

Where are Ethiopian rural communities heading?

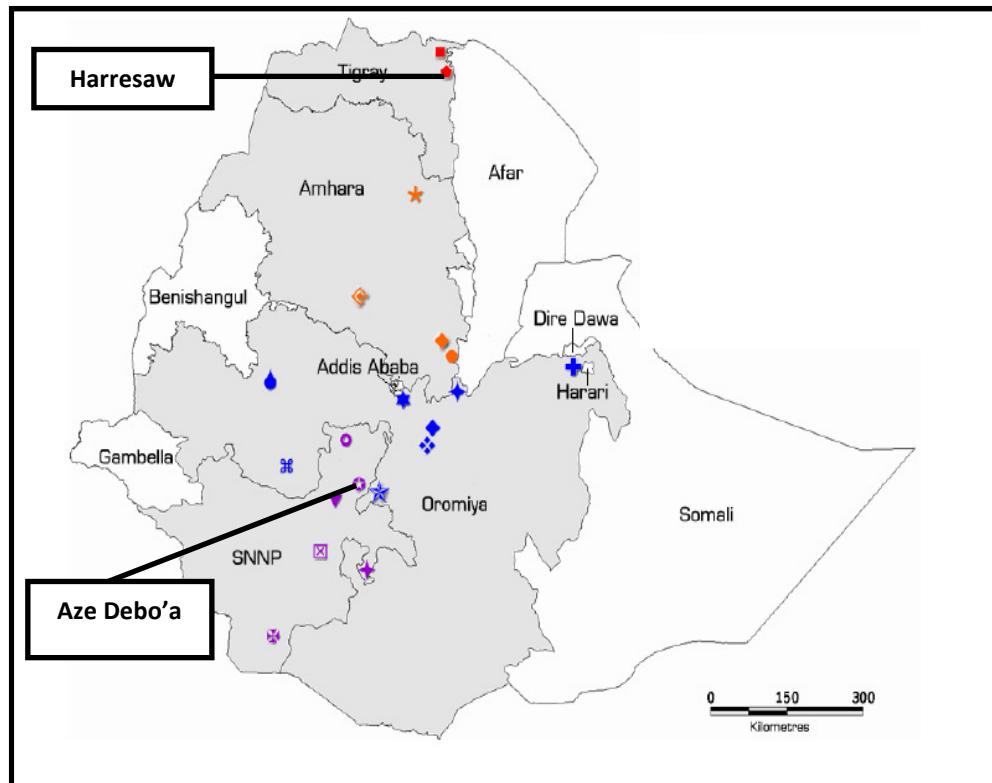
Youth, education and migration in two food-deficit communities in Eastern Tigray and Kambata

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1 Introduction

Ethiopian rural communities are the location where policy happens (not always as designed) through interactions between government and society (BEVAN et al 2012). The WIDE research focuses on twenty villages selected in 1995 as exemplars of the different types of rural (non-pastoralist) livelihoods identified then in Ethiopia (see map 1). In the ongoing research phase we document longer term trends (building upon data made in 1995 and 2003) and differences and similarities between and within communities with a view to trying to understand why in certain communities sustainable development processes have emerged and less so in others. In this paper, we compare the trajectories of Harresaw in Eastern Tigray and Aze Debo'a in Kambata/ SNNP, two food insecure communities among the twenty WIDE villages.

Map 1: Harresaw (Eastern Tigray) and Aze Debo'a (Kambata, SNNP) in the WIDE villages



In both communities migration has been a longstanding important element in the otherwise quite different local livelihoods. In 2012 we found that migration had remained important and patterns had significantly evolved especially in the past few years. Harresaw and Aze Debo'a thus emerged as most similar cases in relation to migration as a key parameter in their trajectories.

¹ The research in 2011-12 was carried out by Kiros Berhanu and Solomon G/Selassie in Harresaw, and Dename and Mulugeta Eyoel in Aze Debo'a, on the basis of which community situation reports have been prepared. I thank them very much for their contributions which made this paper possible. I also wish to thank my colleagues Philippa Bevan, Rebecca Carter, Alula Pankhurst, Agazi Tiumelissan and Mengistu Dessalegn for their collaboration and the J-GAM fund for financing the research.

Following this introduction, section 2 outlines what the communities looked like in 1995. Section 3 presents a snapshot of how each community looks like in 2012 and what important changes have occurred in livelihoods, social fabric and people's lives. The focus is in particular on youth, education and migration. Youth matter, for what they aspire to and do will significantly shape the communities' futures. Education and migration emerged as closely linked to youth. In section 4 we look into possible alternative futures for each community. We conclude that Harresaw and Aze Debo'a may be 'prototypical cases' helping to understand a phenomenon of growing significance that is, how international (mostly illegal) migration is changing prospects of development for certain rural communities in Ethiopia.

