

# How are urbanisation and irrigation affecting food-deficit communities in rural Ethiopia?

## A comparison of two kebeles near Lalibela and Harar

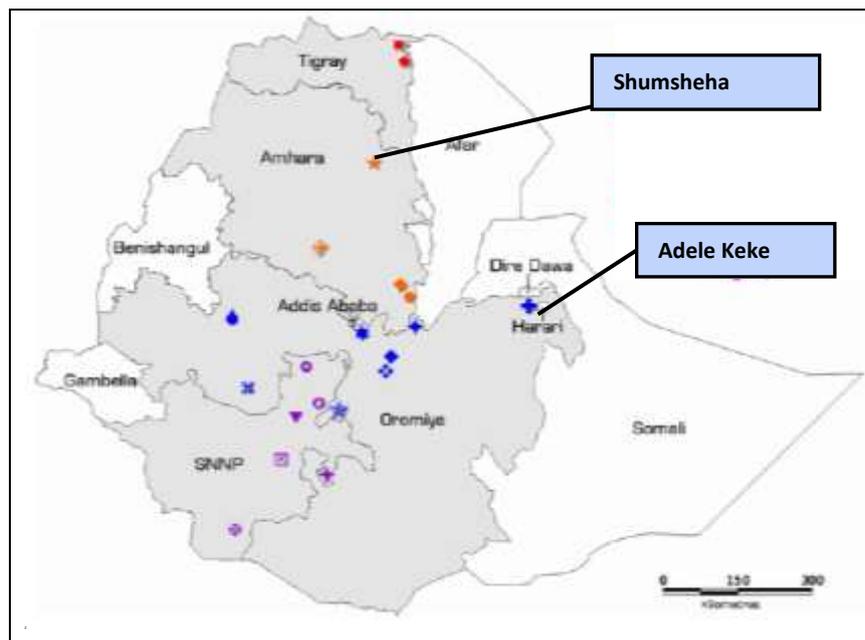
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### 1. Introduction

In this paper we explore the impact of urbanisation and irrigation on people’s well-being and livelihoods over the last two decades in two rural long-term food-deficit and aid-dependent communities: Shumsheha, a Christian Amhara North Wollo community nine kms south of Lalibela of around 4,500 people settled in nine villages; and Muslim Oromo Adele Keke with over 7,000 people living in 25 villages beside the main road from Harar to Dire Dawa.

**Map: Adele Keke (Oromia), Shumsheha (Amhara) and the other WIDE sites**



These two communities are part of the longitudinal qualitative research study Wellbeing and Ill-being Dynamics in Ethiopia (WIDE) which has been monitoring twenty rural Ethiopian communities since the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> The WIDE researchers understand the communities as complex systems with interconnected variables that interact not always predictably, and through this lens seek to identify synergies and antergies among development interventions, track past paths and spot potential tipping points and future trajectories. Each of the twenty communities is an exemplar case with lessons to be learnt for other communities in Ethiopia that have similar sets of characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup>The research was carried out by Mulugeta Gashew, Zelalem Bekele and Minilik Tibebe (1995/6), Samson Abebe and Selamawit Menkir (2003), Bizuayehu Ayele and Tesso Berisso (2011/12) in Adele Keke and Kelkilachew Ali and Million Tafesse (1995/6), Woubishet Demewozu and Tsega Melese (2003), Damtew Yirgu and Eyerusalem Yihdego (2011/12) in Shumsheha. The WIDE study has been led by Philippa Bevan, Catherine Dom and Alula Pankhurst, and Agazi Tiemelissan, Mengistu Dessalegn and Philip Lister also provided invaluable collaboration. WIDE data has been made through semi-structured interviews with a range of informants and interpretation involving triangulation and judgment. Numbers in the paper should not be taken as exact; they were estimates provided by informants.

Urbanisation and irrigation have emerged as critical issues for these two communities. As the two WIDE sites classified as peri-urban, urbanisation is an important change process for both Adele Keke and Shumsheha while irrigation has been identified by the local government as the springboard for both to transition away from food insecurity to become self-sufficient and sustainable local economies. In rural Ethiopia girls and women have traditionally been among the most vulnerable and therefore we will consider in particular the impact on them and assess how urbanisation and irrigation may change women's lives in the future.

This paper first outlines the community situations in 1995 (section 2) and then in 2012 (section 3) looking at historical context, society, local economy and livelihoods, governance, services and conditions for women, and draws out key similarities and differences between the two communities. Section 4 concludes by reviewing the potential future trajectories of the community, exploring the impact of urbanisation and irrigation on the longer-term viability of the communities' economic growth paths. The annex provides maps of the two communities and diagrams of the key linkages in 2012.

## **2. The communities in 1995**

### **2.1 Historical context**

Located on a plain and the rugged slopes below historic urban Lalibela, Shumsheha is an area of long-standing settlement. By the 1930s intensive traditional farming over many years had led to extreme soil exhaustion and deteriorating agricultural productivity which, combined with an extremely arid climate, led in the twentieth century to repeated famines. The Derg years brought forced army conscription for many Shumsheha young men, mass resettlements in response to famines in 1979 and 1985 (many of whom returned in 1991) and the introduction of disastrous Producer Co-operatives. The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) gained control of the area in 1988, with most of the fighting taking place away from Shumsheha in the western part of the wereda.

Adele Keke<sup>2</sup> is in East Harar Zone, Oromia Region, midway between Dire Dawa and Harar. The Oromo are thought to have settled on the Harar plateau in the sixteenth century and at the end of the nineteenth century the area was incorporated into the Abyssinian Empire. Adele Keke has suffered from long-term acute water shortage, chronic food insecurity and severe famines. In the 1970s-80s the Derg carried out unpopular forced villagisation, moving people into three sites, imprisoning and beating those who refused; by 1995 people had moved back to their old villages. In the early 1990s fighting between the Oromo Liberation Front and the EPRDF forces took place in the area.

