# Interviews with key development actors in Aze Debo’a kebele, Kedida Gamele wereda, Kembata, Oromiya

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## Community public goods

### Guard – National Park, community forest…..

I am married, thirty four years old and a father of five male children. I completed grade nine fifteen years ago. I became a guard for community forest since 2007. It started to be planted in the hillside of the kebele since 2006. Since then, every year we dig holes in February and March, and we plant trees from May to June.

The forest is not yet fenced, but there is a soil bund constructed to demark its boundary. The enclosure is protected by a guard because individuals started to cut and carry the grass. They also started to cut the trees for different purposes. Wood is very expensive and a small pole of five meter can be sold up to ten Birr. While if the forest is protected from human and animal contact, it would grow rapidly and slow down the run-off soil erosion, allow water to infiltrate into the soil and increase soil moisture and crop productivity. Moreover, it could be a ground for the reproduction of wild animals and contribute to soil fertility. In relation to this, two individuals who were found guilty of cutting trees from the community forest in October 2011 were detained for a few days and released after each of them punished and paid 200 Birr.

I was appointed to be a guard because of my willingness and the kebele trusted that I could assume the responsibility even though I have many roles in the kebele. For example, I am the natural resource head and representative of EPRDF in my village. I am also a chair person for our village Iddir, but none of my family members have roles in the kebele. I am still working without any payment because it is my commitment to serve the community. However, I have the right to use the dry wood in the forest for fire and trees are sold to me at lower price when I want to buy from the forest. In most cases, I patrol the surrounding of the forest at least one time in the morning and one time in the afternoon. On average, I spent a minimum of four hours a day and two hours at night. So far, individuals who want to cut trees do this on market days as most people leave the area to go to Durame so it is easier to hide oneself. The other serious problem is protecting the forest from the contact of animals because some households want to graze their animals in the forest.

The kebele is benefiting from the community forest more than individual households. For example, the kebele was able to construct all buildings for the social services like health post, kebele office, FTC and DAs office thanks to the community forest (using the poles). It also sells the grass and trees from the forest when it faces shortage of money to buy stationeries or other office materials. In my opinion, there is no direct benefit for individual households, but no one is adversely affected as a result of the community forest.

When I face a problem and I need some kind of advice, I primarily consult members of the natural resource and development committee, and then the kebele administration.

### Electricity organiser/leader (not government)

I am married and sixty eight years old. The community gave me the responsibility of organising the community for contribution and leading on electricity issues immediately after the electricity was made available in our kebele in 2009. Personally, I benefit nothing, but I have the ambition of seeing all our kebele people getting electricity. I tried to organ people to raise money village by village so that they are able to buy their own electric meter. Up to the end of November 2011, roughly one fifth of the people in the kebele got access to electricity by sharing the meter of individual households.

Households having their own electric meter facilitate their neighbours to have access to electricity by charging 15 Birr for each bulb per month until they buy their own meter. In reality, economically better households have easy access to electricity and they are benefiting more than the poor households. However, poor households close to rich people have great chance to have access to electricity by taking though cables even though they do not have their own meter. Inhabitants of the kebele living in upper hillside may have less chance of getting electricity in the near future because moving the line for more than one kilometre seems to require a huge amount of money.

I immediately report all cases associated with electricity to people in the post, but they did not reply to my request. I wish everybody in the kebele gets electricity. I am advising the community to inform their problem to the kebele.

## Livelihoods

### Champion Model Farmer

I am 61 years old and a father of five children (three females and two males). There are more than 150 model farmers in the kebele. The major criterion for choosing a model farmer is the ability of a person to produce enough to cover the consumption needs of his family and his readiness to adopt new technologies and practically implement the innovations introduced through the agricultural extension programme such as using commercial fertilisers, improved seeds, new farming methods and others. I was chosen to be a champion model farmer mainly by planting vegetables and many fruit trees on my land (mangos, avocados and papayas) and getting high production by using water from my own hand dug well. The wereda gave me farm tools as a reward, while the region invited me to the region capital, Hawassa town, by covering all my costs together with other people invited from different zones of the region. I stayed three days in Hawassa and obtained a certificate and 2,000 Birr reward as an encouragement.

In terms of livestock, I have one ox and two breeds of Holstein dairy cow. As a result, my family gets enough milk and milk products. I also have a local cow and four sheep. I planted new varieties of grasses and animal fodder introduced by the DAs on my land.