2 The Communities in 1995

This section describes each of the communities in 1995, focusing on livelihoods – including migration, the status of youth and education; and including a comparison of the main similarities and differences between Harresaw and Aze Debo'a at the time.

2.1 Harresaw

Map 2: Harresaw in 2012



As for Tigray as a whole the history of Harresaw is marked by war since well before and throughout the Derg and by repeated drought and famine hitting communities with no time to recover from earlier high mortality and mass livestock loss crises. For example, Harresaw lost 150 people in the 1985 famine. These disasters prompted migration on a very large scale at times. The upcoming of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in 1991 opened an era of peace, security and easier movement for people.

In 1995 Harresaw was a remote farming community, connected by a 17 km dry-weather road to the small wereda town Atsbi. There was 'no hope to get electricity' and no phone in the *tabia*. 600 of the 1,100 households were female-headed, in large part due to the war. The community was 99% Orthodox Christian and 100% Tigrayan.

Erosion was a big problem and the soil fertility had greatly declined. Recurrent drought severely affected the single annual production season in most years. The community had not yet recovered from mass livestock losses during the 1984-5 famine: there were farmers without a single animal. Land was distributed under the TPLF and this established women's rights to land. Up to 100

households who returned after the distribution were landless. There was shortage of land for young men. Most people felt that their landholding was too small.

Most crop production was for consumption, and insufficient. Fertilizer was little used because too expensive. People also kept livestock although herds were smaller due to losses during droughts, population pressure and pressure on grazing land. Farmers sold some honey, eggs, goats, butter and beles but little else and the market was fickle, varying hugely with the weather.

Most households combined farming with off-farm activities, indispensable to compensate agricultural seasonality and complement inadequate agricultural income. 300 people were involved in various local off-farm activities. Trade of salt from Afar was widespread. So too was labour migration (seasonal and as response to shocks). 150 people, mainly young men, migrated annually, mostly in Eritrea, a few in Adigrat and Afar and very few to Saudi Arabia, to work as daily labourers, in hotels or as house servants. Earnings were used for consumption, social obligations such as marriages, debt repayment, and investment (cattle) whenever something was left.

The community, known to have been better-off, was poorer than in the previous generations. But there were large differences between the very wealthy and the poor. The very wealthy included those households with relatives in Saudi Arabia.

There was no such concept as youth. Even when married and living in his own house, a son was in a subordinate position to his father. Young men's main concern was access to land to marry, but as little land was available they had to share their parents' plot. Young men were the majority among migrants.

There was one primary school with more than a thousand students in grades 1 to 5. Schooling competed with households' need for children's labour, so families might send the older or weaker children while others would herd. Both men and women thought that getting enough education was important to succeed in farming and off-farm activities and to be a better farmer's wife. However, there was no prospect for Harresaw children to go to secondary school, the nearest being at 42 km. Nobody had been to college or university.

The government helped the community by providing extension and fledgling vaccination services and by encouraging NGO activities. Under a rehabilitation programme targeting poorer farmers in particular, credit was available to get inputs, oxen, farm implements and small livestock; some of this was given for free. Extension agents visited and advised a few farmers on a monthly based and organised SWC activities. Through FFW the government had started the construction of an earth-filled dam for irrigation, which was expected to cover 130 ha. Since 1985 food aid was provided regularly when there was crop failure. It was highly appreciated and had prevented hunger deaths during the 1989-1993 recurrent drought.

In the local modern repertoire land was the most cherished possession and it should not be held privately or sold. There was no consensus on whether further land redistribution was desirable to address land shortage. Most people believed that the government priority to rural development and its attempt to 'organise people' and 'try to change their attitude' would benefit the community.