### **2.2 Society**

Shumsheha is predominantly Amhara and in 1995 95% of the population were Orthodox Christians, with a very small number of Muslim families and craftworkers. The Amhara Christian majority considered Muslims, craftworkers and those identified as former slaves as lower caste groups; inter-marrying was not permitted. Kinship was traditionally important for mutual cooperation, with relatives obliged to support each other at times of death and crisis. In 1983 2,583 people lived in Shumsheha; of the 896 households 28% were female headed. Thought to have one of the highest fertility rates in the region, the population was growing unchecked, with children seen as gifts from God and important assets for parents in their old age. Polygyny was not customary though it was common for men to have mistresses and marriages were easily and frequently dissolved

By contrast in Muslim Oromo Adele Keke Islamic traditions governed the community's way of life. There were a few Amhara who had been assimilated to the Oromo way of life save their religion (Orthodox Christianity) and language (Amharic). Oromiffa was used in the daily life of the villagers and as the official language for schools and courts. There were a few blacksmiths who were despised. The clan system was strong and important for the social structure with nine different clans in the kebele acting as power and mutual support networks. The total population was more than 4,500 in 1995: on average women were said to give birth to six children. There were

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<sup>2</sup> According to an older male community member, Adele means 'white' and Key Key means 'no thank you' – referring to the salty lake and/or the steep uninhabitable areas of the *kebele*. The spelling on the *kebele* sign is Adele Key Key but the field researchers reported the spelling as Keke.

1,300 households of which 23% were headed by women. Most families were monogamous but polygyny was practiced with an estimated 10% of married men with more than one wife. Divorce was rare.

### 2.3 Wealth and household types

Most people in Shumsheha were living in extreme poverty: 95% of people were described as poor and those considered wealthy had only marginally better living standards. There were only six tin-roofed houses in the kebele and fewer than 50 people owned radios. A farmer with 6-8 *timad*<sup>3</sup> of land and a pair of oxen was considered rich. The poorest households were the landless (which included returned resettlers and demobilised soldiers), people without livestock, people with disabilities, and elderly or female-headed households with no labour for farming.

In Adele Keke people in the community were identified as being poor, middle and wealthy. The poorest people were those who did not have fertile land or only a very small amount and could not grow *chat*; they were often widows, those with many children and/or the old and sick. The wealthiest people in the community were those with *chat* plantations, a good number of livestock or who practiced trading in addition to farming. Luxury goods such as radios, watches and tape recorders were seen as status symbols but not more than fertile land or a good quality *chat* orchard.

### 2.4 Local economy

Shumsheha families depended on subsistence farming of cereals, legumes and oilseeds with some surplus sold at the local Lalibela market. Productivity was low due to the small landholdings, poor soil and extreme aridity; years of intensive cultivation had been exacerbated by population pressure and deforestation. Government had started investing in natural resource management activities, mobilising farmers for terracing and tree planting and establishing a free seedling nursery employing 20-30 farmers, but progress was slow. Ministry of Agricultural (MOA) extension agents visited the kebele only sporadically and farmers had limited access to fertiliser, pesticides and veterinary services. There was no irrigation. The shortage of grazing land and animal fodder constrained livestock numbers. The poor roads and bridges made it difficult for farmers to take their produce to market. There was no electricity, no telecommunications (not even in Lalibela) and no improved water sources. Strict observation of the many Christian holidays interrupted essential farm work. A considerable portion of the kebele's cultivated land was appropriated to upgrade to an all-weather airport in 1997/8; some farmers squandered their compensation money. Some richer households were starting to build houses and establish off-farm businesses such as selling firewood and *tella*. Poorer people worked as agricultural wage labourers, with men and sometimes families migrating to the neighbouring regions of Gondar, Raya and Kobo or as far as Setit Humera, and Kefa for the coffee harvest. The government started relief distribution activities in Shumsheha in 1992, providing free and untargeted food aid while the Ethiopian Orthodox Church provided food for the poor, elderly, people with disabilities and demobilised soldiers. However others in need (600 weak and disabled people at the time of the 1995 research according to the kebele chairman) were desperately waiting for government aid (there was a widespread bad drought in 1994/5).

In Adele Keke the farmers struggled with unpredictable rains and poor, stony soils frequently washed away by rainwater floods, especially after all the trees were cut down during the political instability in the early 1990s. There was some successful tree planting and terracing by the government and an FAO Food for Work programme, but at a slow pace, and establishing zero-grazing areas exacerbated the shortage of land available for grazing. As a result animal husbandry was a marginal activity. By 1995 the local economy had become heavily centred on *chat* production with more than 75% of the arable land covered with *chat* trees. Proximity to the main road enabled villagers to make frequent trips to markets to sell *chat* and buy agricultural inputs and other products in nearby Haramaya,<sup>4</sup> Dire Dawa and Harar. There was no irrigation so the *chat* farmers produced only one *chat* crop during the major rainy season when prices were low. The government agricultural extension service reached Adele Keke in 1984; in 1995 agents were visiting 36 contact farmers twice a month and follower farmers copied their use of new techniques and inputs. There was no electricity or telecommunications, but there were a number of improved water sources. There were few off-farm activities: a handful of shops and a few blacksmiths but no carpenters or other tradesman. Poorer people worked as daily labourers within the kebele. Migration was not

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<sup>3</sup>The amount of land that can be ploughed in one day; one *timad* is estimated at 0.25 hectares.

<sup>4</sup> Called 'Alemaya' in 1995 (the 'Amharicised' version) and 'Haramaya' in 2011/12, for consistency this town is referred to as Haramaya in this paper.

common; a handful of people had migrated to urban centres for education or work. As well as the Food for Work programme, other intermittent food aid programmes were run in the 1980s by UNICEF and USAID.

## **2.5 Governance**

The EPRDF introduced the new kebele and *got* structure in Shumsheha in the 1990s, with the new Kebele Administrations much wider in area and more autonomous than the former Peasant Association. There was a kebele council and also Youth, Women and Elders' Associations but the youth and women organisations were less active than they used to be. Elders were primary decision-makers, in particular on dispute resolution; community police dealt with thieves and murderers. The community was reported to be orderly and harmonious as it was quite homogenous and the few Muslims lived harmoniously in the community. The only political organisation active in the area was the Amhara National Democratic Movement (part of the EPRDF). There were allegations that the officials were unjust and corrupt, giving land unfairly to relatives, friends and those who could afford to pay bribes.