Before I dug the well my fruit trees were dried up before they would set fruit due to lack of water. I never earned more than 2,000 Birr from the sale of my fruits. By working as a daily labourer with Kale Heywot Water Section and digging a shallow well in our kebele, I was able to understand that it is possible to obtain water relatively easily. In 2006 I was able to dig a hand dug well in my own backyard and got access to enough water and started planting more fruit trees. Now my annual income from fruit sales increased up to 11,000 Birr. The market price for vegetables and fruits has increased, which created a conducive environment for my production and motivated me.

I am also a leader of my church and my wife is a committee member in kebele women association. I am a member of EPRDF and of 1:5 group. However, my participation in the kebele and other political meetings is very limited because I mostly pass the time within my farm and refuse spending precious time in meetings.

My future plan is to plant more fruit trees of improved variety of mangos with no fibre in it. When I need technical assistance and advice, I consult the DAs. In this respect, I have never consulted the experts in the wereda. The recent problem I faced is the volume of water in my hand dug well was decreasing over time. I minimised the amount of water I use for vegetables and fruits per day and was able to resolve the problem.

### Most successful woman farmer

I am married and fifty years old. My livelihood is based on the cultivation of Enset, supplemented by maize, wheat, teff and root crops mainly used for consumption. Every year I plant varieties of vegetables such as tomato, cabbage, carrot and others. I was doing this even before the DAs started to train us. I planted fruits like avocados, mangos, papayas, custard apple and sugarcane in the last couple of years mainly for market and to earn income. I also have woodlots of eucalyptus that were planted some years ago. Currently, it became the source of additional income for my family. I use fertiliser when I plant crops in my land. I also rear livestock on a small scale; I have two oxen, two hybrid milk cows of Holstein Frisian and more than ten hybrid chickens. Since the wereda Agriculture and Rural Development Office introduced us the improved seeds of maize, wheat and teff, I started to plant these varieties, and totally abstained from planting local seeds.

Due to the slopy topography of my farming land, I constructed terraces on my land. I also buy supplementary animal feeds and glum of grain from Durame town in addition to the grass and fodder from my own field. I use milk and egg for consumption. So far, I didn’t involve in bee keeping. Thanks to God, coffee price is getting higher and higher and what I earn is increasing over time. Therefore, I am earning a lot of money from the sale of coffee in the market. I do not borrow from anybody.

I serve my church in the capacity of administration. My daughter is the manager of the kebele. Regarding the aspiration, I would like to continue in my prayer and my profession; and I do not have any plan to change my current job.

I consult DAs for issues related to agriculture. If I face other problem, I tell to my Christian friends and church members.

### Investor

Male Age: 62. I am married, and with seven children (four male and three female). I was born in Shamba Gubena kebele of the neighbouring Angacha Wereda in Kembata–T’ambaro zone of Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region. I got the chance of education and learned up to grade 8 about 45 years ago. Then, I started selling salt as a retail seller by moving from one market to the other throughout the week except Sunday, which is my worshiping day. After I saved some money in my home place, I came to Durame town and opened a small shop near to the market place in the town in 1975. From this business, my savings grew rapidly and I was able to buy a pickup Toyota vehicle in 1977. Then, I assigned my younger brother to sell in the shop and I started to transport goods from one town to the other including Durame, Shinshicho, Shashemane and Addis Ababa. Gradually, my business grew and I brought my two younger brothers and two sisters to live with me and to attend their education. All of them were able to complete grade 12, but none of them were able to join university. In 1983, I purchased an Isuzu vehicle and used it to transport goods from place to place and to lead my life by the income I was earning from this business.

Since the last five years, the demand for the Ethiopian coffee has increased on the world market because of two reasons. First, it is widely known to be organic. Second, it has unique flavour, taste and aroma compared to the coffee from other countries. Accordingly, I decided to involve in the business of coffee. Then, I submitted my proposal to invest in coffee washing and to install a plant in Aze Debo’a kebele to the Trade and Industry Office Kembata-Tambaro zone in March 2009. After carefully reading my proposal and checking the amount of deposit I had in the Bank, the zone allowed me to invest in the kebele. Thereafter, the Wereda facilitated and the kebele gave me about 1.5 hectares of land. For the owner of the land, the kebele gave him another land in the upper hills and I paid him some money as compensation. I also promised to employ him as a guard and to give job priority to his family members. Accordingly, he and two of his family members are working with us. We finished installing the plant in July 2009 by investing a total amount of 2.3 million Birr and started washing coffee for the first time in October 2009.

Currently, the investment created a permanent job opportunity for four people and a temporary job opportunity for about 80 people. Most of the employees are women and they earn from 20 to 25 Birr per day and they earn up to 500 Birr in a month for four months in a year. In terms of profitability, so far it is a lucrative business and I earn a profit of not less than half a million per year on average. In 2010, however, the price for Ethiopian coffee in the world market was very good and I earned a profit of about one million Birr.