2.2 *Aze Debo'a*

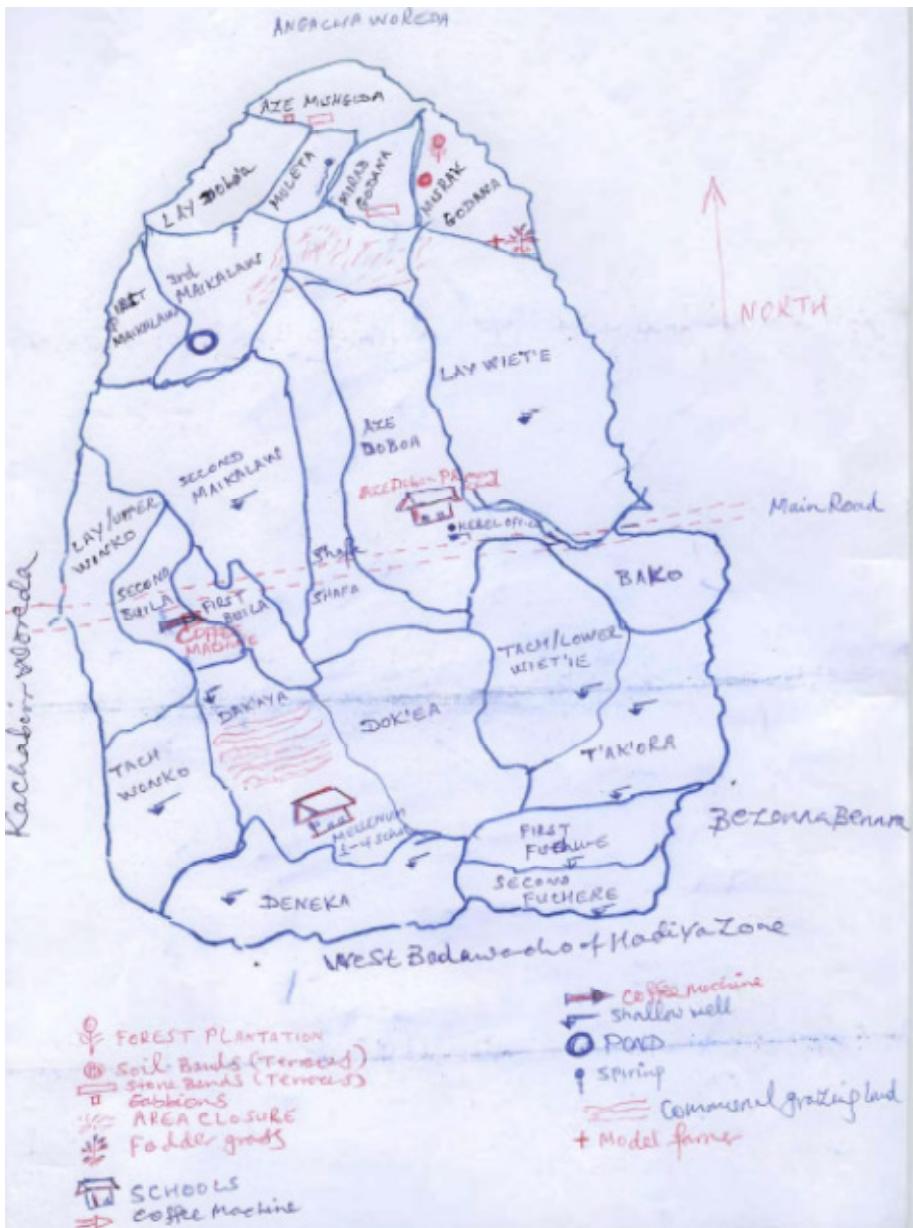
Aze Debo'a is in Kambata, a highly densely populated area with a longstanding tradition of clan-based state organisation. This was only minimally disturbed by the Amhara *gebar* system under the Emperors, as Kambata had very little land to offer. After the fall of the Derg traditional institutions gained power again. The community hated the Derg resettlement, military service and harsh tax policy; land reform created tensions; the literacy campaign was appreciated. The TGE brought new policies but their effect was not yet clearly felt in 1995. 1985 and 1994 were drought years: an unknown number of people died and many were forced to sell most of their cattle.

In 1995 *Aze Debo'a* (843 households) was connected to Durame, the wereda and zonal capital, through 4 km of an all-weather road. It was fairly remote as Durame like the Kambata zone as a whole had seen little infrastructure development. There was no electricity and no phone. There were few

female-headed households (60) although females largely outnumbered males due to the Derg and migration. Most people were Kambata, and a mix of Orthodox Christians, Protestants and Catholics.

Floods, soil erosion and greatly decreased soil fertility were aggravated by changes in the weather. The kebele had abundant water resources but there was no irrigation. The size of landholdings was decreasing as never before. 230 households were landless. Women had no land rights. Some people thought that further land redistribution was needed but this was controversial.

Map 3: Aze Debo'a kebele in 2012



The local economy in this very densely populated area was based on subsistence enset-based and some cash crop agriculture (coffee, chat and some eucalyptus), livestock, trade and migration. There was little use of fertilizer because of its cost. Livestock was very important: it was customarily kept in people's house and people took extraordinary care of them. There had been no epizootic but people had fewer livestock due to pressure on grazing land. Farmers sold eggs, butter and cheese for income.

Most households combined farming with non-farm activities including agricultural trade on local markets, trade in clothes and selling firewood, and various local services; a few were teaching and health and agriculture agents. Migration was very important. Nearly 50% families had at least one migrant.

People without education and money to trade migrated seasonally for daily labour in state sugar plantations and farms in Arssi or on private farms in neighbouring areas. A few migrants had modern professional jobs. Many were car owners or traders in Addis, Dire Dawa and other places. But the regionalization policy affected all types of migration.