In Adele Keke in 1995 there was still political instability and rebel activity in the area. The community respondents had mixed views about the EPRDF and the policy of regionalisation. One respondent reported that the area was administered by two forces: when the community was called for a meeting by government officials in the daytime, the rebel forces would come at night and might attack people who went to the meeting. The Government was also trying to weaken the influence of the traditional clan leaders, including by imprisoning those found attempting to organise the community. Government officials and elders were reported to have begun to reinforce each other's authority; the elders were very important in the community, in particular with decision-making related to marriages and land. The Muslim Sheiks were also important influences.

## **2.6 Services**

The nearest health clinic (9 kms away in Lalibela) and hospital (119 kms away in Woldiya) were inaccessible and unaffordable to most Shumsheha farmers and they relied primarily on traditional medicine. There was a high incidence of malaria. People did not accept the family planning advice propagated by the health workers. The health workers visited Shumsheha once a month to vaccinate infants against typhoid. An elementary school was established in Shumsheha in 1988 and in 1995 there were 120 students enrolled up to grade six; less than 50% attended regularly. With insufficient classrooms and a lack of equipment as a result of looting during the civil war, the school had only recently got desks. No one in the kebele had completed secondary school; six students had transferred to the junior secondary school in Lalibela in 1995.

Home economic agents from the wereda agricultural office advised women in Adele Keke on nutrition and birth-spacing, but no women had started taking contraceptives. The nearest health clinic and drug store (with limited supplies) was half an hour away by car. Women give birth at home with traditional birth attendants. Vaccinations were provided to mothers and children but there was no special care provided either during pregnancy or after birth. In Adele Keke very few children from each family went to school; there was a government-run primary school built in 1984 that went up to the fifth grade and had 30 students, and seven small traditional Koran schools with 15 students each. Only eight students had gone on to secondary school in Haramaya.

## **2.7 Women in the communities**

Women enjoyed few rights in Shumsheha in 1995. Wives were subject to the authority of their husbands; it was socially acceptable for husbands to have mistresses and domestic abuse was condoned. However a widow could inherit her deceased husband's property and daughters in theory had equal rights to inherit their parents' property as men. Girls got married as young as 6-8 years old or in their early teens, with the parents' choosing their partners, and the few girls who went to school would drop out to get married. Girls (and boys) were traditionally circumcised shortly after birth.

In Adele Keke women were likewise second class citizens in the political and economic spheres. Widows would be looked after by the children rather than inheriting directly from their deceased husbands; a widow without children could inherit. Girls usually married between the ages of 15-18 with marriages arranged by the parents.

## **2.8 Key similarities and differences in 1995**

On the surface the two communities, located in very distinct areas of Ethiopia with contrasting religious affiliations (Christian/Muslim) and societal institutions (lineage/clans), were facing very different situations in

1995 with one still seeing considerable political unrest (Adele Keke) while in the other the EPDRF was more firmly in control (Shumsheha).

However, the two communities also had much in common. Both were facing recurrent drought and epidemics and the legacy effects of villagisation (Adele Keke) and producer cooperatives (Shumsheha) experienced in the 1980s. High rates of de-forestation, soil degradation and erosion, irregular and unpredictable rainfall, population pressure and acute land shortages were common problems. Both communities had undeveloped potential for irrigation and livelihood support in general: government assistance in the economic sphere in Shumsheha was said to be insignificant and in Adele Keke health clinics, schools and water points were ranked as more useful than fertiliser, credit, pesticides and improved seeds. Both were reliant on relief assistance and had under-developed social services and rigid traditional hierarchical social structures severely circumscribing women's economic participation and political and civil rights.

Adele Keke appears to have had two advantages over Shumsheha at this time: firstly Adele Keke was a long-time producer of the cash crop *chat*, and also potatoes, whereas Shumsheha farmers were only selling limited amounts of the surplus of their subsistence crops, and secondly Adele Keke already had better linkages with a wider variety of nearby urban centres while Shumsheha's poor road network and lack of transport cut farmers off from their markets.

An interesting difference in the coping strategies used by food insecure households is that seasonal migration played an important role in the Shumsheha economy while in Adele Keke people tended only to migrate at times of great distress such as a famine.

### **3. The communities in 2012**

This section looks at the two communities' situation in 2012 across the same parameters and reviews what changes have taken place since 1995.

#### **3.1 Society**

Grown to a population of 4,530 with 1,366 households, Shumsheha remains staunchly Orthodox Christian; the Muslim community in Shumsheha is now about 5-10 per cent of all households and there are still a handful of marginalised craftworker households. The population pressure on the land has intensified but countervailing government and NGO (Plan International) activities to raise awareness and provide free contraceptives and other reproductive services have had some success. Young families, who find it hard to establish independent households because of the lack of land, are having children later and practicing birth spacing. On the other hand community members report that stopping underage marriage is leading to a rise in unplanned and unwanted teenage pregnancies.

In Adele Keke there are 7,098 people living in 1,306 households, the majority Oromo Muslim with a handful of in-migrant Amhara Christian. Family planning has taken off in Adele Keke too: previously hard to come by, thought to have adverse side effects and against religious and cultural norms, today many women are using contraceptives, available for free from the health post since 2007. However some religious elders still preach against birth control, believing that Allah will provide to feed the child. If a couple cannot have a child, the man may marry a second wife but it is no longer common for men to have multiple wives.

#### **3.2 Wealth and household types**

There are still not huge differentials between the poor and rich, but it is now possible to discern poorer (25%), medium (50%) and rich (25%) households in Shumsheha. The poorest households in the kebele are the landless (now 28% of all households) and female-headed households (13% of all households) with many dependents. There are an estimated 300 dependent youth; one response to the lack of access to land has been a rise in informal (and illegal) land squatting on protected forest reserves. Today a household's status in the community is judged not only by its livestock holdings and farming outputs but also by the standard of the house (concrete blocks and metal roofs in central Shumsheha *got* or stone instead of mud in more rural areas) and other assets (e.g. TVs and satellites in Shumsheha *got*; battery powered home-made light bulbs in remoter hamlets; mobile phones; wooden furniture; plastic plates and utensils).