My daily responsibility is closely supervising the work and I work for an average of 10 hours a day for four months except Sunday which is a worshiping day for all employees except the guards. There is no serious problem so far, but some people pick out the coffee beans a bit before it is fully ripe.

I came from Durame town and started an investment in Aze Debo’a because there is a reliable and clean access to rivers and a production of coffee in the kebele and its surrounding areas. Because of involving in business for many years, I had savings of more than three million Birr before I started the investment in washing coffee. I have no any role in my community except my role as a committee member in the Iddir of my neighbourhood. My wife is a member of Kale Heywot church and she is a committee member in Christian women association in Durame town.

My future aspiration is to invest in the same business in another kebele depending on the world market for Ethiopian coffee in the coming years. I have a good relationship with all government functionaries and the DAs assist us in mobilising the community to bring the coffee to our washing machine. In general, we daily follow the market price for different brands of Ethiopian coffee in Addis Ababa. For instance, the Kembata Coffee has its own brand and foreign companies who buy coffee from us want every brand to be exported independently without being mixed with the coffee from other areas. The following is an extract of a foreign company used for marketing promotion of Kembata coffee.

*Kembata (Dry-processed hand-picked garden coffee) Medium to low acidity / Full body - a new and exciting spicy Mocha flavor with a hint of aniseed / The southern spicy Mocha with a character all of its own. Kembata is a Mocha coffee which has only recently been discovered by specialty roasters outside of Ethiopia. What makes Kembata so unusual is restraint of winey and fruity character in flavor of a dominant spicy nature. We believe its spicy characteristics are beautifully complemented by bitter-sweet sensations of darker roasts. Kembata is consequently slowly taken into second crack to create a balanced full bodied potent coffee which is suitable for all brewing methods[[1]](#footnote-1).*

### Leading cash-crop trader

I am fifty four years old and a trader of coffee and maize in addition to my work in agriculture. I started the business of coffee from my childhood, but it became my main livelihood option while I was thirty years old with 300 Birr I received from my parents. Back in that time, I was buying coffee from Hadaro and Shinshicho markets in the neighbouring wereda and selling it back in Shone and Halaba towns for a profit of 30-35 Birr a day on market days. Gradually after five years, my capital reached up to 10,000 Birr and I started to take coffee to these towns through vehicles. On the one hand, I provide fresh coffee to coffee washing machines. On the other hand, I buy fresh coffee and make dry before I sell it back.

I mostly buy coffee from retail sellers who bought it from different local markets and sell it for one person. Sometimes, I buy coffee directly from the producers themselves who bring it to the market. Then, I sell the coffee to people running coffee washing machines. I also rent a car to transport my coffee on a contract basis. The owners of coffee washing machines know well the price of coffee at any market in the area and may take the coffee after adding a little amount on the price of retail sellers. In this regard, there is high competition within the entire kebele to buy fresh coffee because it does not last more than three months. There is a problem when I bargain and buy coffee from individual farmers because they often demand higher price to gain more profit from the sale of coffee. When the coffee business decreases, I focus on agriculture. I have about one hectare of land and it is predominantly covered with perennial crops like Enset, coffee and fruit trees. I have also two oxen and two dairy caws of Holstein Frisian. For me and my household, there is enough to eat and no livelihood problem.

Since last year, I started the trade of maize. My children assist me in buying and selling the maize. I also have a long term plan to continue in my coffee business as there is no other agricultural crop which is as profitable as coffee. I accept and practically implement the advice of development agents and coffee board members.

### Leading woman trader

I am twenty years old and completed grade ten. In our area involving in the business of coffee is very good in terms of profit though it is seasonal and lasts for three months only. In total there are nine girls who involve in the business of coffee – all of them individually. I buy the coffee from those who take to the market waiting on the way. I take the coffee that I bought on the way to the market to coffee washing machine and sell it in kilos. I use donkey drawn carriage to take the coffee to coffee washing machine. The profit differs according to the market price. There is no competition among the traders.

There is no problem related to the work. They are no employees assisting me. I buy coffee on Tuesday and Saturday afternoon and sell it at any time. I became a trader as my academic performance was poor and I obtained a low grade. I help my parents at home. My brother and sister are students. After school my brother and sister sell coffee on market day to help themselves. I do not have another plan, because I do not have money to change my current work. I advise my parents when needed.