There were large differences between wealthiest and poorest households. Migrant children sending remittances was a source of wealth. Indeed a wealthy son was expected to help his parents, who could ask whatever they wanted.

To marry, young men had to get an independent income as physical and psychological preparation to their life as responsible adults. This was becoming difficult as land was not available. Newly-wed established an independent household if they could afford and otherwise lived with relatives/parents. Youth as a social group was emerging in people's concerns.

Kambata valued education since a long time. However, due to school costs some households sent only younger/weaker children, keeping at home those better able to help and girls approaching marriage age; they might also consider school performance. 25% of the primary and secondary school age groups were said to be enrolled but there were many early dropouts. People thought that it was very important to be able to read, write and do sums and primary education mattered to be a good farmer. But students became idle after completing. Many high school leavers just assisted their parents in farming; some left to seek a job or were trading. The few college graduates were generally employed.

MOA had undertaken afforestation programme and terracing work and was providing outreach extension and irregular vaccination services. Crossbreeding and vet services were available thanks to local protestant church development branches. There was no credit. Starting in 1964 there had been food aid in bad years, then FFW started in 1970. Since 1982 there was cash for work organised by MOA, sometimes complemented by Kalehiwot church.

Generally, the TGE had brought peace and stability and the end of many hated policies. But people disliked the regionalisation policy causing many returns and hindering migration because of ethnic conflict, the lack of credit and the increasing number of jobless educated youth. They thought that devaluation, far from being beneficial to farmers as promoted by the government, was harmful.

2.3 Key similarities and differences

Both communities experienced conflict- and drought-related hardships before and under the Derg, with seemingly more local violence and higher famine-related mortality in Harresaw. In Harresaw the TGE was greeted as liberator. People were more reserved in Aze Debo'a. In both areas migration had traditionally been an important strategy to cope with war and famine in Harresaw, land scarcity in Aze Debo'a. In both communities resettlement (moving people) was a terrible memory, in contrast with migration (people moving).

In 1995 in both communities farming was undermined by deteriorating natural resources, high population growth and the weather vagaries, perhaps more pronounced in Harresaw (just two good years in the past decade). Land was the most cherished possession yet landlessness was a growing issue; in both communities there was a debate about further land redistribution. Migration, trade and other non-/off-farm activities were indispensable complements to farming. Trade seemed to be more important in Aze Debo'a where cash crops were grown and the wereda centre was closer and more easily accessible. Migration in Aze Debo'a was also more diversified, linked to the average higher education level reached in this Kambata community. However, it was also undermined (especially skilled migration) due to the regionalisation policy which was therefore exerting a double pressure: forcing people who would have migrated otherwise to stay and forcing others to return.

Government activity in the livelihood field seemed more intense in Harresaw, linked to the post-Derg rehabilitation programme. Irrigation was being developed. In Aze Debo'a people were more critical, highlighting problematic policies including regionalization, devaluation, and the lack of credit.

In both communities education was valued but competed with households' need for labour/income, especially in poorer families. For young men in both communities one major concern was to raise an independent income and this was becoming increasingly hard. In Harresaw this was linked mainly to

lack of access to land. In Aze Debo' a concerns about the lack of return from longer studies and underemployment of more educated youth were emerging whereas going beyond primary education was not an option for Harresaw's children.

3 The Communities in 2012

This section paints a picture of the communities in 2012, focusing again on livelihoods, migration, youth and education.

3.1 Harresaw

In 2012 erosion, land overuse and low and declining soil fertility continue to be big issues in spite of intensified but long-run government-led rehabilitation activities. Recurrent drought prevails with more erratic rains. In 2008/9 a severe drought decimated the community's livestock. Like in 1995 more than half of the households are female-headed though this is now no longer due to war/conflict but primarily to migration.

Landlessness has increased with the ever increasing number of newly-formed households. A few got residential land around the *tabia* centre. Land declared unoccupied according to the new regional land law and wet communal grazing land was reallocated as farmland twice in the past four years for landless groups including youth. However, these measures are widely insufficient. Land value is rising and some transactions are now monetised. People with no other option rent out land to repay loans.

A small centre is emerging around the relocated *tabia* administration, with electricity since 2008/9, a wireless phone and mobile network coverage. Rich households invest in houses in nearby towns. An increasing number of families have relatives or children in town, for business or studies. The use of mobile phones is rapidly increasing (migrants send or bring them back), connecting people to markets, relatives and migrants. The road Atsbi-Dera is now all-weather with daily (but costly) transport. The development of inside roads has lagged behind, which hinders livelihood activities and access to markets and services including from the *tabia* centre as it no longer is alongside the main road.