In Adele Keke all wealth groups have improved their livelihoods; today most of the community are classified as 'middle wealth' and poverty has decreased. The kebele manager is proud that Adele Keke is 'a rich place' and

wereda officials think that it will not need the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) support in the future. However the degree of change varies and while community members say no household has become worse off, 25-30% of the households have not shown any change. Landless households (11% of all households) struggle; 59% of female headed households are landless compared with 6% of male headed ones. Some female household heads are successful in establishing sustainable livelihoods but others struggle to cope with a low labour base, in particular if their husbands died after a long illness leaving large medical bills. Successful *chat* farmers are accumulating assets such as buying second homes on the main road to open up shops, constructing grain mills and purchasing improved breed milking cows to building new, larger and better homes and buying household goods like TVs, satellite receivers, beds, mattresses, blankets, carpets, kitchen equipment, water pumps and mobile phones.

### **3.3 Local economy and livelihoods**

While the majority of Shumsheha farmers continue to rely on subsistence staples, more farmers are starting to produce irrigated vegetables and fruits as cash crops that command higher prices. This growth is currently limited to the 10-27% of households who are able to access irrigation through schemes supported by the government (providing training and credit for equipment) and NGOs (financing larger river irrigation schemes). Meanwhile Shumsheha groundwater is pumped to Lalibela, covering 50% of the town's water needs since 2008/9. Farmers have access to training and inputs such as improved seeds and breeds from the three development agents resident in the kebele. The farmers complain bitterly of being forced (under threat of not getting PSNP support and other services) to take fertiliser on credit when the fertiliser is unsuitable for the local environment and does not improve yields. Most households keep an assortment of small livestock, some financed through PSNP household asset building credit; however animal diseases are an issue and, with no vet in the kebele, there are complaints of poor service by the wereda vet and the high cost of treatment at Lalibela. Other growth areas include honey production, with youth beekeeping groups given credit and support, and more non-farm activity by women (petty trade, local beverages, cotton spinning and sewing) and men (employment at the airport, cobble-stone production, migratory seasonal agricultural labour). However some women have stopped trading because they could not afford to pay for the license. Poor transport links and a lack of investment in all-weather internal roads, compounded by the higher-level government decision to construct a longer route from the airport to Lalibela that bypasses Shumsheha, means that despite its proximity to Lalibela the community does not have easy access to local markets. There are opportunities for young men to migrate to work as seasonal rural labourers in Metema, Kobo, Raya and Humera. A few young women (and some men) migrate to Addis and Saudi Arabia in search of longer-term work.

Since 2005 about 28% of Shumsheha people (40% of households) receive food and cash support for six months of the year from the PSNP and other households receive emergency aid (including richer Muslim households for the first time this year). When PSNP started there were complaints of unfair selection; there was a re-selection process with increased community participation and more poorer households were included. As there is not enough quota to give PSNP support to all those who need it, there remains conflict between the haves and have nots. The PSNP support has been a life-saver for the poorest and most vulnerable in the community (in particular those not able to work); other households have improved their consumption, avoided selling assets and invested PSNP-linked credit into income-generating schemes such as beekeeping and small livestock production. There are some accusations that a few PSNP beneficiaries are 'aid waiters': they wait for the PSNP support and do not try to improve their lives themselves, creating a culture of dependency. Since 2011 there has been pressure from the wereda to graduate people from the programme: half of the PSNP beneficiaries who contribute to public works as a condition of their support were asked to graduate in 2011 although they had not accumulated enough assets to meet the benchmark criteria.

In Adele Keke, every available corner is now used for growing *chat*; irrigated *chat* can produce multiple crops in a year, which sell at high prices at domestic and international markets. Wereda officials introduced irrigation techniques in the area around 2002; farmers also learnt how to tap into groundwater reserves by Lake Adele from watching Chinese construction of the main road in 2006. Today there are about 35 water wells and 106-146 water pumps in the kebele, and around 250 households benefiting from access to irrigation. Farmlands on the higher slopes of the kebele are too far away; some are trying to dig their own wells with encouragement of the development agents. Some women are making money from selling milk and a NGO-supported women's cooperative plans to give capital, training and equipment. The government has provided modern milking cows, but they are costly and demand outstrips the supply. Poorer farmers are struggling to afford fertiliser (which is not available on credit) and pesticides. The government is providing extension training through the three resident development agents and there is an assistant vet living in the kebele. PSNP linked credit has enabled some people

to invest in small livestock production while the emerging richer class is investing their *chat* profit in diverse business interests such as grain mills, transport (mini-buses), a Coca-Cola distribution centre and other trading activities. Adele Keke's position on the main road with frequent and affordable transport means the community has easy access to many nearby towns and markets (including Haramaya, Aweday – a major *chat* trading centre, Dire Dawa, Harar). There is still little migration; a handful of young men and women have travelled illegally through Somalia to reach the Arabian peninsula.

In Adele Keke PSNP has been provided since 2005; in 2011/12 18% of the population and 27% of households in the kebele were beneficiaries. Emergency food aid is given to about 8% of households each year for one or two months to cope with crises such as drought and associated crop and livestock failures. There has been controversy over the insufficient PSNP quota and unreasonable exclusions and inclusions, with rumours of nepotism and bribery by the targeting officials; the appeals committee is not trusted as the people on the committee are also the selection decision-makers. A large number of people have graduated already (97 households in 2010; 114 in 2011); some people forced to graduate in 2011 took their appeal to the wereda but the decision was referred back to the kebele. As a result of getting PSNP support the elderly and other people who cannot work have been able to hire daily labourers to work their land, thereby getting better yields than from sharecropping, while households with a large number of dependents but a low labour supply have been able to work their farms living off PSNP support rather than having to work as daily labourers and neglect their own land. Some people, including women, have used PSNP linked credit to embark on new income generating activities and accumulate assets.