### Leading businessman

I am fifty years old and completed grade three. I began the coffee trade when I was fifteen years old by obtaining money from my parents. There are six people who have the same business in the kebele including me. In addition, I buy oxen from the market and sell them back. Every year in July I buy up to 20 oxen from the market and distribute to 20 farmers to fatten and to share the profit by selling the oxen in Meskel. I mostly buy the oxen from Durame and Shinsicho markets and sell them at Durame market. I also bring coffee from Shinsicho and Hadaro markets and sell it to merchants who have a license to take and sell in Addis Ababa.

I have no access to credit, but I am doing business by my own money. In general, there is no problem to my business. I also have no transportation problem as I transport the coffee from markets by my own Isuzu vehicle. Those who fatten the oxen ride them to markets on foot. When I load and unload coffee, I use daily labourers. Coffee trade is seasonal, so that I stopped it now. When I started coffee trade I used local grinding mill to depart the husk from the bean.

I do not have any participation in the kebele. Currently I am serving my church in the capacity of cashier. I opened two coffee and other commodities shops for my son and daughter in Durame town and they are doing business in a good way. Sometimes my two sons assist me. I am planning to use the house I have at Durame town for coffee store. I advise the people who have similar business in my kebele.

### Leading businesswoman

The husband of this woman is a strong farmer. He may have helped with capital for the beauty salon etc.

After retirement my husband‘s niece came to our house in Aze Debo’a. My husband’s niece had no job after she graduated from high school. She planned to help him by opening a small shop and started to sell at the shop. She was selling herself at the shop, but she was simply selling without taking cash in hand and without properly recording those taking on credit, so I got bankrupt. I then began working myself at the shop. I brought different kinds of materials such as soap, fuel, ground pepper, salt, cereals and other items from Durame town. Gradually, I got out from bankruptcy and my shop became well known and I became profitable.

There is no problem in transportation because I am using donkey drawn carriage to bring my goods to the shop. I also have milk cows and I am getting enough milk for our daily consumption. I prepare food for my family and again I work at the shop the whole day.

Since the shop belongs to me and I work hard I am profitable. Now I am fifty years’ old. I opened the shop in 2003 and I am willing to continue it. In addition, I opened a barber house and beauty salon in the kebele. I do not have any participation at the kebele because I got a lot of problems during the Derg regime. Now I only serve in the church.

If God is willing and gives me long years to live, I am planning to expand my shop and to fill the need of the community. So far, no one advised me except my husband. If the issue is very serious we share it to our Christian brothers and sisters in our church and request their assistance in prayer.

### Skilled worker

I am thirty years old and completed grade eight. I began work as a carpenter when I was eighteen years old and as daily labourer at Durame town. I was an assistant for six months. Gradually my skills grew and I started building houses by own. I build houses, ceilings, doors and etc. I built twenty houses in my area. There is a boy assisting me. I hire men when there is a lot of work to be done. I buy essential materials from a building materials shop. I am paid according to the level of the house.

There is no problem in transportation. The profit differs according to the house. If I build a big house the profit also increases. If I built a better house than others, I will be chosen by the customer. When I built the Millennium school many people looked for me to build their houses. There is no problem on my work. Since the work is profitable and it is my profession I will continue it for future. I am able to make chairs, beds and shelves and others but I do not have a lot of money to do it.

I do not get credit. I also do agriculture. From my family members no one does this work. If God will I want to buy machine to do the furniture like beds, shelves and chairs. No one advises me

### Returned longer-term migrant male (inside Ethiopia)

I am 44 years old. I was a soldier and served the Derg regime as a military from 1977-1991. When I joined the military, I was in grade nine. One day, I and my classmate looked at an announcement for employment in the Ministry of Defence with a salary of 300 Birr on the board in the centre of the town. Immediately, we registered in the office of wereda Administration because our academic performance was poor and we were not good at many subjects. After three days, we were taken to the military institution in Harar and we trained there for one year. The next year we were taken to Eritrea. I stayed fourteen years in Eritrea.

I spent most of these years on the front with other military from Ethiopia. When I was living in Eritrea, I was single. After the collapse of the Derg regime, I and all military people of the Derg regime were fired out from our job, and everybody was forced to return to his family or home place. Accordingly, I returned to Aze Debo’a in 1991 and there was only 155 Birr in my pocket, which can do nothing. In 1992, I married, being assisted by my brothers and other relatives in Aze Debo’a and other places.

After I returned to Aze Debo’a, my brothers gave me some land to live on. On that land I built a house and planted Enset and maize. I also started to rear cattle. I also planted coffee trees, but the flood destroyed them because our village is in the hillside.

