



YOUTH AND THE WORK/HOUSING NEXUS IN ETHIOPIA AND SOUTH AFRICA:

Project Overview and Policy Recommendations

This project investigated the intersection between work and housing for young people in two secondary urban African contexts, examining how it is produced, experienced and responded to.

Youth in Hawassa, Ethiopia and Ekangala, South Africa experience some similar but also distinct challenges, often directly the result of state policy.

Project collaborators:

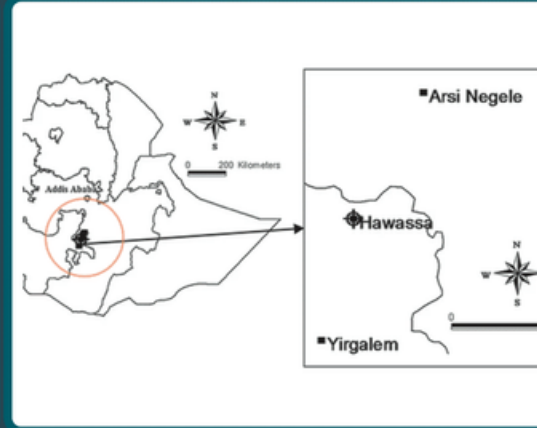


The
University
Of
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Ekangala

State investment in employment has been poor, but youth have indirectly benefited from a substantial programme of state-supported housing. Also, many young people benefit from welfare grants (often through family members). As a result, youth often have access to relatively decent and affordable shelter, but they have very little direct income and limited opportunity to access work.



Project Methodology

1. Collaboration with 28 Youth Representatives.

2. Training events with Youth Reps (survey design & implementation).

3. 'Life History Interviews' conducted with each Youth Rep.

4. Youth Reps. each surveyed 20 other youth in their local areas.

5. Key stakeholders were interviewed.

6. Dissemination workshops (including with key stakeholders).

7. Youth Reps provided with media training & supported in producing media outputs.

Key Findings

Education and Employment:

- Overall there was a lack of employment for young people in both contexts
- In Hawassa, sectors of employment have grown and changed over time. The private sector and self employment are emerging as key
- A degree of 'hustling' is evident in both contexts: young people find multiple ways of generating a livelihood; they are often very creative. Hustling is stressful and tiring (see Figure 1)

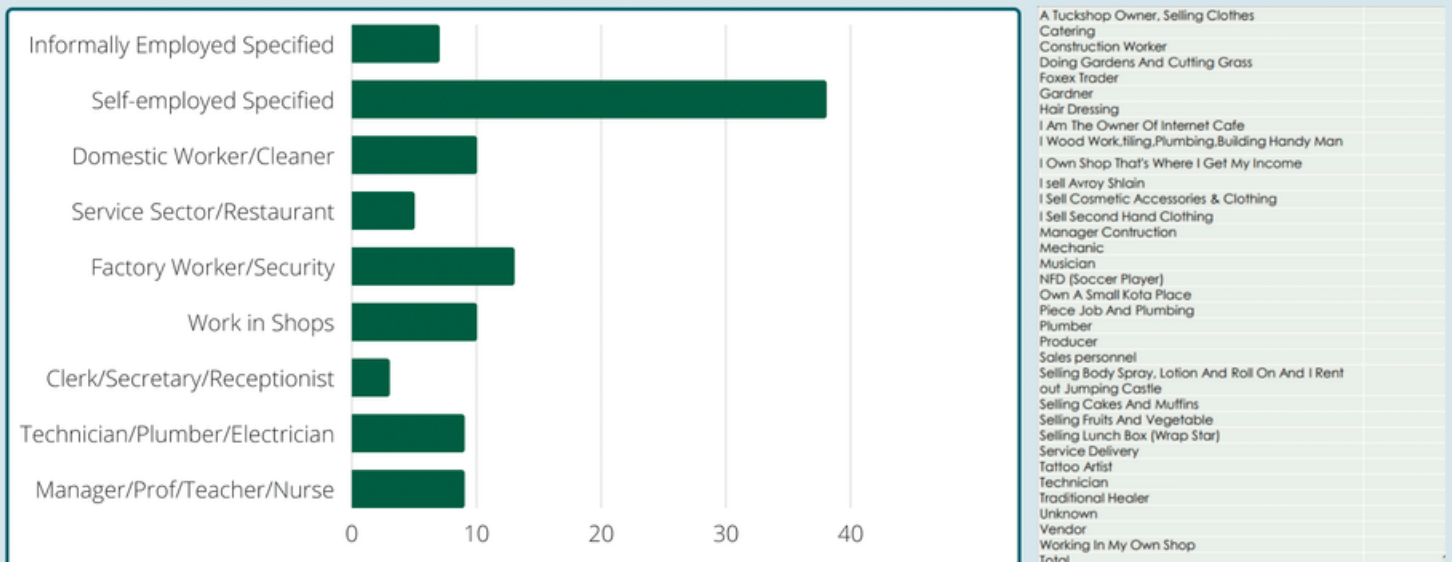


Figure 1: Using survey data from Ekangala, this shows how self employment in a diverse range of situations dominated youth employment.

- In both contexts youth struggle to find suitable jobs but in the SA case there was less chance of any employment (over 40% unemployment). The Ethiopian survey shows higher employment for youth in Hawassa at 75% (although this figure includes informal and self employment activities)
- Social grants are crucial in several SA YR (youth rep) households. In Ethiopia no welfare grants are available to support youth (directly or indirectly)
- Education and access to training was either limited or unaffordable meaning low completion rates (as in South Africa) or it was inappropriate for the existing job market: Education training in Hawassa is not always in the youth's chosen field and education doesn't lead to employment.

Hawassa

The state has supported employment through the development of Africa's largest industrial park, but has invested very little in housing. Hawassa faces a crisis in affordable housing, making urban living unsustainable, particularly for young people.

Furthermore, youth in Hawassa are far more educated than those in Ekangala, but this education doesn't necessarily result in employment. These different policy interventions, as well as policies around education, affect youth directly.

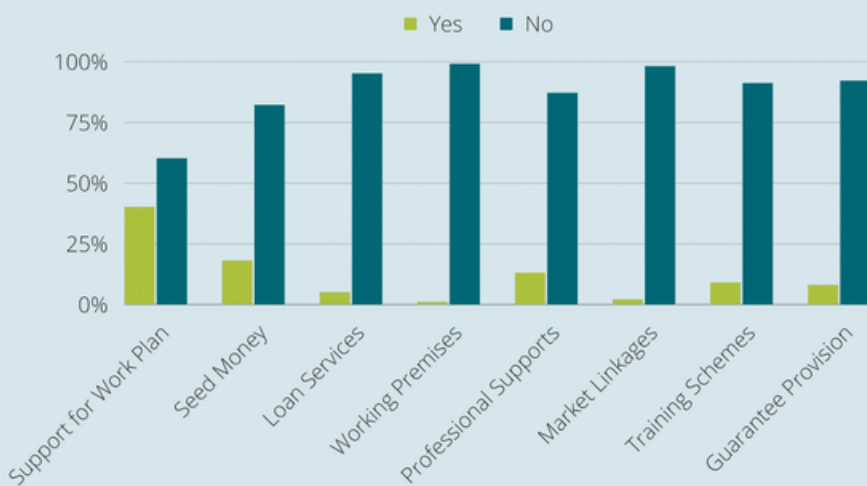


Figure 2: Survey data from Hawassa reveals that employment support is lacking in important areas such as the provision of loans, working premises & market linkages

- In both SA & Ethiopia, there is a sense that opportunities or jobs are only accessible through favours and personal connections. Political and ethnic affiliation affected who was able to access opportunities. Young people felt that employment and livelihood support from the government in either context was very limited (see Figure 2).

Built Environment, Housing and Infrastructure:

- Hawassa and Ekangala are very different urban contexts, meaning accessibility varies significantly. Hawassa is a more consolidated urban space, areas and services are closer together, offering fairly good access to 'town'. In South Africa, different sections of the wider Ekangala area are dispersed and mostly residential, transport is very costly and distances to opportunities can be very far.
- Yet in Hawassa many youth are living in shared accommodation, in small spaces, with little privacy. Their living environments don't support entrepreneurship, particularly rental housing where youth have limited access to outdoor spaces (see Figure 3)

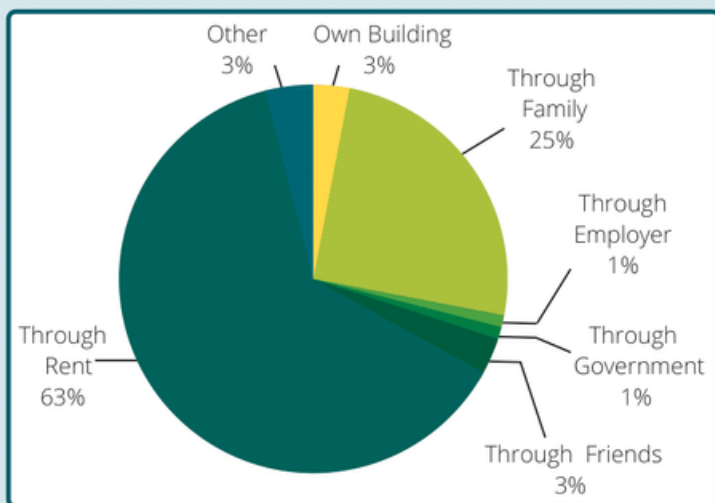


Figure 3: Survey data from Hawassa shows the dominance of renting by young people.

