



SoTiN
Stamping out Trafficking in Nigeria

DRIVERS AND ENABLERS OF UNSAFE MIGRATION

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SUMMARY

This research was commissioned as part of the SOTIN inception phase to explore the drivers and enablers of unsafe migration in Edo State. The sample comprised 24 focus group discussions across 4 Local Government Areas in Edo State, including men and women aged between 18 and 55; and 24 Key Informant Interviews among local stakeholders, such as pastors, traditional leaders, women leaders and teachers.

Drivers and enablers of unsafe migration were identified at three levels:

- **Institutions and structures:** the lack of good quality, appealing jobs was a key driver of unsafe migration. Available jobs were seen as low paid, uninteresting, and offering little fulfilment for an ambitious young person. In rural areas, few young people wanted to work in small-scale farming, which was the main economic activity available. Access to employment was seen as dependent on connections and bribery, and there was a lack of faith in the ability of Nigeria's political leaders to offer a better future. These factors created a potent mix of frustration and ambition for a better life – by travelling abroad.
- **Society and the family:** parents expected their children to contribute to the family after finishing education. These expectations were strongest on the eldest child and in larger families – but were also felt more generally. If it was not possible for a young person to meet these expectations in Nigeria, then there might be pressure from the family for a young person to migrate abroad. Having a child abroad was an aspiration for many families, seen as a way to lift them out of poverty, fund the education of younger siblings, construct a better house and remove the need to “struggle” in life. Whole communities also benefited from the wealth of returning migrants, who might build houses, set up businesses, or fund community projects such as a school. “Successful” returnees were respected, their family status was lifted, and they were admired for their wealth and courage. Pastors celebrated their return and traditional rulers gave them titles of honour.
- **The Self:** individual desires, ambitions and aspirations also played a strong role in driving unsafe migration. Young Nigerians wanted to contribute to the betterment of their families, to get a good job, drive a nice car, live in a modern house, and “make it” in society. They wanted respect and social status, derived from wealth and success, and migration was seen as the only way for some to achieve this. They knew of the risks but were prepared to accept these as worth the potential rewards, with Europe seen as a dream of riches, security, good infrastructure, plentiful employment and a stress-free life.

Unsafe migration was a social norm in Edo State, but only when a young was not able to fulfill their ambitions in Nigeria and therefore was driven to migrate. It was seen as common and widely accepted, with almost everyone knowing a friend or relative who had travelled abroad for work, and most also seeing the impact of remittances on the status of local families. Migrating in order to raise your family from poverty was approved and even admired. Friends and family were thought to support a person who was considering

migrating, because they sympathized with their desire to improve their lot, and because they expected to benefit from the gains which would flow. Those who had the opportunity to migrate but chose not to do so might be criticized by family and their peer group, seen as lazy or unwilling to help their parents and siblings. These expectations operated most strongly at the level of the family rather than the wider community.

This research has the following implications for programming:

- Interventions need to address drivers of unsafe migration at all three levels of the socio-ecological model: structures and institutions; society and the family; and the self. Activities focusing on one level alone are unlikely to be effective in reducing the numbers involved in unsafe migration.
- Interventions need to be highly contextualized to address local patterns of unsafe migration and social norms.
- It is essential to avoid reinforcing negative social norms about the prevalence and acceptability of unsafe migration through communications activities;
- Highlighting the views of those who do not support unsafe migration, and role models who have established themselves in Nigeria, could shift harmful social norms.
- Alternative ways for young people to support parents and siblings, and to have a successful career in Nigeria, should be highlighted.
- Working with families is essential to address social expectations which drive unsafe migration. Families, not whole communities, were applying pressure to young people to migrate.
- Pastors and religious leaders could be key partners in reducing unsafe migration, as they were often called on to bless potential migrants. But they would need support in identifying and providing effective guidance to vulnerable young people.
- Survivor testimony and advocacy should form a key part of local interventions. These seem more effective than generic information about the risks.
- Identifying male peer champions to speak out against unsafe migration could also be useful, as young men were strongly influenced by their peers.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Stamping out Trafficking in Nigeria (SOTIN) is a 4-year DFID Nigeria programme which aims to change or reduce the behaviours, attitudes, and social norms in Edo State that drive or enable unsafe migration and human trafficking. The programme seeks to achieve the impact that more effective Government and non-Government institutions reduce the drivers and enablers of unsafe migration and trafficking through three components:

- Strengthened Edo State Government response to preventing unsafe migration and human trafficking;
- Improved coordination, innovation and quality of NGO response to preventing unsafe migration and human trafficking: better coordinated and more effective civil society tackling the drivers and enablers of human trafficking;
- A stronger evidence base for action in anti-slavery prevention, with learning platforms operating and informing policy and interventions.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to explore the drivers and enablers of unsafe migration in Edo State. Specifically, the research explored:

- Knowledge, awareness and experiences of unsafe migration in Edo State;
- Attitudes towards unsafe migration, as well as to “aspirational international migration” in general, among younger people (potential migrants) and the parental generation;
- Factors which support, drive or enable unsafe migration, including individual attitudes and social norms around wealth and status; economic circumstances; the image of life in Europe; gender and the role of women; cultural traditions such as inheritance practices and polygamy;
- The extent to which unsafe migration could be described as a “social norm” in Edo State.

It is important to note that this is a perceptions study – we asked people what they thought the drivers and enablers of unsafe migration were. Their perceptions may not, of course, be completely accurate. A separate study (*How Migration Happens*) looks at the actual experiences and motivations of survivors of human trafficking and unsafe migration.

1.3 Research method and sample

The research used qualitative methods, comprising Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. FGDs included 8-10 people and lasted around 1.5-2 hours; KIIs lasted around 1 hour. FGDs and KIIs were run using a discussion guide designed in collaboration with the SOTIN team. Vignettes were used to explore social norms and community attitudes. A three-day briefing and piloting session was held in Benin City with the research team

before starting fieldwork, and the fieldwork instruments were adapted based on the results of the piloting.

The sample of FGDS among community members included:

- 18-24 year olds, 25-40 year olds; and 41-55 year olds (i.e., younger potential migrants, older potential migrants, and the parental generation) in separate groups;
- Equal representation of males and females, in separate groups;
- A range of socio-economic status and educational backgrounds;
- Urban and rural locations;
- A spread of 4 Local Government Areas, including 3 LGAs with high rates of migration and 1 LGA with low rates, for comparison.

A sample of 24 KIIs among religious and traditional leaders, community workers, youth workers, teachers, etc, was also included. A detailed sample breakdown can be found in the Appendix.

FGDs and KIIs were digitally recorded and written up according to a template designed by the research team.

2. THE CONTEXT: ATTITUDES TOWARDS UNSAFE MIGRATION IN EDO STATE

2.1 Migration, Unsafe Migration and Human Trafficking

It is worth defining our terms before discussing the research findings in detail:

- Human Trafficking is defined as *“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”*¹
- Unsafe migration does not appear to have a universally recognised definition, but the International Office of Migration defines “safe, orderly and regular migration” as *“Movement of persons in keeping both with the laws and regulations governing exit from, entry and return to and stay in States and with States’ international law obligations, in a manner in which the human dignity and well-being of migrants are*

¹ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

*upheld, their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled and the risks associated with the movement of people are acknowledged and mitigated.*² So we may treat “unsafe migration” as migration which does not meet these criteria.

- Aspirational international migration is a term taken from the DFID ToR for SOTIN. It is not defined within the ToR, but we take it to mean travel undertaken in order to seek a better job, better life, improved income or educational opportunities.

A key decision which needed to be made at the beginning of this study was how to introduce the topic of the research, and what language to use in the Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews. The terms of reference for the study defined the topic as “attitudes towards unsafe migration and human trafficking, as well as attitudes towards aspirational international migration in general.” This is a broad framing and is in line with the stated scope for SOTIN in DFID’s ToR, which refers to unsafe migration, human trafficking and aspirational international migration.

The ToR for this study goes on to state that *“In order to avoid biasing the respondents, the research topic should be framed as “aspirational international migration” rather than “human trafficking” or “modern slavery”, which may not be terms recognised by local communities.”* Thus, the initial guides for the Focus Groups and Key Informant interviews asked about attitudes towards aspirational international migration and, as agreed in the ToR, did not ask about human trafficking or modern slavery.

During the pilot Focus Groups, we found that this broad framing risked the discussion focusing on safe and regular migration – visiting relatives overseas or travelling in order to take up a university place, for example – which were not the focus of SOTIN. Thus, after the pilot sessions it was agreed that the discussion should focus on “unsafe migration.” The Focus Group and Key Informant Interview guides were amended and the questions were framed in terms of “unsafe migration.” As per the agreed ToR, the researchers did not ask explicitly about human trafficking or attempt to differentiate between drivers of unsafe migration and drivers of human trafficking.