### **3.4 Governance**

The kebele in Shumsheha is divided into three sub-kebeles and is administered by the kebele cabinet, headed by the community-selected kebele chair and facilitated by the kebele manager (a government salaried employee), and the 300 member kebele council (50% of whom are women) which meets every month. There are 40 development teams with 20-30 members organised into 1-5 groups to cascade extension training and organise community voluntary labour. Compulsory community-wide 60 days voluntary labour was introduced in 2009/10; no longer able to fine or punish people for not taking part in development works, the kebele chair thinks implementation has deteriorated. The Woman's Association (650 members) is active in improving women's enjoyment of their rights but the Youth Association stopped functioning in 2011 with the leader complaining of lack of wereda support. Government community leaders and employees are all from the EPRDF party and in total 400 people are paying (14 birr/year) party members; some party members dislike the expense and long meetings while some young people report wanting to be party members to get work opportunities, training and other benefits. There has been no open opposition party activity since the Coalition for Democracy and Unity dissolved. There are some complaints of corruption and nepotism among the officials, particularly at *got* level, but others say the kebele administration is working well and the kebele chair in particular is respected for listening to adversely incorporated groups (e.g. Muslims, craftworkers). Over the past decade peace and security has improved, with effective kebele militia (one team per *got*) and community policing according to wereda officials and community members; persistent issues include stealing and the rise in drink-fuelled fighting among disaffected youth.

Adele Keke's kebele cabinet has eight members (two female) of which four are salaried government employees and four are unpaid community members. Kebele community leaders resent being overworked for no reward and want to concentrate on their private *chat* trade. There are sector committees and close involvement of wereda officials. Absenteeism of the kebele council is a major problem, especially from the 23% female members, and fines for non and late attendance have been recently introduced. Adele Keke has 25 villages organised into three zones; kebele officials think the recently introduced 1-5 network is more efficient for disseminating information to the large kebele; problems have included 1-5 leaders prioritising their own farm work above their duties in coordinating their group. The relationship between the formal administration and the clans came to a head in 2007 when the then kebele chair was removed from his post to end clan-driven conflict; Adele Keke's clans are still important for informal social protection networks but no longer play a role (at least overtly) in formal governance decisions for the community. The Women's Association (900 members) actively supports women's legal rights and recently has facilitated access to economic opportunities for women by setting up village-level milk trading groups. The Youth Association is dormant but there are plans to start three income-generating groups for young people. There are 573 paying members of the political party and the same people are both government and party leaders. Some party members complain that they pay 12 birr annually for party membership but they do not get any tangible benefit; some others reported benefiting from access to information and services. Opposition has been effectively defeated: opposition parties campaigned in the area for the 2005 general election but not in 2010 and there are no active opposition party members in the kebele. The community has become safer and having electric light helps; there is still a lot of theft and the militia are accused of not doing enough to help guard the

*chat*. There are mixed views on whether there is more theft because the *chat* is more valuable or because there are more unemployed and disaffected youth in the community.

### **3.5 Services – 1) health**

In Shumsheha, at the health post and through house-to-house visits, two health extension workers with community volunteers and model households promote the health extension packages; raise awareness on hygiene and environmental sanitation; provide contraceptives and family planning advice; give mother and child vaccinations; and undertake UNICEF funded nutrition screening and provision of supplementary food. The HEWs are struggling to get the community to use latrines because they get damaged by termites; women prefer to go in privacy outside; poorer people do not have the spaces or resources. There is a health centre in Shumsheha but no doctor and there is no ambulance to take people to Lalibela in emergencies, including in the event of childbirth complications. Women mainly give birth at home attended by traditional birth attendants, who tend not to have training or equipment. Malaria is still the third most common disease treated at the health centre in 2009/10 but the incidence has lowered dramatically, with successful interventions such as bed nets, removing stagnant water, spraying houses. Anti-retroviral drugs are free for people with HIV/AIDS; social stigma still stops some from disclosing their status.

Access to health services in Adele Keke have also improved a great deal but with some constraints. Construction of the health post in Adele Keke has been delayed for many years; the health services are run from the privately rented room of one of the health extension workers. The two health extension workers, who started work in the kebele three years ago (2009), struggle to visit all the houses in the kebele as they are spread out over a large hilly areas; the health extension workers would like to have motorbikes and a fridge to keep vaccinations. The nearest health centre is half an hour away and there are no ambulances. There is a community volunteer in each village who helps train households in the health extension packages and monitors children and mothers for malnutrition, and traditional birth attendants as home deliveries are still the norm; however since the health extension workers were appointed the volunteers' training, equipment and per diems stopped. Activities to prevent malaria have been very successful in reducing the mortality rate largely thanks to the effectiveness of the village malaria prevention committees. Little work has been done on HIV/AIDS although there is some mobile testing (in particular of the militia and pregnant women); however, with stigma still high, no-one in the kebele is openly living with HIV/AIDS. The increased quantity of *chat* chewed by men may be leading to increased prevalence of gastric, liver and kidney problems, perhaps exacerbated by the use of DDT and other chemical pesticides on the *chat* crops.

### **3.6 Services – 2) education**

In Shumsheha attitudes and access to education have improved tremendously: the kebele (with the support of Plan International) has upgraded the old elementary school to a full cycle primary school (up to grade eight) and opened three pre-schools, a half cycle primary school up to grade four and two satellite schools. Rapid expansion means quality has lagged: classes are congested, materials and equipment are inadequate, teacher training is only slowly improving and there are very low examination success rates. Enrolment is still not universal (only 74% girls and 70% boys had enrolled for 2011/12 at the time of research) and the dropout rate is high: boys stop going to school to help on their families' farms while girls leave to get married. The overcrowded secondary school is a tiring two hour steep walk away in Lalibela; parents worry their children are exposed to bad urban habits and girls are particularly vulnerable (a girl was raped on her way to school a week before the research). Many students fail grade 10; even those that pass can find it hard to find a job after graduating. Some go on to the Lalibela TVET centre but poorer students cannot afford the fees.