Credit is widely available for farm and non-/off-farm activities, in cash and kind, from the local branch of the regional MFI (DECSI) or from the wereda agriculture office through the *tabia* multiservice cooperative. The *tabia* has a justified poor reputation in relation to repayment. Youth can get credit but they are less trusted as they take loans then migrate with the money. Views about credit are mixed, with both success and failure stories. Some loans are 'forced' onto people and when the weather fails the whole community plunge in debt, like after the 2008/9 drought which prompted a sharp increase in illegal migration abroad as the best option to repay failed livestock loans.

Irrigation is a potential for 15-20% of the community, and the government has the community further invest in it through PSNP public works. However, this does not fully offset the effect of weather vagaries because all irrigation schemes depend on the rains. With crossbreeding and veterinary services available nearby and inflation in the past few years leading to skyrocketing market prices, livestock production has also emerged as a potential. However, drought and diseases make it a risky business and fodder availability is a constraint. Officials believe that on average, people's agricultural income has much increased in the past four years with higher production and output prices and easier access to markets. Daily labour is on the increase (irrigation, work on migrants' farms) and much better paid than the PSNP public works.

However, households continue to have to rely on non-agricultural livelihood options. This includes PSNP PWs (hardly more than a small complement for better-off households), a few new non-/off-farm activities linked to petty urbanisation and services (e.g. running shops and drink houses in the *tabia* or nearby towns, locally paid jobs like phone operator), and trade which may have increased too.

Migration has if anything increased in importance, with several big changes. Migration to Eritrea has stopped as the border has remained closed since the Ethio-Eritrean war. Seasonal agricultural migration has decreased as daily labour jobs are available locally for much of the year. The biggest change is a sharp rise in illegal migration to Saudi Arabia, initially as a coping strategy following the debt crisis prompted by the 2008/9 drought and now gradually turning into a way to meet an expanded

range of consumption needs and to get investment capital. This trend has multiple effects at individual, family and community levels. Migration injects new ideas and flows of money much larger than PSNP in the local economy. It deepens the community's links with towns as migrants and their families invest there and landless returnees may decide to live there.

Thus in spite of the setback of the 2008/9 drought many in the community are on an upward trajectory, with irrigation, livestock production and migration as new sources of wealth. Migrants and their families, in particular, are said to be much better off.

Attitude to and expectations from education are in flux. Most families attempt to send their children to primary school, although poorer/more vulnerable households face more difficulties. The opening of a secondary school in the neighbouring tabia makes it much easier for girls and boys from Harresaw to attend Gr9-10. An increasing number of children make it to university, for which families sacrifice a lot. In 2012 there were 20 graduates and 29 more studying in various universities. But children's and parents' expectations are also dampened by the many failures at exams, the high costs of pursuing even government-sponsored education, and the lack of job opportunities.

So, there is also growing 'hopelessness with education' and in contrast, the hope of making rapid gains through migration is snowballing. In spite of high risks and hardships, incentives to migrate are very high for youth whose access to land, jobs and capital to 'change their life' is severely constrained at home. Better-off migrant returnees, trading in shops and living in town instead of toiling on the land are the youth's new role model. Support from grown-up children continues to be critical and migration enables them to support their families better. In contrast youth staying at home fuel landlessness, which in turn fuels tension between generations, at family and community levels. At the same time, youth's lack of voice in the community is recognised as an issue, and the community believes that the government pays insufficient attention to the issue of youth joblessness.

In the expanding 'local modern repertoire', migration divides the progressives into two camps, those who see it as positive or at least, inevitable, and those for whom it is not desirable.

3.2 *Aze Debo'a*

Floods and erosion continue to be harmful in spite of increased but long-run government and NGO-supported SWC activity. People report decreasing groundwater levels, declining soil fertility, more erratic and less rain. There was drought three out of the past five years. In 2008 all crops failed and 35 children and elderly people died of hunger and related causes due to wereda officials reporting late on the need for food aid in addition to PSNP.

With population growth and continued returns, average landholdings have become very small and landlessness continues to get worse. There is a start in enforcing women's rights to land, established thanks to the land certification completed a few years ago. Land is unofficially rented, at high prices. Some families sell plots to get capital for migration.

Public buildings, a few modern houses and one shop make a small centre along the main road, where there is electricity since 2009. Phone services are also available with a wireless phone (2009) and 200-250 mobile phones as the network reached the kebele in 2010. However, the main urbanisation trend seems to be through intensified links with Durame; as access becomes easier with the ongoing road asphaltting Aze Debo'a might well become a distant suburb over time. These urbanising trends are fuelled by investment with migration savings or remittances. Progress in developing inside roads has lagged behind and parts of kebele remain inaccessible by vehicle.