Community members did not use these terms nor did they differentiate between “unsafe migration” and “human trafficking”. For community members, the key distinction was between travelling by road and travelling by air. Travelling by road (also referred to as “by land”, “by bush”, or “through desert”) was thought to be risky, but cheaper and easier to organise as formal documents were not needed. Travelling by air was assumed to be safer, but more difficult to access as passports and visas were required. This is a key insight for programming in local communities, as using appropriate language is important if people are to see interventions or communications as relevant to them.

During the course of the discussions, respondents gave examples of different types of travel, experiences and stories from their own families and communities. In some cases, these examples appeared to be human trafficking than unsafe migration (as defined above), and where this is the case we indicate this in the text of the report. However, in general we use the

² <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

term “unsafe migration” to describe the topic of the study, as this was how the research was framed for participants.

It was not an objective of this study to differentiate between drivers of unsafe migration and drivers of human trafficking, and it is therefore not possible to draw conclusions on this point from the data. A separate research project – *How Migration Happens* – looked specifically at the experiences of survivors of Human Trafficking and Unsafe Migration, and differentiated between the two categories. If further insights are needed to differentiate between these drivers, then a further study might be needed.

2.2 Variations by Location

The research visited four Local Government Areas in Edo State. In each LGA one urban and one rural area was included:

- **Ikpoba-Okha** is high migration area³. Idogbo, near to Benin City, was the urban location included. This is a modern town, with a range of business activities, modern buildings and services. Unsafe migration was seen as common and was widely approved of by the community. Ologbo, the rural area visited, is on the border with Delta State. It is further from the migration networks around Benin City. Levels of education among respondents were low, and there were limited economic opportunities for young people. As in Idogbo, prevalence and approval of unsafe migration was high, especially among younger people. There was however, some evidence of perceptions of a decline in unsafe migration and a reduction in support for it, particularly among women. This was seen as due to an increasing awareness of the abuse of women in sexual exploitation, the lies of traffickers, and the Oba’s curse against Human Trafficking.
- **Orhionmwon** is a high migration area^a, bordering Ikpoba-Okha. Abudu, the LGA headquarters, was the urban location visited. Here there was evidence of development, including hotels and good roads. Attitudes were more variable than in Ikpoba-Okha, with some support for unsafe migration, whilst others said they had heard stories of the bad experiences of returning migrants and therefore were no longer supportive. Nevertheless, young people in the area were keen to travel to seek a better life. In Ugo, the rural location, there was much less development. Roads were poor and subsistence farming was a key economic activity. Like their urban counterparts, young people here were keen to migrate and approved of those who did so.
- **Esan North East** is a high migration area and Uromi, the LGA headquarters, was the urban location visited. Here there was considerable evidence of the wealth of returning migrants, such as expensive cars and modern, well maintained houses. Unsafe migration was described as prevalent in Uromi and young people were keen to travel. Attitudes among the older groups were more mixed, and one key informant was aware of local NGOs visiting schools to speak out against unsafe migration.

³ High and low migration areas were selected based on the LGAs of residence of those on the database of returnees from Libya, and was verified by consultation with the SOTIN Team Leader.

Amendhokian was the rural location visited, a farming area with few amenities, poor roads and without mains electricity. A key informant noted that the only car in the village belonged to a returning migrant. Here, unsafe migration was seen as prevalent, and largely approved of, by both young people and the parental generations. Young people were keen to travel and there were sponsors and their agents in the community⁴. In this location, one female community leader had called together the women of the community speak out against unsafe migration.

- **Owan West** was the low migration area selected, with Sabon-Gida Ora being the urban location visited. Here, there was less evidence of unsafe migration, and there were few large modern houses or other signs of conspicuous wealth typical of high migration areas. There was less approval of unsafe migration here, and some even suggested that those who travelled overseas, or pressurized their children to do so, were actively disapproved of in the community. In contrast, unsafe migration was seen as more common and approved of in Uzebba, the rural location. This was an isolated rural area, with few business activities other than farming. Young people in this area were keen to migrate, but it was reported that there were few sponsors or agents in the community, and that prospective migrants were required to travel to Benin City in order to contact sponsors. It was also reported that successful returnees were more likely to settle in Lagos or Benin City, meaning there was less visible evidence of returnees and their wealth.

One objective of including high and low migration areas was to explore differences in attitudes, culture or other factors which might explain why people migrate from some areas and not from others. We found no significant differences between the low and high migration areas in terms of beliefs, cultural values, attitudes or aspirations. Rather, it seemed that the different rates of migration might be more due to geography and history. Owan West was further away from Benin City, the centre of unsafe migration, and there were fewer traffickers or sponsors in the locations we visited. There was less of a history of migration and residents were not so aware of migrants returning with conspicuous wealth. Indeed, the young people in Amendiokhan were keen to travel and had the same ambitions and aspirations as their peers in Ikpoba-Okha or Orhionhmon: what they lacked was access to information and contacts which could enable them to act on their desires.

Unsafe migration was prevalent in rural locations, and younger people aged 18-25 were the keenest to travel. The young people we met were engaged in a range of economic activities. For the men, welding, motorbike riding (i.e., carrying people or goods), vulcanizing, bricklaying, construction work, mechanics and bartending were all mentioned. For the young women, hairdressing, fashion, beauty, dressmaking, trading in foodstuffs and clothing were common activities. Some were also students or unemployed. Most wanted to grow their businesses, provide for their families and be independent of their parents. However, they saw

⁴ "Sponsor" was used to describe people who provided funds for others to travel. In theory, this might be a generous family member, but in practice most were traffickers. "Agent" is a local person who can put someone in touch with a sponsor.

limited opportunities available in their local communities and this was one key driver of unsafe migration.

2.3 Gender Differences

Unsafe migration was thought to impact on male and female migrants in different ways. Although community members rarely used these terms, it seemed that women were more likely to be trafficked while men were more likely to engage in unsafe migration.

Compared with men, women were thought to travel mainly for prostitution to Italy. This was seen as a quick route to making money, and therefore was appealing for traffickers as they would be able to exploit the woman's labour more quickly. Respondents said that female who wanted to travel had few other economic options than to use their bodies to earn money, as they were not able to "hustle" like men. Women were more likely to be approached by other women offering to "help" them to travel overseas; they were more vulnerable to family pressures, and their mothers might introduce them to local sponsors or their agents. They were likely to be taken to swear juju oaths to repay their debt to their sponsor, and it was said that sponsors increased the debt and demanded more money from the women once they had arrived at their destination. It was also commented that women remained in Italy once they had arrived, because they were indebted to their sponsor and not able to leave until they had paid off their debts. One positive finding was that the Oba's curse against human trafficking was reported to have reduced the numbers of women being trafficked.

Male migrants were thought more likely to make their own decisions to migrate or be influenced by their peers. Some respondents suggested that men were less likely to tell their parents of their decision to travel, and were more likely to disappear one day, only to phone their parents weeks later from Libya requesting money for the sea crossing. Men were thought to engage in a wider variety of economic activities when they migrated, including cleaning, agriculture, driving, security, construction, drug-dealing, and internet fraud. They were also freer to move from country to country than women, seeking work in different locations. Men travelled to Germany, Italy, Senegal, Ghana, Malaysia, Dubai and Libya, seeking work, whereas women were thought to travel mainly to Italy. It was suggested that men might be under more social pressure to migrate to support their family, as this was a more traditional male responsibility – but others felt that women were more likely to face this pressure.

2.4 Age differences

Most respondents believed that younger people who were seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families were most likely to engage in unsafe migration. This is consistent with the data which we have from other sources, such as the separate quantitative profiling exercise of returnees from Libya, which found approximately seven in ten of the total sample were aged under 30 at the time they travelled. However, this does mean that around three in ten were aged over 30 and we should not forget this group. In our sample, we found people in the older age categories (26-40, and 41-55) who were open to unsafe

migration for themselves, as well as supporting their children to migrate. They were motivated by the desire to improve the status of their wives and children, rather than their own parents, and particularly to secure their children's education. In other ways, the drivers for these older potential migrants were the same as for their younger counterparts – a perceived lack of good quality jobs, low earning potential, and a feeling their aspirations were frustrated within Nigeria.

2.5 How people migrate

Community members said that it was easy to arrange travel overland through Libya to Europe –easier than travelling by air. Overland travel did not require visas or passports, the journey could be organized in a few days, and was described as cheaper and less stressful than applying for a visa and passport.

"You cannot travel by air if you don't have your papers complete. They will deport you back but with road, you don't need any document or visa."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

Sponsors were known to live in urban areas such as Benin City and Uromi, but they had their agents in local communities and rural areas. It was common for young women to be approached in church groups, marketplaces or women's clubs by agents offering to help them migrate.

"The one I saw, she was complaining to somebody, so someone said 'I can help,' she didn't even know the lady. It was because of her complaints about life and family stress. She walked towards her and she said she can help if she really wants to. She asked how she can help her, and the lady said, 'if you need me, call my number.'"

Female, 18-24, High Migration Area

"If I am interested in leaving, I could go to Benin to meet one person who can link me. It is someone who knows the road that will now arrange the journey."

Male, 41-55, High Migration Area

"They get assistance through sponsors who are mostly outsiders and there is always a payment agreement between both parties. Sometimes the mothers of the child also plays a role by taking the child to Benin to meet with the sponsor where they arrange the travel dates and the payment."

Traditional Ruler, High Migration Area

Potential migrants and their parents were aware of the risks of the overland route – through TV, social media, and personal knowledge of returnees. They knew that sponsors lied to people about jobs, demanded more money, and exploited women who they promised to help. However, it was often assumed that by choosing someone known to their family, or with a good reputation, the potential migrant could increase their chances of success. Agents and sponsors were identified by word-of-mouth, by asking others who had travelled. Indeed, whilst people claimed to condemn traffickers who deceived and exploited those in their

charge, others were respected for helping people fulfil their goals and bringing development to the community.

“What I believe is anyone who has money is respected, also anyone who has become your source of income is respected. If I have a good experience with a man who connected me and I crossed over to Europe, of course I will respect him.”

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

“If a sponsor has helped 100 people get to Europe before, people will trust and respect him. Even mothers and fathers respect them because if your kid is on the road and their lives can be in danger, then you have to be respectful.”

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

Thus, unsafe migration was prevalent and largely approved of, or at least tolerated, in the high migration areas. Sponsors and their agents were easy to contact and travelling overland via Libya to Europe was seen as relatively easy. However, this overall picture masks important variations. Younger people and rural dwellers were more supportive of unsafe migration and keen to migrate themselves; whilst older people and some women saw evidence of a decline in support for unsafe migration and human trafficking specifically, as a result of the Oba’s curse. In low migration areas, there was less support for unsafe migration. Young people were still keen to travel, but they lacked contacts, access to migration networks and role models.

3. SOCIAL NORMS AFFECTING UNSAFE MIGRATION

So far in this report we have outlined perceptions of the prevalence of unsafe migration, and individuals’ attitudes towards it. This section looks specifically at the existence, prevalence and strength of social norms which support unsafe migration in Edo State. Social norms are different from individual attitudes and beliefs, in that they are based on what people believe *others* do, and what *others* expect them to do. They are not an individual’s own personal beliefs or values.

Social norms have been defined by scholars as:

- A pattern of behaviour that people conform to, because:
 - They believe most of the people in their network conform to the norm, and...
 - They believe most of the people in their network expect them to conform to the norm.

- Social norms can be held in place by sanctions for breaching norms (such as social stigma, isolation or ridicule) and rewards for complying (such as social status and praise).⁵

We explored social norms through the use of vignettes. These are short stories about imaginary characters in local communities. Participants were asked how characters in the story would react to a situation, usually where perceived norms were breached, and how they themselves would react. This allowed us to explore perceptions of other people's expectations, and to compare those with participants' individual attitudes and beliefs.

Three vignettes were used in the research (see Appendix), involving male and female young people who were considering migrating. We adapted the CARE Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP), which suggests asking the following questions of vignettes:

1. How common is this situation in your community?
2. Would community members /family/ peers approve or disapprove of the behavior?
3. If others in the community found out about xxx would they criticize or say negative thing about the person?
4. Would these criticisms make the person change their mind?

Judged by the criteria outlined above, migrating abroad to find a better job and lifestyle was a social norm in Edo State. To be more precise, the social norm which drove migration can be defined as follows:

“Young people in Edo State are expected to travel abroad to find a better job, to support themselves and their families, if they are unable to do this in Nigeria.”

Before going through the four questions outlined above, it is worth making a few general observations about this norm:

- Migrating abroad to earn money, to raise your own status and that of your family, was seen as prevalent, approved and even admired. But the expectation to migrate only arose when young person was not able to make a living and to contribute to their family in Nigeria.
- The eldest child was expected to support their parents and siblings, so they would face greater pressure to migrate. There might be more pressure on those from larger families – the argument being that if you have six or seven children, then at least one should try to migrate abroad.
- Although unsafe migration to improve status was a social norm in Edo State, many respondents said that it had reduced in recent years. This was attributed to the Oba's curse on trafficking, greater awareness of women being sexually exploited, and of the lies told by sponsors. Women in Ohriomwon and Ikpoba-Okha, both high migration areas, said that unsafe migration had been more common in the past, but was now reducing. These observations, clearly, are relevant to trafficking rather than to unsafe

⁵ Cislighi, B., & Heise, L. (2017). Technical brief: Measuring social norms. London.

migration. However, as we have pointed out, women themselves did not make this distinction.

- The social norm operated most strongly in rural areas – where there were fewer alternative opportunities – and among younger people. The norm also existed in urban areas and among older people, but views were more mixed and there was more scope for debating the issue.

3.1 Expectations about what others do

Unsafe migration was described as prevalent in Esan North East, Ohriomwon and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas. People were aware of friends, relatives and community members who had migrated; they saw the modern houses, cars and wealth which flowed to their families; and they knew of those who had returned, wealthy and “their skin shining.” Agents and sponsors were known within the communities, and it was relatively easy to arrange travel, suggesting that both human trafficking and unsafe migration were prevalent. Indeed, it was so common in some areas that people were keen to try migrating almost out of a fear of missing out if they did not make the attempt.

“It is very common in my community, as you can see we don’t even have young people anymore in this community most of them have travelled out of the country to make money.”

Women’s leader, High Migration Area

“Travelling for me personally is something that if the opportunity presents itself, regardless of me having a job or not, I’m still going to jump at it.”

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

In Owan West – a low migration area – unsafe migration was seen as less common in Sabongida Ora, the urban area and LGA headquarters. In Uzebba, the rural area, it was more common but was not seen as highly prevalent or visible. Respondents contrasted their communities with those nearer Benin City, which was seen as a centre for unsafe migration.

“It is not common here like Benin but the truth is that our people like doing everything they see Benin people do.”

Female, 41-55, Low Migration Area

3.2 Expectations about what others approve of

Migrating to find work abroad was approved of in most of the communities visited, with the exception of Sabongida Ora in Owan West. People assumed that parents and peers would approve of a young person who wanted to migrate, especially if they were going to contribute to their family income. This was seen as admirable and indicated that the child was fulfilling their duties to their parents. When asked how people would react to a young woman wanting to migrate abroad to earn money to send back to her family, these were typical reactions:

"Most people in this community would approve. Most families can't even afford to eat three square meal in a day, the suffering is too much so they are looking up to their children to take care of them and bring them out of poverty."

Women's Leader, High Migration Area

"Some will say she should be courageous, that life is all about risks because they believe Europe is better and she will find better opportunities."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"Out of ten friends she tells seven will tell her to go because no one likes to suffer when there is a way out to make things better."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

Indeed, those who claimed to disapprove of unsafe migration were reluctant to try to dissuade a potential migrant. More than one respondent stated that if someone were to ask for their advice about migration, they would not try to dissuade the person for fear of being labelled "an enemy of progress", i.e., trying to hold back that person's desire to improve their life.

"If I told you I am very hungry and poor, then my daughter tells you she has found a way to leave the country and you discourage her, will you find another way to take us out of our poverty?"

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

3.3 Sanctions

It was widely agreed that if a young person was offered the "opportunity" to migrate, and refused to take it, that person might be criticized. They could be called lazy by their families; their friends might think they were foolish; parents might nag them, refuse to give them money, or even throw them out of the family home.

"Yes, there are many people who are in this community who had the opportunity and didn't take it, they heard things like, You are lazy, see your mates are moving forward, you are here eating your father's and mother's sweat instead of you to go find your own."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

"The friends might say, "Why waste the opportunity?" They will think she does not know what she's doing."

Male, 41-55, Low Migration Area

3.4 Sensitivity to sanctions

If a young person who refused to migrate was subjected to criticism, it was assumed that it would affect them and make them reconsider their decision. Females were considered more vulnerable to these criticisms than males, and it was assumed that the young woman's mother would be the one applying pressure. These sanctions applied mainly within the

family and peer group, rather than the wider community who might not be aware of the young person's intention.

"Some mothers do it often [criticize their daughter], almost every day, so the child is left with no option than to travel."

Female, 18-24, High Migration Area

"She will be disowned by friends and family members. Her mother might send her packing. She will be insulted by her friends. This can make her change her mind about going."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

Once again, views were more mixed in Sabongida Ora in Owan West, where young people were not expected to migrate to support their families. Here, it was suggested that if parents applied pressure to their child to migrate, the parents would be criticized by the community rather than the child. This is interesting, as it suggests that an alternative norm can be created which protects young people from pressure to engage in unsafe migration, rather than supporting it.

3.5 Social norms and individual attitudes

We asked respondents what they personally would advise the characters in the vignettes to do, to explore the relationship between social norms and individual attitudes. Individual attitudes were much more varied than social norms. It was assumed that approval of unsafe migration by others – families, peer groups – was widespread, but respondents' own views were more diverse. Younger people and those in rural areas were often supportive of migration – they were keen to travel, and they would advise others like them to do the same – so for them social norms and individual attitudes were aligned.

For others, particularly women and older people, there was sometimes a mismatch between social norms and claimed individual attitudes. Many respondents stated that *other* families and friends would support a young person's decision to travel, but *they themselves* would not support it. This could, of course, be due to people not wanting to admit their true attitude to the research team. However, it could suggest a situation of "pluralistic ignorance" exists, where perceptions of the views of others are inaccurate, assuming a higher degree of support than actually exists.

Thus, migrating to improve your and your family's status can be seen as a social norm in Edo State, but it only operated when the young person was unable to achieve these goals at home in Nigeria. The underlying norm was that young people were expected to contribute to and support their families – unsafe migration was one way to do this, but not the only way. There were strong normative beliefs in the high migration areas, where unsafe migration was both common and supported, and sanctions for those who refused to comply. However, these sanctions and expectations operated at the level of the family and peer group, rather than the wider community.

Individual attitudes were more varied than perceived norms, and there was a suggestion that the trend was declining, suggesting space to shift social norms does exist. Providing a forum for those who disapprove of unsafe migration to speak out, and supporting them to do so, could shift empirical and normative expectations. This could be supported by advocacy from survivors, which has a greater impact than public communications or official warnings of the risk.

The remainder of this report explores perceptions of the factors which support or drive unsafe migration, based around the socio-ecological model of human behavior. This categorises influences on behavior into three domains:

1. Institutions – larger economic and political structures
2. Society – Social and cultural beliefs, the family and peer group;
3. The Self – individual desire, attitudes, ambitions and goals.

4. INSTITUTIONS – SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

4.1 Lack of good quality jobs

A lack of good quality and appealing jobs was thought to be the main driver of unsafe migration. Young people expressed frustration with their inability to secure a job which would pay enough to support their family and achieve the lifestyle to which they aspired. They wanted to drive modern cars, wear fashionable clothing, live in a modern house with electricity, and to be independent of their parents. Few of them felt that they could achieve these ambitions in their local communities, or indeed in Nigeria.

"There is nothing that can keep anyone in this community. There are no companies here, if you aren't a bike rider, you are probably a bricklayer, so nothing can stop young people that want more money."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

"I am tired of living like this, bathing in cement every day. People in this community finish secondary school and don't know what next to do."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

Older people agreed that there was little to keep youngsters in their communities. In rural areas, farming was often the only job available and this was not appealing to young people.

"Parents are eager for their kids to be done with school so that they can take care of them in future. Only for their kids to graduate and there are no jobs, before you know it a university graduate will now have to join his father that trained him to school in farming, live in the same house with his father, it can be frustrating."

Male, 41-55, High Migration Area

"There is no good job in this village aside farming and it makes you get old in time. Someone can travel so that he can get a job that will pay well."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

"Children of nowadays are of computer age. Even when they finish school, they would not want to work in the farms because they feel it does not fit them so they will try and travel out of the country to make more money there."

Female Traditional Leader, High Migration Area

"You graduate from school which your parents trained you, you will now finish school and return to your parents' house, your parents will now feed you. It will get to a point they will get tired of it and become ashamed now."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

4.2 Unfair access to jobs

People also commented that access to jobs was dependent on connections or bribery rather than on merit or qualifications. Even if a young person worked hard, studied and graduated from college, they would still not secure a job on their own merits.

"There is no job in this country, before you get a job in this country it takes the grace of God, it's either you pay for it or you know somebody. Somebody was giving us a testimony recently, they were asking him 'Are you in the governor's list, are you in the local government list, are you in chairman's list?' So, there is no job in this country."

Teacher, High Migration Area

"These days if you don't bribe you can't get a good job and you must know somebody."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

4.3 Lack of faith in Nigeria's future

This left young people, especially young men, feeling frustrated and unfulfilled. They wanted to be successful, to "make it" in society – but they felt that they were unable to achieve this in Nigeria. This was part of a wider lack of faith in the future, where government and politicians were seen as either unwilling or unable to bring development to Nigeria.

"This government and past governments have succeeded in eating the destiny of generations, today there are no roads, no water, there is no impact. Italy doesn't even have more resources than us but because our leaders don't have vision that is why we are in a terrible state."

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

"The basic amenities, there is no good hospital, there is no light, there is no good road and that was why I categorized it as the system has broken because nothing is working."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

This was compared with what people had heard of Europe, from friends or relatives abroad, returnees and from social media. Life in Europe offered all the benefits which people desired and which were not available at home – creating a very strong desire to migrate, to experience this superior lifestyle and opportunities.

"I have people there, my siblings are also there, when you get there, things are working well, talk about the security, the roads, electricity, everything is working fine, that is why people here like to travel abroad. Look at Edo State, some of the roads are bad and electricity too is bad, so because of these things, people like to migrate from Nigeria to other countries."

Female, 18-24, High Migration Area

Thus, a lack of good quality jobs, unfair access to employment and a lack of faith in the future in Nigeria increased people's vulnerability to unsafe migration.

5. SOCIETY - SOCIAL AND CULTURAL VALUES, FAMILY AND THE PEER GROUP

5.1 Children expected to contribute

Community attitudes towards unsafe migration varied between locations, but there was evidence of widespread support for young people who migrated to improve their own and their family's circumstances. Many of the families in our sample were large, with six or more children, and in these cases it seemed natural and commendable for one child to seek work abroad. Children were expected to contribute to the household economy, especially when they had finished their education. Finding a job, securing an income and supporting parents was expected, especially of male or eldest children. In this context, it was seen as good, even admirable, if a child decided to migrate in order to raise their family from poverty.

"I have six children, if one of them said he wants to travel through land and it cost 300,000 naira, I will give him the money, close my eyes and begin to start praying."

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

5.2 Valuing of wealth and status

The value accorded to wealth – and the outward signs of wealth – was seen as a driver of unsafe migration. Community members who were better off were accorded more respect; their voices were listened to in community meetings; they were seen as "famous"; and young people aspired to be like them. Many respondents reported a "get rich quick" attitude among young people, driven in part by the visible signs of wealth derived from community members overseas.

"I have been to other communities who are far poorer than this one and they don't see travelling via road as the only alternative out of their condition. People in this community that travel are the ones that are more desperate to quickly get rich and wealthy. I have brothers, we are of the same environment and they decided to go because they have the get rich quick syndrome".

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

"When you see me buy jeep here you will value me, but when you don't see me buy jeep here, they will say 'Don't mind that man!' Those that are poor, they will not value those ones."

Pastor, High Migration Area

5.3 Celebrating the success of migrants

One of the main sources of wealth was seen as remittances from abroad. People claimed that those who had a family member working in Europe were better off; they had nice houses, modern cars, better clothes, nice hairstyles. They could send their younger children to better schools, they did not have to worry about the day to day life unlike their poorer peers. This image was highly appealing to potential migrants – who wanted to raise the status of their families – and to their parents, who might see migration as a solution to their financial worries.

"My neighbour at home has gotten very rich from her child who is abroad. They now have big cars."

"My landlady is driving big cars because her children are overseas and she spends very well."

"My grandmother is also enjoying herself because her children who have travelled have been taking care of her."

Female, 18-24, High Migration Area

Indeed, the return of "successful" migrants was celebrated within local communities. Returning migrants brought wealth, gifts, threw parties and bought drinks for everyone. They might even return to their homes in a "convoy" of vehicles, playing music and "spraying" cash to passersby. In this context, is important to note that participants were not in a position to determine whether a person had migrated safely, unsafely, or been trafficked – they only saw the apparently successful returnee.

"People embrace them and want to be like them."

"Their attitude will change and when you see them they look very fresh, so people will just be envying them."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"When they come they line their cars and drive around."

"Some of them share money for the people."

"Their skin and hair will be shining."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

"They are always respected after taking the risk and surviving. When they return, they are driving the best car, they will come and spend money on drinks for everyone who

is with them at bars. Some will even move their parents from their old house or do businesses so that their younger siblings will be managing."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

They were given titles by the local community and by traditional leaders, as a sign of respect for their contribution to the community. This might include commissioning construction projects, setting up businesses for their siblings, and or starting a school in their name. Thus, from a purely rationale, economic point of view, a returning migrant was a good thing for the whole community.

"A lot of people in this community go and come back to build big houses, buy the latest cars, they also help the less privileged in the community by employing them in private-owned stores which they built with their own money, even hospitals. They are even better than the Government, so they impart greatly in the community."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

"When you see them people call them Chairman"

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

"They see them as 'Governor'; that is they have arrived and their level has changed."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

"We call them Akate and when they come people praise them and they help people in their community."

Female Traditional Leader, High Migration Area

They were also admired for the hardships they had undergone to raise the status of their families.

"People are respected because they were able to go through the dangers on the way, successfully get to Europe, become rich and are able to help themselves and their families."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

"People respect them a lot because it is not easy to cross from Libya to Italy."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

Although both male and female returnees were admired for their wealth, female returnees might be stigmatized as it was assumed that they had been involved in prostitution. This might mean, for example, that they were unlikely to get married.

"People would respect her because she is rich but they know she was into prostitution there."

Women's leader, High Migration Area

5.4 Family support for unsafe migration

Given the benefits which flowed to a family if they had a child working abroad, it is not surprising that some families were reported to encourage their children to migrate. According to our sample, mothers were most likely to place pressure on their daughters,

especially if they were not already making a contribution to the household economy or married. They might compare their child with other families who had a child sending remittances from abroad. Or they might criticize their daughter, saying she was a drain on the family resources. Over time, these pressures might prompt a child to consider migration.

"[People would say] Why don't you want to help your parents, isn't it time for you to feed your father and your mother?"

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

"If he has six kids now, few travelled abroad and they returned rich with cars and everything, if my own child said he wants to travel through land that I should give him money, I will because I believe what didn't kill this man's children will also not kill mine. Prayer will work it."

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

Those who provided for their families in this way were admired and respected, as having fulfilled the proper duties of a good child.

"When they return, people are happy for them I mean your mother used to go to farm every day and would probably have to trek four miles to the farm, now she doesn't have to anymore. You will help everyone of your family, they praise God for their lives".

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

'I have a friend who couldn't eat before her kids travelled through land, and now they have three houses, that is why people are motivated to go to Italy through road'.

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"When they return rich, they are much more respected by their parents and more admired by other members of the community. If you come back, buy your mother and father cars, renovate their house, how will they not be respected by members of the community?"

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

As one respondent memorably said, if a family gets one member overseas, the whole family can "tap from the blessing", enabling others to benefit either materially or in social status and respect.

5.5 Peer group support for unsafe migration

Male migrants were reported to be more likely to make their own decision or to respond to peer pressure than family expectations. Young men saw the money, cars, respect and status which was accorded to returning migrants, and they wanted to be like them. Peers were likely to support their friends' desire to migrate, because they wished to encourage them in improving their lives, and because they hoped to "tap from the blessing". Indeed, if a friend tried to dissuade a potential migrant, they might be seen as standing in the way of that person's progress.

"Once they see that their mate is doing well, like the person has money and is taking care of his family and dresses well, they will ask the person to put them through how he is making money and will want to do what the person tells them."

Female, 18-24, Low Migration Area

"When they look at some of their friends in the same community who travelled and are driving new cars, they will say to themselves that they have to go to so they can be like their friends. I know of a young man who already had a skill in installing tiles in people's houses, as he saw some of his friends travelling and making money, he decided to go too."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"When it comes to travelling and I approach a friend and he tells me not to go, in my mind the person is against my progress because to me, it's a route of making money and you said I should not go, I won't talk to you again, I will leave. When next I see you I will start running."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

Male migrants might simply disappear one day or tell their parents that they were travelling to another part of Nigeria, only to phone them weeks later from Libya requesting them to transfer money to fund their travel across the Mediterranean to Italy.

"Most of my friends that travelled and got there, they didn't tell me before they did, the only thing I notice is that they will take some guys to a bar and you will drink so much, the next day, you won't see them. Three months later you will now hear they are in Europe."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

5.6 Attitudes and role of Pastors

The role of pastors in supporting or discouraging unsafe migration appeared to be mixed. Some churches, described as "apostolic", "prophetic" or "prosperity" churches, were reported to support and celebrate those who had travelled abroad for work. They might pray for the safety of those intending to migrate, boast in sermons about the number of "successful" migrants from their church, bless returning migrants, and accept gifts in return for their support.

"Parents still allow them based on these fake prophets and pastors that we have in Nigeria. The prophet will tell them, 'I would pray for your child, it's not your portion to die.'"

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"These new churches today don't preach sin, they preach prosperity. Any money you give them, whether it's by hook or crook, is thanksgiving money to them. If pastor was riding a bike before, they try to make sure he is driving a new car".

Traditional Ruler, High Migration Area

Other pastors might not support unsafe migration, but parents would take their child to be blessed without revealing their true intentions and plans.

"I know in my church we preach against it. My pastor always says; it isn't travelling abroad that is bad but how you go abroad that can be a problem. I believe if you tell a pastor you want to go study in Europe, that is a good thing, but no one will tell a pastor I want to go abroad to do prostitution and the pastor will now pray for you."

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

"Religious leaders can advise them not to travel by land but at the end of the day, the parents don't tell the pastor the route the child is taking, they just ask them to pray for their children that wants to travel."

Female, 18-24, Low Migration Area

Indeed, some respondents reported that their pastors preached against migration of women to Italy for sexual exploitation.

"There was a day my pastor in the church called out mothers who have daughters in Italy and scolded them for selling their soul to the devil all because of wanting to show off wealth."

Female, 18-24, Low Migration Area

We interviewed four pastors in our sample of Key Informants. One was a preacher in an apostolic church, and he proudly told us that thirty members of his congregation had travelled to Europe with the support of his prayers.

"Some of them say when they faced hindrances, when they slept they saw me in their dreams praying for them and they overcame the temptation."

Pastor, High Migration Area

The other three pastors had little to do with unsafe migration. One said he provided support to returnees who needed help, and another said he preached against the sins of prostitution and greed. However, none was working actively to reduce unsafe migration – they focused on the morality of the individual's intention, rather than the risk of unsafe migration itself.

5.7 Attitudes and role of traditional rulers

Community members thought that traditional rulers, such as village chiefs, were of limited relevance to the decision of any individual to engage in unsafe migration. They were unlikely to be told of such plans and they were rarely approached for advice. One village leader pointed out that he would only find out about migrants when they returned with their new wealth – he would not know when they set off on their travels.

"If I am not aware, I can't challenge anybody now. No-one tells anyone when they are planning, it's when they successfully cross or not that you start hearing anything."

Community Leader, High Migration Area

"They [traditional rulers] don't support it but the truth is most of the time, when these people want to travel, they do it secretly, they don't even tell anybody. They don't

allow their neighbours to know, it is only when they have successfully gotten there or something bad happens, that is when others in the community find out."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

The Oba's curse on human traffickers had also affected traditional leaders, meaning that they were unlikely to offer support to anyone engaged in human trafficking.

"No way, traditional rulers will never approve especially since our new monarch came into power. Since he has openly pushed against it, no traditional ruler will try it."

Community Leader, High Migration area

However, whilst they might not openly endorse unsafe migration, it was reported that they celebrated and profited from the wealth of returning migrants, conferred titles of respect upon them, and often boasted about having their own children working or studying abroad. This led community members to assume that although they did not promote unsafe migration, they tacitly approved of it.

"Yes, they approve of it because some of the chiefs don't care how they want to travel as long as provide their own share of the money."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

"Most of them do [approve] because they are the ones who give the men that return titles. As long as the money is there they don't want to know how it was made."

Female, 41-55, Low Migration Area

Traditional priests or "native doctors" – as opposed to village chiefs and rulers – did have more to do with unsafe migration. In spite of the Oba's curse, it was reported mothers still took their daughters to traditional priests for blessings and that they were supporting unsafe migration. Again, as a matter of judgement this seems more likely to be human trafficking than unsafe migration – but respondents did not draw this distinction.

"Most people will take their children to native doctors to bathe them so that they are fortified and when they get there they will be favoured."

Female, 18-24, High Migration Area

"If parents know that their kids want to travel, they will ask a pastor to pray for them or native chiefs who will now do sacrifice with their hairs on their body which they believe will offer protection against any bad thing that wants to happen on their way."

Male, 18-24, High Migration area

We included sixteen traditional leaders in our stakeholder interviews, covering village chiefs, women's leaders, members of traditional royal families and family heads. Most were aware of unsafe migration in their communities, but the majority were reactive in their responses. For example, they might give advice on jobs or training to returnees seeking support. When asked what they would advise if a young person approached them intending to migrate

overland, one answered that they would tell the person to make sure they knew what they were getting into; and another said she would pray for the person; another advised them to work hard and be patient.

Four of the sixteen leaders interviewed were working actively to prevent unsafe migration. One local ruler in Orhiomwon had set up a committee to raise awareness of the risks of unsafe migration; another traditional ruler in the same LGA convened meetings with local returnees to speak about the hardships they faced on their journey; and a women's leader in Esan North East had gone door-to-door in her village to speak to the women about the risks of unsafe migration. But overall there was little sense of urgency, focus, or resources being dedicated to addressing the issue.

Two teachers – both women – were working to reduce unsafe migration through programmes in schools, where they spoke with students and parents on the dangers of unsafe migration. These might be collaborating with local NGOs who had visited schools to carry out educational activities.

There were, therefore, many cultural values and beliefs which supported and indeed drove unsafe migration in Edo State. Young people were expected to make an economic contribution to their families; status was derived from wealth, in the form of modern houses, cars and fashionable clothing; successful returnees were celebrated and given titles for the riches they brought to their families and communities; families supported young people to migrate with financial and practical support, and peers encouraged them too.

The role of pastors was mixed, with some supporting unsafe migration and others preaching against it. However, they were more focused on the morality of the migrants' intentions – greed or prostitution – rather than the risks of unsafe migration and immorality of Human Trafficking itself. Potentially, they might play an important role in combatting unsafe migration, as parents often took their children to pastors for blessing and prayer before travelling. Currently, there was little evidence that they were doing this. Traditional rulers had a limited role in combatting unsafe migration. Few appeared to be working to combat it, and more were tacitly endorsing it by honouring and profiting from the gifts of successful returnees.

6. INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

6.1 Ambition and hope

All respondents emphasized that as well as social pressures to migrate, young people were strongly motivated by their own individual desires, ambitions and hopes. They wanted a "good life": a job which paid a good salary, a nice car, a modern house for themselves and their families. Many commented that after finishing education, young people were left with few attractive opportunities – farming, petty trading, motorbike riding, vulcanising or laboring – and they wanted more than this. After seeing their ambitions frustrated for months or years, it was natural that they should consider migrating. This was true of young men and women.

"I know a young man who farmed for two years, he planted a lot of yams and cassava, as soon as he was done selling everything, he started his trip by himself, he didn't let anyone know."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"As a man, you want to keep girlfriends, you want to feel free and do what you like and you can't just do what you like on your salary, there is always this drive to want more."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

Young men tended to compare themselves with their friends who had migrated. Returning migrants were respected by their family and elders, and those who remained almost felt ashamed or belittled of their lower status.

"People that have money and people that don't have money aren't the same. There are things you just can't do if you don't have money, you can do everything you want to do when you have money, so you are respected. Even our friends that left and returned they don't even talk to us anymore because they are better than us now, they have money now, even guys that go to Senegal then come back rich with Benz and Lexus, they won't even look back again."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

6.2 Desire to "uplift" the family

Young people also felt a strong desire to help their families and raise their status in the community. They wanted their parents to live in a bigger house, to dress well, and not to have to struggle. They wanted their siblings to go to good schools, set up businesses to help them earn an income. They wanted their families to be respected and wealth was the way to achieve this.

"Sometimes regardless of how old or young kids are, when they assess their family's situation and see that there is no way out, they begin to feel it's their place to take their family out of their financial crisis. This is why young people even as young as 15-18 years decide to make the move on their own."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

They come from a poor background, so they travel to help their families. Some of them do not want do anything here (for themselves), what is in their mind only is just to travel to and look for solutions, then come back and built a heavy duplex for their families, so that poverty will leave their families now.

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

6.3 Attitudes to risk and faith

Attitudes to risk, faith and destiny also supported unsafe migration. Men commented that life in Nigeria was a risk, they could just as well die here, so why not take the risk of migrating to gain something better? Although they were aware of the risks of unsafe migration – dying in the desert, enslavement, forced labour, beatings, or dying trying to cross the sea – religious faith and a belief in destiny meant that people were not always

deterred. They felt that if it was not their destiny to die, then they would not die. Those who died during the trip were unlucky or were fated to die.

"They believe people have different destinies. Those people that died, it was their destiny to die when they did, just because it happened to them doesn't mean it will happen to me. I have my own destiny."

Female, 40-55, High Migration Area

"People die here in Nigeria through accidents, people also die in Europe in water, it is everywhere. It is risky not to take the risk itself."

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

"In Nigeria, there is constant news of death, today we hear that Boko Haram has killed 1,000 people, I never hear that 1,000 people died in the Mediterranean sea. The risk we pass through in Nigeria is worse than what they pass through in Libya."

Male, 40-55, High Migration Area

"Truth is in this Nigeria, nothing is here. So, when you already made up your mind to die or succeed, they know about all the disadvantages, but they have already said to themselves it's either I succeed or die"

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

6.4 Image of life in Europe

Finally, the image of life in Europe was highly appealing to young people. Europe was seen as an idyllic place where life was free from worries, safe and secure, with good transport, electricity and government; plentiful well-paid jobs easy to find; and where hard work was rewarded – unlike in Nigeria. The appeal of life in Europe was not only based on economic factors. People wanted to experience the lifestyle of Europe and they believed that those who returned were more sophisticated, better people as a result of their time abroad.

"That place (Europe) is more beautiful than here. I have seen it on TV when I am watching football and in movies."

Male, 18-24, High Migration Area

"They want to know what is in Europe because what they see, they want to experience it more. Yes, the life in Europe is enough reason to travel."

Traditional Ruler, High Migration Area

"Those people that travel when they come back their skin is shining, their hair will just be shining and they are clean."

Female, 25-40, High Migration Area

"I have a friend who went to Europe and for six months. He didn't have any job, but he was still looking very good and doing fine because if you watch the way they are living you can't compare. It will take us time even if we have good leadership before we get to where they are."

Male, 25-40, High Migration Area

Thus, the individual desires, ambitions and aspirations of young Nigerians were at least as important as social and cultural values in driving unsafe migration. The image of Europe was very appealing, as a kind of myth of the ideal life free from worries, from which they would return richer and transformed into a better person, respected by their family and peers. They were aware of the risks but their religious faith and belief in destiny meant that they were not deterred by them. As a matter of judgement, individual motivations alone might be enough to drive unsafe migration, without the social and cultural expectations described earlier in this report. This emphasizes the need to address vulnerability at all three levels of the socio-ecological model. Working at one level alone is unlikely to have a substantial impact on numbers, as it is the interaction of factors at all three levels which produces the high level of unsafe migration currently seen in Edo State.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

This section outlines the implications of this study for the SOTIN programme. We do not propose firm recommendations, as these ideas will need to be considered in combination with those of the other research studies and programme strategy.

- **Interventions need to address drivers of unsafe migration at all three levels of the socio-ecological model.** Vulnerability to unsafe migration results from a combination of factors at all three levels, and they must be addressed together to reduce the numbers involved. This means working on individual attitudes and beliefs as well as self-efficacy, challenging social norms and community support for migration including working with religious and traditional leaders. Institutional reform to the labour market and education system would also be encouraged through work with the Government of Edo. This could also include addressing the ease with which sponsors and their agents operate in Edo State and to work to reduce tolerance for their activities.
- **Interventions need to be highly contextualized** to address local patterns of migration and social norms. Levels of unsafe migration and community attitudes varied between the LGAs visited, and between urban and rural locations. Interventions must address local contexts and take advantage of reductions in community support, local NGO activities, and the good work of some traditional rulers and teachers.
- **The programme must guard against unintended negative consequences.** There is a risk that communications activities could reinforce negative social norms or increase awareness of unsafe migration. It is also possible that interventions targeting specific local communities could result in the activities of traffickers being displaced from one location to another. The main reasons for lower migration in Owan West seemed to relate to lower awareness of migration routes, limited contact with successful returnees, and less access to traffickers. It will be important to avoid inadvertently increasing awareness through, for example, communications activities.