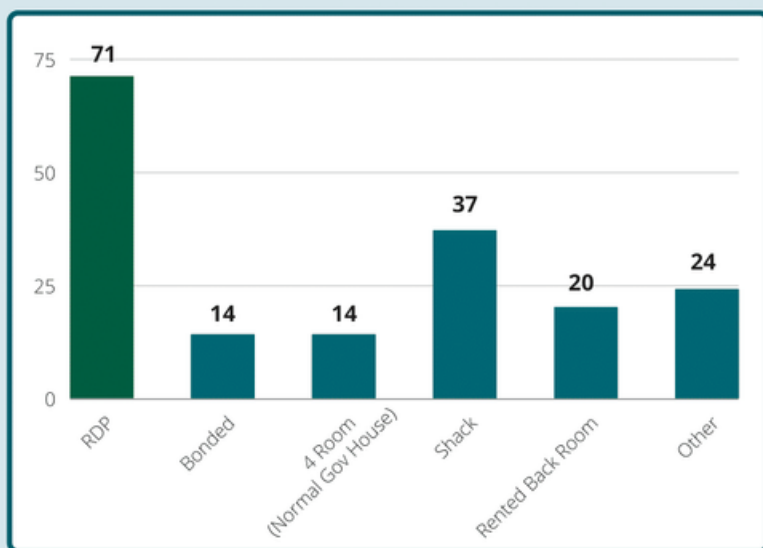


Figure 4: Survey data in Ekangala showing type of housing young people lived in - clearly indicating that state housing (RDP) dominates.

- In contrast in Ekangala, many youth benefit from the provision of a free state subsidised house (RDP) to someone in their family, Figure 4 shows how dominant this housing type is. This housing is often on quite a spacious plot (see Figure 5), making home based working more feasible.



Figure 5: state housing in Ekangala, source Mark Lewis, South Africa

- In both contexts, young people's inability to afford their own decent housing impacts on their independence, and ability to transition to adulthood. It constrains their efforts to 'start life', get married and have children. Although in SA having children before marriage is relatively common.
- In the South African context, the neighbourhoods were often inadequate, particularly in terms of recreation facilities.

Policy Recommendations and Youth Priorities from Hawassa and Ekangala

- **(Un)employment:** Urgent need for education which is suited to aspirations but also employment opportunities, more funding for learnerships/ internships/ and entrepreneurial training and support that meets market demand
- Government to support and **encourage entrepreneurship** and start-ups through the provision of seed capital and the removal of red-tape including licensing and regulation of "informal" activities
- Government to **push for better wage payments** for young people employed in formal businesses
- Government to establish an **independent body** to manage youth employment and opportunities for youth engagement. Ensure this is supported by the appropriate ministry.
- **Accountability from leadership:** state programmes for youth and housing require better transparency and accountability to ensure that funds go where they are supposed to, and corruption and nepotism are eradicated.
- Establish **youth-based housing schemes and subsidies**
- Advance **affordable decent housing** options urgently
- **Infrastructure:** Youth need better infrastructure to deal with their work/housing challenges: including better access to WiFi, cheaper transport and better, functional recreational facilities.
- Government to **address drug abuse and crime problems**, especially in the South African case

Contact details:

Dr Paula Meth p.j.meth@sheffield.ac.uk (Project Principal Investigator, University of Sheffield);
with Co-Investigators:

Dr Tafesse Matewos tafessemk@gmail.com and Dr Eshetayehu Kinfu eshetayehu@gmail.com, Hawassa University; Prof Sarah Charlton, Sarah.Charlton@wits.ac.za, University of Witwatersrand; Dr Margot Rubin, RubinM@cardiff.ac.uk, Cardiff University and Prof Tom Goodfellow, t.goodfellow@sheffield.ac.uk, University of Sheffield;

and Project Co-ordinator: Ms Lesego Tshuwa, tshuwal@gmail.com, University of Witwatersrand.

Further information is available here:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/usp/research/projects/youth-work-housing/>