I have a plan of planting many coffee trees in my land and teaching my children. I do not take any advice from anyone else because I do not have that much relationship with other people in the kebele or in the wereda except my parents and brothers. I mostly give advice to my parents because they are illiterate and old. I only go to the kebele to pay the land tax because I am not a member of EPRDF and 1:5 group. So far, I did not face any problem for not being a party member, but I am suspected to be a member of opposition party.

### Returned seasonal migrant male

I am thirty years old. Since 2003 I often go to Wolkite and do agriculture. I get land on contract and plough the land with the oxen of the owner. I and the owner contribute equal amount of money to buy fertiliser. I plant maize in April and pepper in August. I harvest both crops in November and come back to Aze Debo’a after selling it. I stay with re-settlers who went there in 1984. Since my parents are in Aze Debo’a, I always go to Wolkite and come back to Aze Debo’a. Whenever the weather changes there is also a change in production. In other words, when there is a shortage rain or it is erratic, there is failure of crops and low productivity.

Generally, I stay in Wolkite for eight months from sowing up to harvesting. Two years ago, I got 6,000 Birr from the sale of pepper. Last year, I did not go because of my brother’s death. This year, I am ready to go. I am the only one who is helping my parents and my siblings. My parents have a piece of land in Aze Debo’a which I plough and sow before I go to Wolkite.

Because of my frequent movements between Aze Debo’a and Wolkite, I don’t have any role in the kebele or a relationship with youth of my age. I have a plan to buy a donkey-drawn carriage whether I go to Wolkite or stay at Aze Debo’a. I have some Christian friends in Aze Debo’a who attend the same church with me; and I mostly share every idea of my life with them.

### Returned re-settler

I am fifty years old. I went to Gojjam resettlement area in 1985. When I went there I had four family members. The land given by the government was marshy and I did not get enough grains to feed my family. After one year my daughter died. Again after one year my wife gave birth. Because of the climate the amount of grain decreased. The climate affected me and my family. Again after one year my wife gave birth to a son. I planted vegetables and local cabbage. I reared five goats. Again after two years two of my sons died and the condition of climate was changing over time and the whole family became sick. The three reasons mentioned above made me change my mind and I planned to come back. I sold the five goats and used the money for transportation.

After I came back to Aze Debo’a my brothers gave me a piece of land and I built a small house to live. I get a little amount of grain to eat. Now I am becoming old. I am planning to build a big house because my house is small and old. I have a good relation with returned re-settlers. If I get an area with suitable climate condition, I will go again and change my life.

### Ex-soldier

I am forty eight years old. During the Derg I was selected from the kebele and taken to Kedida Gamela wereda to be a revolutionary Militia. I worked as guard and peace-maker. But I did not go to battle. I got married in 1983. When I became free I came back to my home. I have eight children. I got land from my parents. I left the revolutionary militia work when the Derg fell. I do not have any participation in the kebele and community. I serve in the church. I had no problem in leaving the work of militia since I am a farmer. Still now I do not use improved seeds. If God gives rain I will sow improved seeds of maize. I have a relation with those who worked with me at Kedida Gamela wereda revolutionary militia.

## Human re/pro/duction

### Traditional birth attendant

I am fifty two years old and I began this service twenty years ago. There are about six TBAs in the community. I assist delivery without charging anything, but I ask to be paid the cost of the gaunt, which is only ten birr. Prior to the deployment of HEWs in each kebele by the government, great attention was given to train the TBAs and many of us were able to provide effective delivery service after the training. For instance, I participated in a training organised by KMG on Hazards of FGM and Delivery Assistance. We also obtained all the necessary equipment from the wereda Health Office. However, I didn’t get any access of training from government institutions. Since I participated in the training, I always use gaunt when I assist delivery.

When the TBAs were sent to Hossana town for training organised by the government, they ignored me. I then became very angry and totally abstained from going to the health post for anything. Prior to that, I had a good relationship with the HEWs. I would take women to the HEWs. I push down the abdomen of the mother and massage immediately after the baby comes out of her womb. After birth I dress the baby with clean cloth and give it to care for the woman. I tie the umbilical cord with a thread and cut it with a boiled and cooled razorblade. In the past I used to daily assist two women. But now I am not even assisting one within a month because many women are going to health centre for delivery service. There is nothing I get from assisting delivery. Personally I am fine and there is no problem regarding my health. In addition to assisting delivery, I bind broken legs with the sticks of bamboo tree. It is better if my profession gets recognition and if I get paid for my service I will improve my livelihood. I do not advise anybody.

1. http://www.ikhofi.co.za/coffee/coffee.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-1)