/ very good (%)	Relocated NOT in condominium (n=31) Excellent/ very good (%)	NOT Relocated NOT in condominium (n=153) Excellent/ very good (%)
Pre-school	81%	88%	79%	84%	85%
Primary school	80%	91%	76%	81%	87%
Secondary school	70%	82%	69%	71%	78%
Post-secondary school	49%	62%	52%	48%	56%
Health care	72%	84%	83%	61%	79%
family planning	53%	70%	48%	55%	64%
Markets	75%	78%	48%	58%	86%
Opportunity to get work	33%	40%	24%	35%	38%
Shops	88%	92%	86%	87%	91%
Police	57%	71%	62%	77%	61%
Kebele offices	55%	58%	52%	58%	57%
Religious services	86%	91%	90%	81%	90%
Recreation	36%	31%	41%	39%	31%

8 Among those who revealed the monetary compensation, the minimum compensation was 40,000 birr and the maximum was 392,000 birr with an average of 107363.6.

9 Of those who were provided with transport to move to the new area, the cost of transport varied from 986 to 5,000, but the average cost was 1160. birr.

A dream come true”? Adolescents’ perspectives on urban relocation and life in condominiums in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

This working paper compares the views of adolescents before and after relocation from inner-city areas of Addis Ababa and rehousing in condominiums on the outskirts. It is based on a mixed methods study, which re-interviewed 215 adolescents from three Young Lives sites in 2020 following up on interviews conducted in 2012 among those who moved and those who stayed behind. The study suggests that condominium housing mainly benefited low-and middle-income households in moving to home ownership, since the poorest could not afford the deposits and monthly mortgage costs and the richest preferred to build their own houses. Overall, the move appears to have led to better housing and improved sanitation. Nevertheless, students reported greater difficulties commuting to their schools in the first year; and the adolescents interviewed considered the schools and health centres in the condominiums to be of lower quality and the markets and shops to be initially less well developed than in the old neighbourhoods. In addition, there were fewer options for recreation. However, the adolescents felt that the changes were mainly positive and most soon adapted to the new social environment. They appreciated the condominiums with kitchens and toilets as modern forms of housing, though social ties in the new communities tended to be weaker. They also reported improvements in the physical environment, with less pollution and fewer security risks. There were gender differences in the decision-making abilities, leisure activities and spending habits of adolescents, with girls having less freedom in general. This lack of freedom was, however, somewhat compensated for by their better access to internet and social media.



About Young Lives

Young Lives is an international study of childhood poverty and transitions to adulthood, following the lives of 12,000 children in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam). Young Lives is a collaborative research programme led by a team in the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford in association with research and policy partners in the four study countries.

Through researching different aspects of children’s lives across time, we seek to improve policies and programmes for children and young people.

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About Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE)

Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year (2015-2024) mixed methods longitudinal research and evaluation study. It follows the lives of 20,000 adolescents in six low- and middle-income countries in Africa (Ethiopia and Rwanda), Asia (Bangladesh and Nepal) and the Middle East (Jordan and Lebanon).

GAGE is generating evidence on ‘what works’ to enable adolescent girls and boys to emerge from poverty and fast-track social change for young people, their families and communities. It aims to explore what strategies are most effective in transforming girls’ and boys’ lives at specific junctures in adolescence.

The GAGE consortium is managed by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), and is funded by UK aid from the UK government.

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