# Personal stories of female transitions to adulthood in Aze Debo’a, Kedida Gamele wereda, Kembata

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##  Rich young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | wife | female | 31 |
| Other  | Son | Male  | 11 |
| Other  | Son  | Male  | 9 |
| Other  | Daughter  | Female  | 7 |
| Other  | Son | Male | 5 |
| Other | Son | Male  | 3 |

I am living with my household, four sons and one daughter. There is no other member in our house except our own children.

### Youth in the community

I was a grade eight student when I dropped out of school without any problem to perform marriage. I did not face any problem in finding a husband and performing a marriage. There is no significant difference between the time we performed our marriage and these days. I heard that land has been very scarce in Kembata for the last fifty years or more. As a result, owning property and leading an independent life without being dependent on parents is very difficult for most of the youths. For example, several youths have no opportunity of getting farming land from their parents especially in the last few decades. This is because parents themselves have shortage of farming land in Aze Debo’a. Parents become willing to cut and provide a piece of land to their young children only after all possible alternatives of livelihoods have been exhausted and the youths decide to lead their life by farming the land of their parents. Otherwise, no land is given to children by their parents.

In general, having an independent source of income, creating assets, getting married and bearing children have been the major challenges for youths in our area. Above all, having an independent income source is very difficult for female youths because many of them cannot go to other places to work as daily labourers like male youths. Therefore, they are heavily dependent on their parents for everything compared to male youths.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a and I am still there. Before I got married, six family members were living in my parents’ house. My parents are still alive. There was no major shock which happened in my family when I was a child. Similarly, I have not faced any serious illness or accidents so far. I started my school in 1993. I dropped out of school from grade eight to get married in 2001 because fell in love with my current husband. During my young age, I did not have a boyfriend and I started to have sex for the first time after I got married. I did not face any problem in this regard. In terms of education, I cannot pursue my education at the moment because I have become the mother of five children. I bore my first child some 11 years ago. He and his successor were circumcised two years ago. My daughter is seven years old and I have no plan to circumcise her because I am aware of the health hazards caused by FGM.

I am still living with my first husband and there is no problem in my life. I am an active follower of Protestant Christianity in the Mekaneyesus church. In terms of support, no one is important and helps me except my God and my own efforts.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

There are no government interventions which have affected my life.

There is no intervention which played a part in my life. We pay 20 birr for land use tax, 5 birr for Red Cross, 20 birr for sport, 10 birr for Kembata People’s Association and 12 birr for party membership. I am a member of the women’s association. I and my husband are members of an Iddir in our village. We pay 30 birr for a household who lost its member by death.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

I wish to see our life improved by working hard together with my husband.

## Middle wealth young woman 30s

### Your household

I am living with my husband and one son.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | wife | female | 30 |
| Head | Husband | Male | 34 |
| Other  | Son | Male  | 4 |

### Youth in the community

In my community there is no recreational facility for youths. At the same time, youths have no access to their own property, independent house or land to carry out any agricultural activities. Let alone youths, the life of parents is a challenge at this time. There is no land for youths before they get married. In the case of Aze Debo’a, all youths can get a piece of land only from their parents because there is no land in the hands of the kebele that could be provided to youths or any individual land seeker except communal land used for planting trees and environmental rehabilitation. As a result, youth are dependent on their parents regarding all aspects of their life. Youths face many problems during their education and school time such as shortage of food, clothes, reading materials, and exercise books. Lack of transportation is another problem for those who come to school from far places, especially for high school students. In this connection, there are only two high schools throughout the Kedida Gamela wereda. All this is common for both young females and males in the community. In general, there are no job opportunities for youths. They are participating in wedding and funeral ceremonies in the community. There is no problem in the church service area, both participate in worship and serving equally.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a and I am still there. When I was in my parents’ house, we were six in number together with my parents and my three brothers. When I was six years old, my parents did not have enough land to plough and produce sufficient production. As a result, we had many economic and other problems. To solve these problems my parents moved to Gojam resettlement area, which is in the current Benshangul-Gumuz Region. I did not face any serious illness, but our family experienced several problems and shocks. For instance, two of my brothers died in the resettlement area. Then, my parents decided to return to their home place of Aze Debo’a in 2006. After we returned to our home place, I dropped out of school due to economic problems and got married in the same year. I did not have anything that was mine. I was forced to drop out of my education and I got married. I was circumcised. My husband is an important person in terms of support.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

There is no government intervention that affected my life.

In my kebele there are two schools. This is the good part of it, but I did not benefit from this because I did not learn even if I wished to learn due to poverty. I am a member of the kebele women’s association, but I do not benefit from it. I do not have any knowledge about politics. I hear different things about politics during the election time. I pay a total amount of 58 birr for land use and other taxes. I am a member of an iddir in my community.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

If it is the will of God, I have a plan to plant coffee and varieties of fruits for cash income such as avocados, mangoes and others. I also plan to make more effort to achieve it and to improve my life.

## Poor young woman 30s

### Your household

Currently, I am married and live with my husband and one son.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | wife | female | 29 year |
| Head | Husband  | Male  | 37 year |
| