

Adele Keke in 2011

Adele Keke is a wide, hilly midland *kebele* near the salty Adele Lake along the main road to Dire Dawa and Harar. The centre along that road is connected through asphalted roads to Haramaya (closest), Adeway (major chat centre) and Kersa (*wereda* centre). There is continuous public transport in all directions. Most of the 25 villages have safe water, 12 have electricity and the others are ready to pay the connection to EPCO. 80% people benefit from the mobile network available since 2006. With the chat boom (see below) every bit of arable land is cultivated, no communal grazing land is left and housing land has high value especially along the main road (for housing and shops). The population is almost entirely Oromo and Muslim; 11% households are female-headed and 11% are landless.

There is a strong perception that rains are less predictable and delayed (4 crop failures in 10 years, severe drought in 2004/5 and 2010). Even in good years rainfed production may feed a household for eight months maximum. A fourth of the households are on the PSNP though this is decreasing with graduation, which some people try to resist while others are fine with it. The big upward economic change is the booming chat production and trade, greatly facilitated by better access to markets and information and fast-expanding irrigation since Chinese road works showed that groundwater is easily reached in parts of the *kebele*. There is also some irrigated vegetable production. The *kebele* has been identified as high irrigation potential but the *wereda* support has been limited so far (awareness-raising, DA advice, limited credit for pumps and drips, fertiliser and improved seeds to be paid cash). The community wants the *wereda* to develop irrigation on a large-scale so that all farmers have access to water (rather than PSNP support). The *wereda* has identified the *kebele* as potential specialist milk producing area but similarly support has been limited. Improved breeds expand through people selling offspring to each other. A women milk production cooperative is 'on the way' of becoming operational (NGO support). A number of women are already engaged individually in milk trading, others in commodity shops. Some of those initially pushed by necessity have become quite successful. Landless/land poor people do daily labour or engage in chat trade. There is little migration of any type. Some successful businesspeople and farmers are young entrepreneurs but youth generally face difficulties in establishing an independent livelihood. The *wereda* has recently got them to organise in groups and choose an activity but there reportedly is delay in the promised credit.

The health post is unfinished and low priority as the community has easy access to public and private facilities in nearby towns. People's attitude to education is mixed. Religious and formal education compete in low grades. Many children dropout early or when reaching Gr9 as the nearest school is 90 min walk, girls to marry and boys to work in chat and raise an income. There are students in preparatory and university but few role models yet. Trends for women are mixed: little change and little action in relation to early marriage, female circumcision and political empowerment but some success in terms of economic empowerment and resistance to widow inheritance and some support to this – though these women are unable to remarry. The *wereda* has acted to lessen clans' influence allegedly leading to nepotism in the *kebele* administration. The latter is said to be weak which is also down to the fact that leaders are more concerned by their thriving economic activities. There is no sense of a strong like or dislike of government, although model farmers bitterly complained about the 15-day long training on GTP they were forced to attend during harvest time.