Credit is available in Durame but in the kebele only a few small-scale and targeted schemes have been organised by the government and NGOs, with limited success. Many want credit to be readily available, although successful people usually got capital through other means (coffee trade, migration).

More cash crops are planted than in 1995 (eucalyptus in government-promoted woodlots, coffee which has reached high market price) but not by the many households with small plots. A third of the community has invested in hybrid livestock thanks to government crossbreeding services and as a response to skyrocketing market prices, although limited availability of fodder and lack of access to

capital constrain this potential. Irrigated vegetable and fruit production has been undertaken privately by a dozen farmers. The community wants the wereda to help further investment in irrigation which has a lot of potential, but budget constraints have prevented this.

Agricultural trade seems to have increased, mainly on local markets. This ranges from small-scale activity for many households with many young women and men getting an income as small-scale retailers, to larger-scale trade in coffee, grain, livestock and eucalyptus. A few coffee traders have links with markets in Addis. Larger-scale trade is a source of wealth for better-off households. There seems to be potential for greater market integration.

So, on the one hand, market prices encourage local production. But given the scarcity of land only a few households produce surpluses; and all are affected by the skyrocketing prices of foodstuff, services and agricultural inputs. The local farming economy is not self-sufficient. Local wage labour, which was said not to exist in 1995, is now the main income source for 42 adult men and many young men. Others are registered as government or NGO employees (53) and businesspeople and skilled workers (32). A few people get an income offering transport services. A few hundred young women and men (mainly women) work on a recently built coffee plant for 3-4 months in a year, slightly better paid than unskilled daily labour.

Migration has remained very important in the local economy, with several significant changes. Male seasonal migration in Ethiopia has decreased, and longer term illegal migration abroad has emerged as a major new trend. Males increasingly go to South Africa. Women have started to migrate as well, something unthinkable a decade ago and which represents one aspect of women's comparatively greater freedom. They migrate in Ethiopia to work in flower factories, private farms and as housemaids in Addis and Awassa. In the past two years they have also started migrating to the Arab countries, as housemaids. The investment required, especially to go to South Africa, is considerable and risks are high. But the gains in case of success seem to also be considerably higher than in the past.

It is unclear whether the community is wealthier as a whole. People talk about proportionally more poor, very poor and destitute households in 2012 (60%) than there were households in poverty in 1995 and in 2003². But there are very wealthy households, and the difference between wealthiest and poorest may have increased. Migration is one factor behind some of this wealth. There also seems to be a sense among hard working rich/better-off that some of the PSNP beneficiaries are 'non-deserving poor' who do not do what they should to improve their life.

Kambata society has a longstanding tradition of valuing education (e.g. in one family four daughters graduated from university more than ten years ago). So, just 2% of the primary school age children are not enrolled. However for poor families, like in 1995 the loss of labour/income of children at school is an issue. If they are not supported those children often attend irregularly, drop out early or are not able to continue their education even if they pass the exams. But generally, expectations of a better life linked to education used to be high. However, these are now challenged: many children fail at exams, unemployment of educated youth from the kebele is counted in the hundreds, and the prospects of rapid gains through migration lure many. An increasing number of students drop out early, from Gr6 onwards. The Gr1-8 school head teacher fears a snowballing effect.

Indeed illegal migration abroad is mainly by young people. At home youth lack livelihood options and prospects; they are often dependent on their parents longer than in the past. Migration partly mitigates what otherwise might give rise to intergenerational tensions; it also allows grown-up children to support their families, as is expected in Kambata society. However, the community is troubled by this lack of any other prospect for the young generation. Already in 1995 the lack of opportunities for the youth was raised as a big issue over which the government needed to be more active. In 2012 there is a sense that government action is increasingly irrelevant for the youth. In contrast the young generation is fully involved in the Protestant Churches which 95% of the community now belong to.

The local modern repertoire in Aze Debo'a is wide-ranging. Migration is part of it in two ways: for some people it is desirable or at least inevitable whereas for others it is unacceptable. There is a sense

² The 1995, 2003 and 2012 data is not fully comparable, but gives an idea of the trend.

that the illegal nature of this migration and the lack of any protection by the government are not acceptable. While the much influential Protestant Churches do not directly intervene in this debate, it is likely that the Protestant ethic, stressing the importance of hard work and encouraging people to ‘improve their life’ and get wealthy, indirectly contributes to strengthen the attraction of migration. Migration also influences the way in which young people think about leading their life on their return: many migrants invest in businesses straddling urban and rural livelihoods.

4 Past and future trajectories

This section first outlines the past trajectories of the two communities between 1995 and 2012, highlighting similarities and differences. We conclude the paper by conjecturing on possible futures, noting that in both Harresaw and Aze Debo'a, international migration has the potential of shifting the community on a structurally new path.

4.1 1995-2012 trajectories

In both Harresaw and Aze Debo'a there is continued pressure on and perceived deterioration of natural resources and decreasing land fertility. Government-led rehabilitation activities have intensified but their effectiveness is seen as long term in any instance. The weather has changed; rains have become more erratic; drought has continued to recur in Harresaw and seems to have become more frequent in Aze Debo'a. Landlessness has been and is increasing and the young generations face the prospect of ever more constrained access to land. In Harresaw the government is trying to address this through legally-based land reallocation but it is far from being sufficient.

At the community level agricultural income has increased, thanks to higher livestock production in both and irrigation in Harresaw, expansion of cash crop in Aze Debo'a, high market prices for farm products and easier access to markets. In Harresaw there is a sense that an increasing number of households are on an upward trajectory started about five years ago. However in both communities agricultural potentials and returns are unevenly distributed among households and on the whole the farming economy is not self-sufficient in either community.

In these contexts, raising and unmet expectations of the young better educated generation (failures at exam, high costs of higher education, unemployment of educated people), land scarcity and greater weather uncertainty undermining farming as an option, limited access to attractive alternative options and greater exposure to ideas and information from outside, led to increased levels of (mainly youth) outmigration. Outmigration is not new in either community but patterns have changed, with less seasonal agricultural migration elsewhere in Ethiopia and more international illegal migration, now also concerning young women.

Economically, in Aze Debo'a lack of access to credit is said to be among the factors pushing people to migrate. In contrast in Harresaw, it is the widespread indebtedness after the 2008/9 drought which prompted a sharp increase in migration abroad in the first instance; now some youth borrow to migrate (under other guises); and migration is still a way of repaying debt. Now in both communities successful migration abroad has a big impact on the migrants' families in terms of both consumption and investment. It injects large flows of funds in the local community economy but also beyond as migrants and their families invest in urban areas or in businesses linking urban and rural areas and often at least some members of the family migrate there. In both Harresaw and Aze Debo'a one factor tying migration more specifically to youth is a growing sense of hopelessness with education, ironically at the same time as opportunities to reach higher education levels are opening up for more young people.

Socially, on the one hand youth have emerged as a social category in its own right in both communities. Yet, while in the government discourse they represent the future, in practice they emerge mainly as a ‘problematic’ category (ANYIDOHO et al 2012). Youth lack voice in both communities; in Aze Debo'a the sense of disenfranchisement may be stronger and is linked to their potentially standing in opposition to government. The current situation is also problematic for the communities as the difficulties that the youth face in establishing independent livelihoods undermine the social norm whereby grown-up children in turn support their parents. Under the circumstances,

migration becomes the best hope for young people to meet these family and social expectations in addition to their own aspirations.

In both communities, the ‘progressives’ are convinced that non-/off-farm activities are indispensable and beneficial, and the shift of at least a part of the young generation away from farming is seen as somewhat inevitable. But illegal migration abroad sharply divides them into two camps: those for whom it is desirable or at least inevitable and those for whom it is unacceptable. In Aze Debo’ a in addition, there are people stating that the government should make legal migration easier and ensure that the rights of migrants are protected. While the debate goes on, migration abroad impacts the communities’ social fabric as much as their economies. It has a powerful influence on youth’s role models and might well continue to snowball.

The size of this phenomenon in terms of estimates of numbers of people involved, costs and potential returns differs between the two communities. In Harresaw several hundred people leave every year (350-500) including young women (50 last year, 5% of migrants). The journey costs 4,000-5,000 birr. Families rent land, sell assets or get money from migrant relatives to be able to send someone; or individuals borrow. In Aze Debo’ a about 20 young men undertake to migrate in South Africa every year; in 2011, 50 young women left for Saudi Arabia and this was increasing. The trip to Saudi Arabia costs 7,000 birr. For South Africa it is 30,000 birr for the riskier and longer route, and 100,000 birr for a bribed visa allowing direct travel. Families sell land, woodlots and other assets or get funds from relatives who have already migrated. Young men pool funds and send one of them who then send money for the others to join.

In Harresaw savings/remittances amount to tens of thousands birr. One man explained that he had 50,000 birr in debt payment, savings and remittances and was able to build a house in Harresaw in addition. Others build houses in Atsbi or Wukro or invest in a truck. Young women may invest in starting-up a shop. In Aze Debo’ a returns appear to be much higher in some cases. For instance one young man who was first robbed 100,000 Rand, saved another 1.4 million birr in addition to sending remittances (25,000 birr several times); he invested in a house, a hotel and a truck in Durame. In both cases, some people also involve in illegal activities which could have much higher return still, but are even riskier.

So at first glance, migration in Saudi Arabia in Harresaw is more widespread than to South Africa and the Gulf in Aze Debo’ a; but returns are potentially much higher in Aze Debo’ a for migrants in South Africa, and the trend of young women leaving for the Gulf is only starting.

4.2 Possible futures

In both communities, possible futures will depend on the balance that will emerge between farming, agricultural trade and off-/non-farming activities. This in turn will depend on how much it will be possible to make farming less perilous, how fast infrastructure development facilitating further market integration will occur, and how much it will be possible to open up attractive non-/off-farm options, locally and elsewhere, for the growing number of better educated young people – in and around each community. Aze Debo’ a may be better placed on the latter two counts: it seems likely that in future it would be increasingly connected to Durame and the asphalting of the main road to other zones and cities should accelerate the development of Durame and its suburbs as a trading and service centre.

In relation to farming in both communities the limiting factors are structural (small landholdings, deteriorating weather and natural resources). Bar a drastic change in policy in relation to land rights these factors will not change (landholding size) or only slowly (size of investment and time needed to rehabilitate natural resources). Aze Debo’ a may again have an advantage as it has yet to tap its irrigation potential, although this would need to be done cautiously. In Harresaw it is not clear that the irrigation potential can be pushed much higher than it currently is.

In all likelihood migration – and within this migration abroad – will remain a necessity. In spite of the high risks migration abroad may well continue to increase in its illegal form. Its deep impact on the communities’ economy and social fabric and in particular, the strengthening of the rural-urban links which migrant returnees and their families prompt are likely to put the communities on a structurally different trajectory. Whether this trajectory is upward, stagnating or downward will depend (among

other factors) on the sustainability of international migration as an option. This in turn will depend on how the government will handle this policy issue.

International examples of countries like the Philippines and Indonesia show the benefits of facilitating legal migration abroad (helping people to move instead of wanting to move people). Although it has costs, politically and economically, this approach may well have to be part of those that the government considers in order to thrive toward ‘green and sustainable development’ in some parts of the country.

Annex: Comparing migration in 2012 in Harresaw and Aze Debo'a

	Harresaw	Aze Debo'a
Past pattern	Seasonal outmigration to Eritrea, Afar, other areas in the Region (e.g; Humera), for daily labour (farm and non-farm, e.g. construction), mainly male	Seasonal outmigration to neighbouring areas for agricultural labour or on sugar estates, state and private farms (e.g. Arssi); outmigration for professional jobs (a few) and trade and service jobs in big cities hindered by regionalisation. Migration entirely male.
2012 pattern	<p>Migration to Eritrea stopped; seasonal migration for agricultural work much decreased as daily labour opportunities are locally available; still some migration in Afar.</p> <p>Large and increasing illegal migration to Saudi Arabia, mainly by young men (farming, construction work) and an increasing number of young women (domestic workers).</p> <p>Coping strategy following mass debt due to drought in 2008/9 now turning into a welfare-enhancing and investment strategy.</p>	<p>Major new trend: longer term illegal migration to South Africa for mainly young men (mainly petty traders), and (since 2 years) to Arab countries for young women (as domestic workers). Female migration elsewhere in Ethiopia (factories, farms and cities). Male seasonal migration in Ethiopia much decreased.</p> <p>Response to land shortage and lack of job/underemployment of educated youth.</p>
Numbers involved	Several hundred people from Harresaw leave every year (350-500) including young women (50 last year, 5% of migrants); 120 people from one kushet were living in Jeddah in early 2012. Even teachers migrate (37 in 2010/11 in the wereda including head teacher in Gr1-8 school of Harresaw).	On average 20 young men every year travel to SA; in 2011, 50 young women left for Saudi Arabia.
Costs	A few thousand birr (4,000-5,000); costlier for women. Families rent land, sell assets to be able to send household members; relatives already in Saudi Arabia send money to pay for others to join.	<p>Trip to Saudi Arabia: 7,000 birr.</p> <p>Considerable investment for SA: not less than 30,000 birr for riskier and longer route; 100,000 for a bribed visa allowing direct travel. Families sell land, woodlot and other assets. Migrants send funds. Young men pool funds, send one of them who will later send money for the others to join.</p>
Potential benefits	<p>Men's salaries 6,500-12,500 birr/month; women's salaries 6,000-7,000 birr/month.</p> <p>Savings/remittances can amount to tens of thousands birr. E.g. 50,000 birr (debt payment + savings + remittances) + house in Harresaw; houses in Atsbi or Wukro; investment in car/truck; young women investing in shop start-up.</p>	<p>Gains if successful are considerable. Two young men from the area became millionaires and have big shops in SA.</p> <p>E.g. man robbed 100,000 Rand, saved another 1.4 million birr in addition to remittances (25,000 several times); invested in house, hotel and Isuzu truck in Durame.</p>

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