- **Highlighting the views of those who do not support unsafe migration, and role models who have established themselves in Nigeria, could shift harmful social norms.** Individual attitudes were more varied than perceived social norms, and people may not be aware of the resistance to unsafe migration which already exists in their communities. There may be more opportunities to intervene, and local champions to speak out against unsafe migration, than was immediately apparent.
- **Alternative ways for young people to support parents and siblings, and to have a successful career in Nigeria, should be highlighted.** Social pressure to migrate abroad only operated when a person could not fulfil their goals in Nigeria. Showing that this was possible, and presenting realistic routes and role models, could remove much of this norm's power.
- **Working with families will be essential to address unsafe migration.** Families, not whole communities, were applying pressure to young people to migrate. Work with mothers and daughters to identify alternative livelihood options for young women will be important; and young women may need capacity building to resist family pressure to migrate.
- **Pastors and religious leaders could be key partners in reducing unsafe migration,** as they were often called on to bless potential migrants. They might suggest that "God does not want you to risk your life in this way", rather than saying "God will protect you on your travels." However, they would need support to recognize those who were at risk and to provide effective guidance and advice. Pastors could be encouraged to condemn unsafe migration, traffickers and their methods, rather than focusing on the immoral intentions of the migrants and their families.
- **Survivor testimony and advocacy should form a key part of local interventions.** These seem more effective than generic information about the risks, and young people related more to friends or peers who have experienced the dangers of unsafe migration.
- **Identifying male peer champions to speak out against unsafe migration** could also be useful, as young men were more influenced by their peers. The image of men being "tough enough to cope with the risks" also needs to be addressed, perhaps by emphasizing the low odds of success and the risk of returning with less money than before. This might be a more effective deterrent than focusing on the risks of the journey, which most were well aware of already.
- **Communications should adopt language and concepts which are used within the communities:** people did not distinguish between unsafe migration and human trafficking, and did not seem aware of the different risks involved in each. This might fruitfully form the basis of a community conversation looking at how these issues affect men and women differently, and to raise awareness of the specific risks of human trafficking.
- **Communications should be informed by gender norms,** including speaking to the gendered social norms that influence their decision-making. Messaging should be cognizant of the perceptions of risk, sense of destiny and protection that religious

beliefs provides for women and men. They should speak directly to the specific motivations of women and men, where different.

APPENDIX 1 - TOPIC GUIDES

Drivers and Enablers Research – FGD Guide Final – Post Pilot

This a guide, not a questionnaire. It indicates the areas to be covered, but the questions may not be asked in this specific way or in this order. The facilitator should also follow up on relevant questions which may not be covered in the guide. The discussion will last 1.5-2 hours. If any respondents are distressed by the subject matter, they can take a break or leave the discussion at any time. Any respondents requiring support should be referred to local support services.

Ensure you focus on unsafe forms of migration after the first two introductory sections. Pick up on mentions of unsafe migration and tell respondents that this is what we are focusing on in this discussion. The topic guide uses the term “unsafe migration” but you can use respondents’ language to describe it, ie, “by bush”, “over land”, or just “travelling” if that is what respondents say.

Also make sure that you probe for differences between attitudes towards male and female unsafe migration throughout, by asking questions like “how does this differ for males and females?” or “Is this true of men and women equally”?

1. Introductions
 - a. Welcome to everyone, thanks for coming
 - b. Topic of the research is international migration and travel – reasons why people to travel to other countries;
 - c. Research is confidential, there are no right or wrong answers, it’s just your opinion we are interested in;
 - d. Please allow everyone to speak, respect each other, avoid talking at the same time;
 - e. Introduce and gain permission to record: for our records to make sure we don’t miss anything, no-one outside the research team will hear this
2. Respondent introductions
 - a. Names, age, marital status, no of children
 - b. Are they indigenes of Edo State? Where are they originally from?
 - c. If they are working, studying, looking for work
 - d. For younger respondents: Any plans they have for the future, ambitions
 - e. For older age groups: what hopes/ plans do they have for their children
 - f. Have they ever considered migrating to another country?

From this point onwards, focus on unsafe migration. This might be referred to as “over land”, “by bus”, “by bush”, or “going to Libya”, “finding a way out”. Listen for these mentions and use respondents language to focus on unsafe migration. Say something like “For the rest of our discussion I would like to focus on travelling by bush/ overland/ unsafe forms of travel”

3. *Unsafe migration – personal awareness/ experiences*

- a. What sorts of people migrate? Where do they go? Is it more men or women? Older or younger people?
 - b. What are the differences between men and women who migrate? Do they go for different reasons/ to do different things/ which is more common?
 - c. Do you know anyone in your family or community who has migrated overseas, to find work or a better life?
4. Drivers and enablers of unsafe migration
- a. What are the main reasons why people migrate overseas in this way? Do men and women migrate for different reasons?
 - b. What are the advantages of migrating overseas to individuals and their families?
 - c. What are the disadvantages of migrating overseas, for individuals and their families?
 - d. Check the following potential drivers of unsafe migration....
 - i. Desire for a better job, money, career, status, wealth
 - ii. Ambition and aspiration for a better life in general
 - iii. Education opportunities
 - iv. Pressure from family /desire to support family
 - v. Idea that life in Europe is perfect/ myth of life in Europe
 - vi. Gender discrimination against women and girls/ lack of opportunities for girls
 - vii. Lack of confidence in the future in Nigeria/ corruption/ poor government/ insecurity
 - viii. Joblessness/ despair/ lack of opportunities locally
 - e. Are people aware of "successful" returnees who have come back rich? How are these people viewed in the community?
5. Family and peer group attitudes (remember to focus on unsafe migration)
- a. What would parents think if their daughter wanted to migrate? Would they approve or disapprove? And what if it was their son? What would be the difference?
 - b. Do families or friends pressurise individuals to migrate? Who specifically – mother, father, uncles aunts, brothers, etc. Is this different for male and female migrants?
 - c. Do family and peer group provide financial or practical support to members who want to migrate?
 - d. Are people aware of families who have profited/ have big houses/ cars bought from remittances of children overseas? Do they approve or disapprove of this?
 - e. Do religious leaders approve or disapprove of unsafe migration?
 - f. Do traditional rules approve or disapprove of unsafe migration?
6. Social norms around unsafe migration and personal attitude
- a. [Use the vignettes to explore these questions – please use different vignettes across the groups: "Now I would like to read you a story about an imaginary family in your community and ask you some questions about it"]
 - b. How common is unsafe migration in your community? Do many people do it?
 - c. Do people in your community approve or disapprove of migrating in this way?

- d. Are people who refuse to migrate overseas criticised in any way?
 - e. Would this criticism make a person change their mind?
 - f. Would you personally support or discourage someone who wanted to migrate overseas to find work/ a better life? Why?
7. Inhibitors/ protective factors against migration
- a. What might discourage someone from trying to migrate overseas?
 - i. More information about the risks and dangers?
 - ii. More information about the reality of life in Europe/ overseas
 - iii. Better job or educational opportunities in Edo/ Nigeria
 - iv. Family and friends advising them not to go
 - v. Community leaders and religious leaders discouraging unsafe travel
 - b. What are the risks and dangers associated with migration:
 - i. Personal danger/ physical danger
 - ii. Threats to family in Nigeria
 - iii. Difficult/ harsh journey and circumstances
 - iv. Risk of failure/ getting stuck halfway
 - v. Financial risks/ getting into debt
 - vi. Forced labour or sexual exploitation
 - vii. Legal risks/ policing/ immigration rules
 - c. Is it worth the risk, for the potential rewards? Why?
8. Mechanisms and routes of migration
- a. How do people who want to migrate arrange their travel?
 - b. Who helps them? is it easy or difficult to travel to Europe?
 - c. Who are these people? local community members/ outsiders?
 - d. How trustworthy are people who organise migration?
 - e. How are they viewed within the community? Approved or disapproved of?
9. Conclusions
- a. Do they think that unsafe migration is driven more by the individual person's desire to migrate, or by pressure from family and the community?
 - b. What are the main factors which would prevent or reduce unsafe migration from Edo State?
 - c. Thanks and close.

APPENDIX 2 - DRIVERS AND ENABLERS RESEARCH – KII GUIDE FINAL – POST PILOT

This a guide, not a questionnaire. It indicates the areas to be covered, but the questions may not be asked in this specific way or in this order. The facilitator should also follow up on relevant questions which may not be covered in the guide. The interview will last 1 hour.

Ensure you focus on unsafe forms of migration after the first two introductory sections. Pick up on mentions of unsafe migration and tell respondents that this is what we are focusing on in this discussion. The topic guide uses the term “unsafe migration” but you can use respondents’ language to describe it, ie, “by bush”, “over land”, or just “travelling” if that is what respondents say.

Also make sure that you probe for differences between attitudes towards male and female unsafe migration throughout, by asking questions like “how does this differ for males and females?” or “Is this true of men and women equally”?

1. Introductions

- Topic of the research is international migration and travel – reasons why people to travel to other countries;
- Research is confidential, there are no right or wrong answers, it’s just your opinion we are interested in;
- Introduce and gain permission to record: for our records to make sure we don’t miss anything, no-one outside the research team will hear this

2. Respondent introduction

- Name, age, role in the organisation
- Are they indigenes of Edo State? Where are they originally from?
- What is their role within the community? How long have they been in this role?
- Brief description of their community/ the people they work with
- Does any of your work deal with people who have migrated or come back; or with people who have got into problems trying to migrate?
- Are they aware of local people migrating in unsafe ways/ informal/ illegal ways ?
- Tell us about any examples you have encountered? What sort of issues come up and what sort of advice or help do you provide?
- What other organisations/ NGOs in your community work on this issue/ address this issue?

From this point onwards, focus on unsafe migration. This might be referred to as "over land", "by bus", "by bush", or "going to Libya", "finding a way out". Listen for these mentions and use respondents' language to focus on unsafe migration. Say something like "For the rest of our discussion I would like to focus on travelling by bush/ overland/ unsafe forms of travel"

3. Unsafe migration – personal awareness/ experiences
 - What sorts of people migrate? Where do they go? Is it more men or women? Older or younger people?
 - What are the differences between men and women who migrate? Do they go for different reasons/ to do different things/ which is more common?
 - Would you personally support or discourage a community who wanted to migrate in this way and asked your advice?

4. Drivers and enablers of unsafe migration
 - What are the main reasons why people migrate overseas in this way? Do men and women migrate for different reasons?
 - What are the advantages of migrating overseas to individuals and their families?
 - What are the disadvantages of migrating overseas, for individuals and their families?
 - Check the following potential drivers of unsafe migration....
 - Desire for a better job, money, career, status, wealth
 - Ambition and aspiration for a better life in general
 - Education opportunities
 - Pressure from family /desire to support family
 - Idea that life in Europe is perfect/ myth of life in Europe
 - Gender discrimination against women and girls/ lack of opportunities for girls
 - Lack of confidence in the future in Nigeria/ corruption/ poor government/ insecurity
 - Joblessness/ despair/ lack of opportunities locally
 - Are people aware of "successful" returnees who have come back rich? How are these people viewed in the community?
 - Are people aware of families who have profited/ have big houses/ cars bought from remittances of children overseas? Do they approve or disapprove of this?

5. Family and peer group attitudes (remember to focus on unsafe migration)
 - What would parents think if their daughter wanted to migrate? Would they approve or disapprove? And what if it was their son? What would be the difference?
 - Do families or friends pressurise individuals to migrate? Who specifically pressurises people – mother, father, uncles aunts, brothers, etc. Is this different for male and female migrants?
 - Do family and peer group provide financial or practical support to members who want to migrate?

- Do religious leaders approve or disapprove of unsafe migration?
 - Do traditional rules approve or disapprove of unsafe migration?
6. Social norms around unsafe migration and personal attitude
- [Use the vignettes to explore these questions – please use different vignettes across the groups: “Now I would like read you a story about an imaginary family in your community and ask you some questions about it”]
 - How common is unsafe migration in your community? Do many people do it?
 - Do people in your community approve or disapprove of migrating in this way?
 - Are people who refuse to migrate overseas criticised in any way?
 - Would this criticism make a person change their mind?
7. Inhibitors/ protective factors against migration
- What might discourage someone from trying to migrate overseas?
 - i. More information about the risks and dangers?
 - ii. More information about the reality of life in Europe/ overseas
 - iii. Better job or educational opportunities in Edo/ Nigeria
 - iv. Family and friends advising them not to go
 - v. Community leaders and religious leaders discouraging unsafe travel
 - What are the risks and dangers associated with migration:
 - i. Personal danger/ physical danger
 - ii. Threats to family in Nigeria
 - iii. Difficult/ harsh journey and circumstances
 - iv. Risk of failure/ getting stuck halfway
 - v. Financial risks/ getting into debt
 - vi. Forced labour or sexual exploitation
 - vii. Legal risks/ policing/ immigration rules
 - Is it worth the risk, for the potential rewards? Why?
8. Mechanisms and routes of migration
- How do people who want to migrate arrange their travel?
 - Who helps them? is it easy or difficult to travel to Europe?
 - Who are these people? local community members/ outsiders?
 - How trustworthy are people who organise migration?
 - How are they viewed within the community? Approved or disapproved of?
10. Their involvement in preventing/ reducing unsafe migration
- Does your organisation do any activities to address/ reduce unsafe migration?
 - What do you do? What have you found effective or less effective?
 - Do you/ your organisation provide any information/ advice/ support on this issue?
 - What might prevent or reduce unsafe international migration in your local community?

9. Conclusions

- Do they think that unsafe migration is driven more by the individual person's desire to migrate, or by pressure from family and the community?
- What are the main factors which would prevent or reduce unsafe migration from Edo State?
- Thanks and close.

APPENDIX 3 - DETAILED SAMPLE BREAKDOWN

Reference no	Sex	Age	Location	High or low migration area
1.	Female	18-24	Ikpoba-Okha	High
2.	Female	41-55	Ikpoba-Okha	High
3.	Male	25-40	Ikpoba-Okha	High
4.	Female	25-40	Ikpoba-Okha	High
5.	Male	41-55	Ikpoba-Okha	High
6.	Male	18-24	Ikpoba-Okha	High
7.	Male	18-24	Orhiomhwon	High
8.	Male	41-55	Orhiomhwon	High
9.	Female	25-40	Orhiomhwon	High
10.	Male	25-40	Orhiomhwon	High
11.	Female	18-24	Orhiomhwon	High
12.	Female	40-55	Orhiomhwon	High
13.	Female	18-24	Esan North East	High
14.	Female	41-55	Esan North East	High
15.	Male	25-40	Esan North East	High
16.	Female	25-40	Esan North East	High
17.	Male	41-55	Esan North East	High
18.	Male	18-24	Esan North East	High
19.	Male	41-55	Owan West	Low
20.	Female	25-40	Owan West	Low
21.	Male	25-40	Owan West	Low
22.	Female	18-24	Owan West	Low
23.	Female	40-55	Owan West	Low
24.	Male	41-55	Owan West	Low

APPENDIX 4 - KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

<i>Reference no</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>High or low migration</i>
1.	Traditional ruler	Male	Ikpoba-Okha	High
2.	Women's Leader	Female	Ikpoba-Okha	High
3.	Pastor	Male	Ikpoba-Okha	High
4.	Teacher	Female	Ikpoba-Okha	High
5.	Family head	Male	Ikpoba-Okha	High
6.	Traditional ruler	Male	Owan West	Low
7.	Traditional ruler	Female	Orhionmwon	High
8.	Community leader	Male	Orhionmwon	High
9.	Traditional ruler	Male	Orhionmwon	High
10.	Community leader	Male	Orhionmwon	High
11.	Traditional ruler	Male	Orhionmwon	High
12.	Pastor	Female	Orhionmwon	High
13.	Women's leader	Female	Esan North East	High
14.	Traditional ruler	Male	Esan North East	High
15.	Teacher	Female	Esan North East	High
16.	Family head	Male	Esan North East	High
17.	Pastor	Male	Esan North East	High
18.	Community leader	Male	Esan North East	High
19.	Pastor	Male	Owan West	Low
20.	Traditional ruler	Male	Owan West	Low
21.	Youth leader	Male	Owan West	Low
22.	Teacher	Female	Owan West	Low
23.	Women's leader	Female	Owan West	Low
24.	Family head	Male	Owan West	Low

APPENDIX 5 - VIGNETTES

"Now I would like to read you a story about an imaginary family in your community and ask you some questions about it."

Vignette 1 – Male – Osahon

Osahon is 22 and works on his family farm in Edo State. He has been looking for a better job for some time but without success. He has heard that life is better abroad and he decides to migrate to fulfil his dreams. He tells his parents about his plans and says that he knows a local man who can organise his travel across the desert and into Europe. He asks his parents advice.

1. How common is this situation in your community? (*what people do*)
2. Do you think Osahon's mother and father would approve or disapprove of his plans? (*what people expect me to do*)
3. What would you advise Osahon to do? (personal attitude)

Vignette 2 – Female – Ivie

Ivie is 24 and lives in Edo State with her parents. She runs a market stall selling hot food and does hairdressing from her home. One day a lady in the market approached her and said she could get a better job as a hairdresser in Europe, and make more money for herself and her family. Ivie is not sure whether or not to go. She asks her friends for advice:

1. How common is this situation in your community? (*what people do*)
2. Do you think Ivie's friends would approve or disapprove of her plan to migrate to Europe? (*what people expect me to do*)

Ivie decides not to migrate and tells her friends of her decision.

3. Do you think Ivie's friends would react negatively to her decision?
4. Would this negative reaction make her change her mind?

Vignette 3 – Female – Enogie

Enogie is 22 and lives with her family in Edo State. She has three younger sisters and two brothers. They do not have enough money to pay for school fees for the younger children, and her mother has been pressuring her to earn more money. One day, her mother suggests that she should migrate to Europe to earn money for the family. Another lady in the village says she knows people who can help Enogie get to Europe. Enogie agrees to migrate, to help her family.

1. How common is this situation in your community? (*what people do*)
2. Do you think people in Enogie's community would approve or disapprove of her decision to migrate? (*what people expect me to do*)

3. What would other people in the community think if she refused to migrate to Europe? (*sanctions/ strength of norm*)
4. If people in the community reacted negatively to her decision, would this make her change her mind?

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