Adele Keke now has four primary schools (one provides classes up to grade seven) with a total of around 1,100 students. There is also a community-built madrasa school (grades one and two) which is attracting children away from the formal schools. The schools are all very basic, with no electricity or running water and little equipment. The school director wants to resign as she feels officials blame her for children transferring to the madrasa school. The nearest secondary school (mainly for boys as the girls commonly drop out to get married) is 90 minutes away; some students walk or use public transport and those who can afford it rent a room nearby. Community awareness of the importance of education has improved, helped by the recent practice of celebrating the return of recent graduates, but overall parents still prefer their children to work on the farms or at home; as there are no role models of people who have completed school and then gone on to be successful, parents are not yet convinced of the difference having an education will make.

### 3.7 Women in the communities

Women's status in Shumsheha has improved with the implementation of government legislation on rights to property after divorce, land registration and inheritance. Violence against women has decreased. The majority of local elites continue to be men; some women play an important role through informal dispute reconciliation. Women are more likely to be absent from government meetings and when they do attend they speak less. Some husbands have started to help wives with domestic tasks such as bringing water and wood, but others resent 'disrespectful' women challenging the status quo. Economically women are taking advantage of new opportunities in petty trade and selling beverages, and a women's cooperative has had some limited activity in making and selling improved stoves. The authorities are clamping down on underage marriage with some success; however the practice of hospital age-checking is controversial, perceived to be inaccurate and parents try to cheat the system. Girls' circumcision has been largely eradicated.

Adele Keke has seen successful cases of women's rights being upheld in divorce cases. Wives and daughters can now inherit, although some say that because of the severe land shortage fathers only give *miraza* (land gift) to their sons. The practice of brother widow inheritance is much reduced compared with ten years ago. Many people report there are more economic opportunities for women, in small livestock, milk trading, other petty trade, and some, including female household heads, are establishing successful livelihoods. In contrast women's political participation in official kebele governance structures remains limited. Harmful traditional practices are still rife; underage marriage continues unchecked and the health extension workers' teachings against circumcision have only served to drive the practice underground.

### 3.8 Similarities and differences in 2012

By 2012 both communities had experienced considerable changes since 1995, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, education, health services, governance structures and life styles. The progress in health and education access to services is striking, and although now the concern is rightly on improving the lagging quality, the advances achieved to date are tremendous.

Turning first to irrigation, it is clear that this has become increasingly important in improving incomes in both sites, for farmers in Adele Keke able to supply growing local and international demand for *chat* and for fruit and vegetable cash crop opportunities in Shumsheha.

Adele Keke has been able to take advantage of 1) the established *chat* production culture and easy linkages to *chat* markets, situated as it is in the area known as the 'chat corridor', and 2) *chat* high prices. As a result the Adele Keke community has got increasingly richer, with the majority of the population benefiting, as *chat* money is invested in diversification of livelihoods and enters the local economy.

In contrast, the situation in Shumsheha has been less dynamic: the difficult access to local markets and the so far limited utilisation of irrigation across the community means that the benefits of irrigation have yet to impact on the wellbeing of the majority of the community.

In both sites there has been increased diversification of farm and non-farm opportunities, in particular for youth and women. The government has designated each site as specialist producers in new sectors: milk production in Adele Keke and honey in Shumsheha. There has been some NGO support (credit, training and equipment) in the sites to develop these livelihood opportunities, for individuals and groups. Meanwhile, thanks to their location near towns and markets, entrepreneurs in both communities have been able to set up petty retail, commodity trading and other urban-linked activities. Again Shumsheha's potential is being constrained by its poor transport links. Both sites have also started developing their own more urban administrative centre, where services, shops and cafes are conglomerated. In Adele Keke there is a move to build new houses and open new shops by the side of the main road to serve the passing trade.

In summary, in both places economic diversification has increased and rural-urban linkages are thickening (see the annexed linkage diagrams for further details). However, remoter villages and some people (the landless, people with disabilities, craftworkers, recent in-migrants) remain marginalised. In addition the lack of land and limited employment options for the (semi-) educated youth to establish their own livelihoods is a growing worry and both sites are experiencing the start of social problems from a growing cohort of disaffected youth. In Shumsheha seasonal migration continues to be an important route for youth (mainly young men) to access jobs, but in both sites other longer-term migration is still not taken up by many young people although some limited migration to the Middle East has started. It is striking that in both sites there has been lacklustre, unsuccessful

efforts to organise youth activities and common complaints of little wereda support. An exception are the youth beekeeping groups in Shumsheha which report some success.

Both sites have received PSNP support since 2005; they report similar conflict over selection and insufficient quotas, and both have seen some consumption-smoothing and some asset building as a result of the support received. While poorer community members report their continued reliance on PSNP aid, both sites have had large numbers of graduations in recent years, pushed from the wereda level and resisted by many of the graduates.

Government and party (in both sites almost indistinguishable) have infiltrated the communities to an unprecedented degree; people are participating more and more in local decentralised governance structures (e.g. sitting on the Council, as health volunteers, in school PTAs, as volunteer militia, in 1-5 groups) and many respondents expressed their desire to work to develop their communities. However multiple unpaid roles, training at harvest time and long meetings are resented, and there are reports of abuse of power by local officials in both sites and little recourse for the poorer or marginalised members to request accountability.

In both places, some women (including female household heads) have been able to take advantage of new economic opportunities that were not open to them in 1995, such as getting involved in petty trade and consumables (both), milk production (Adele Keke) and small livestock fattening (both). However widows or divorcees with many young children remain at risk of expending their asset base, without being able to establish new income streams. Women's enjoyment of property rights (divorce, inheritance) have improved in both communities; women's participation in governance structures is still marginal.

#### **4. Community trajectories: looking to the future**

This section considers how the common forces for change – irrigation and urbanisation – are affecting the trajectories of each community and considers where they might be heading, in particular exploring the longer-term viability of the communities' economic growth paths.

The traditional economies (rain-fed cereal and livestock holdings) in both sites are degenerating as a result of the structural limits of population pressure and diminutive landholdings, exhausted soils and increasingly erratic and low rainfall. The government has identified irrigation as the key to a more sustainable future and farmers interviewed in both sites are desperate for investment in irrigation; in Adele Keke some community members interviewed said they would rather have the government spend money on an irrigation scheme than PSNP support. The communities would also benefit from support to ensure that any irrigation initiative is developed as a public good, rolled out to as many farmers as possible with the benefits shared across the community.

Both sites could be on the brink of new futures, but it is not clear yet how fast or how much financial and technical support will materialise from the government and its NGO partners for irrigation development in these two kebeles, in particular when taken into consideration that these are two among the at least 18,000 kebeles in Ethiopia, many if not all of which have their individual critical needs for resources and support. There are also sensitive issues to tackle such as upstream and downstream competition for irrigation water, within the kebele and between neighbouring kebeles. There is also a risk that the demand will be higher than the actual potential.

Private irrigation schemes will no doubt continue to proliferate in Adele Keke, financed by the *chat* profit; the downside to this is that the farmers involved do not have a particular incentive to consider how to include the harder-to-reach farmers in remoter areas of the kebele. In Shumsheha the government may need to consider the trade-offs arising from using Shumsheha's ground water as Lalibela's water supply; with plans to pump more water from Shumsheha, this may give rise to conflict over water rights and whose needs are a priority – Shumsheha farmers or Lalibela town – in the future.

The new sectors of milk and honey production are potential growth areas for the sites in the future and there appears to be a lot of hope riding on their success. There is not much evidence of technical support on how to add value to the products and how to identify and link to markets. Without this type of assistance, and if the communities do not diversify into other sectors, there is a danger that the communities, as more people get involved and as irrigation increases productivity, could glut their existing markets (be it in *chat* – although less likely as this is the one export market; or vegetables, fruit, dairy products and honey). This risk is compounded by the fact that neighbouring kebeles are likely also all to be concentrating on the same products and developing irrigation where they can. A region-wide approach is needed.

The communities face opportunities and risks, potential tipping points, from the particular characteristics of their

peri-urban locations. For Shumsheha one opportunity is to consider how to tap into producing products and services for the 52,000 tourists<sup>5</sup> that pass each year through the airport in Shumsheha on the way to visit the UNESCO world heritage site, Lalibela. However, opportunities for Shumsheha community members to break into this market will be limited if they do not have the capacity, know-how, capital or influence to create linkages with existing operators (government and private); financial and technical support is needed. Meanwhile a major risk for Shumsheha is that the transport links remain under-developed, thereby stifling the emergent trading activities.

Adele Keke has the opportunity to use the *chat* money to diversify into trading and transport activities, in particular as development along the main road continues, sprawling out from Haramaya. However the *chat* trade, while lucrative and essential for the local economy, has resulted in the men in the community increasing their habitual consumption of the narcotic, which has concomitant social and health risks; in addition the *chat* corridor is a high risk HIV/AIDS area due to the flow of traders through the area while to date activities to reduce social stigma have not been successful.

Women's economic empowerment looks set to strengthen in both communities in the years to come, as the livelihood diversification and rural-urban linkages (resulting in incoming 'modern' ideas as well as products) continue to increase. Political empowerment is likely to continue to be constrained by the traditional patriarchal cultures in both sites, reinforced by the (different) religio-cultural norms in place that subjugate women's position in society. Nevertheless government actions to empower women within the formal governance structures combined with healthier, better educated and more economically independent women being better able to demand enjoyment of their rights offers some hope that the future will bring further change in this regard.

An overriding concern for both communities is the 'youth issue': the number of increasingly educated but unemployed youth is set to grow and it is not clear how the two local economies will be able to sustain them. Even with increased irrigation and the opportunities brought by thickening rural-urban linkages, there may not be sufficient prospects (quick enough) for the young women and men who are seeking to establish their own livelihoods. It seems likely that migration will continue to rise as a coping strategy, as young people weigh up the risks involved compared with the avenues open to them in the own communities. This will bring with it a new set of consequences for the communities, including incoming remittances and new ideas.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the Lalibela Culture and Tourism Department over 80 million birr (GBP 2.2 million) income was secured from over 52,000 tourists who visited tourist sites in Lalibela Town during the budget year 2011/12. [http://www.capitalethiopia.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1452&catid=45&Itemid=37](http://www.capitalethiopia.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1452&catid=45&Itemid=37)

ANNEX

Figure 1. Central Shumsheha Got, 2012



Figure 2. Shumsheha main external linkages

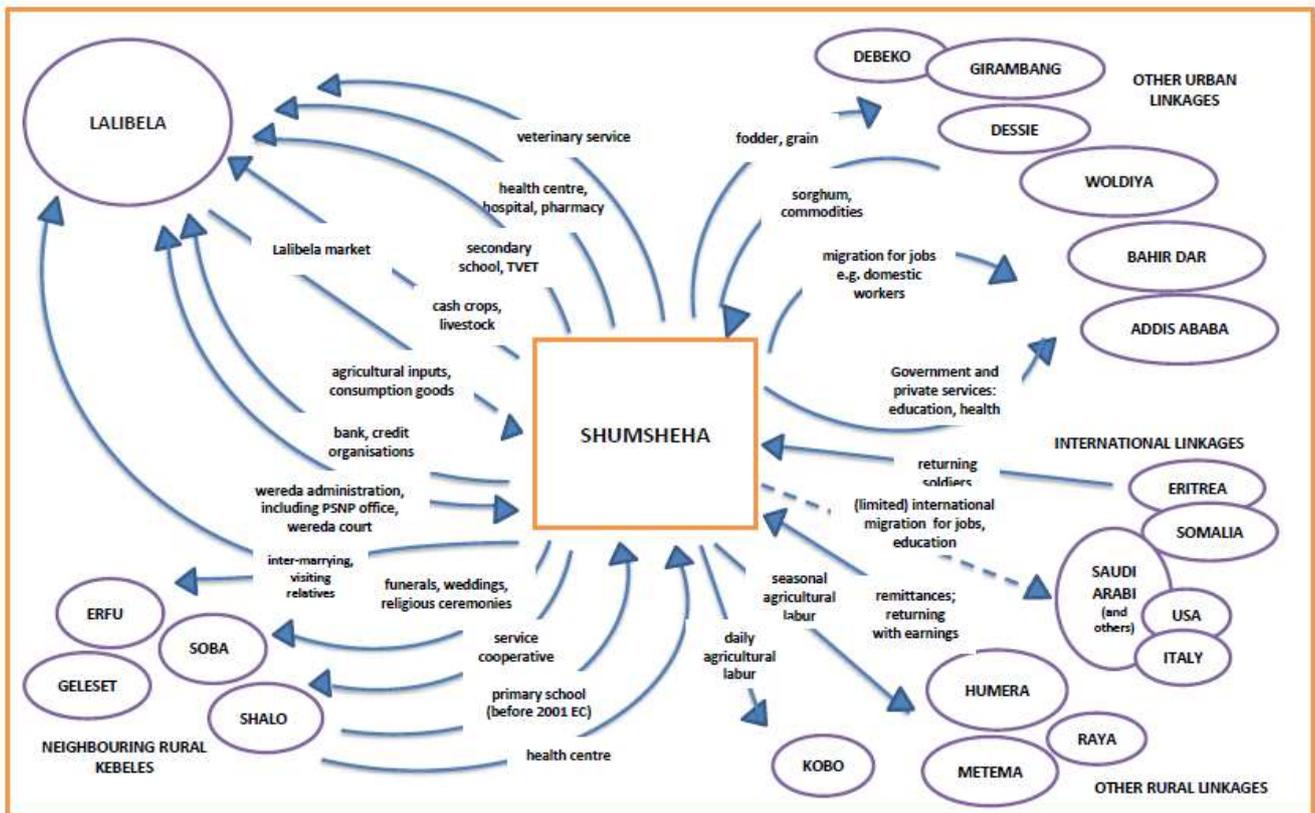
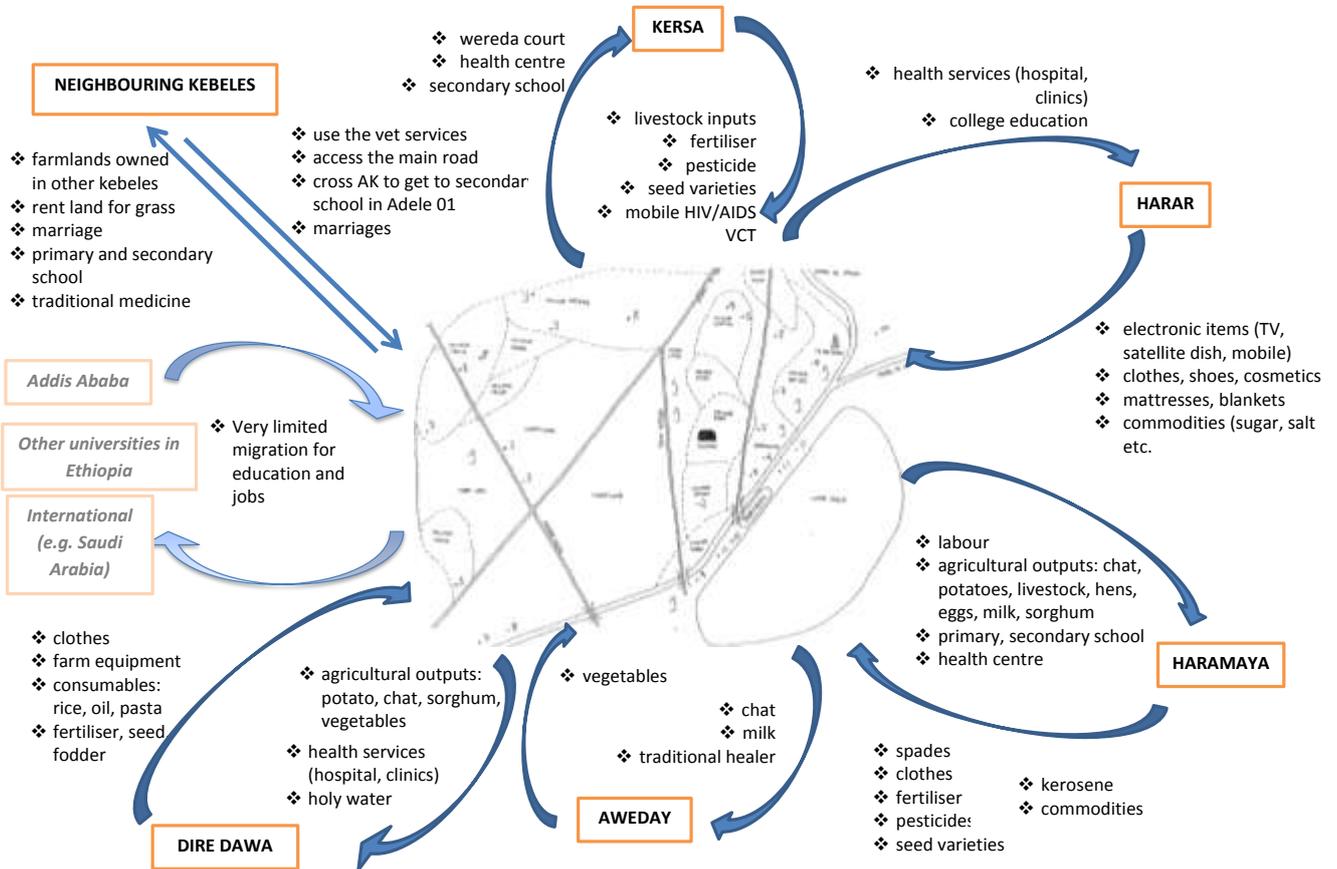




Figure 4. Adele Keke main external linkages



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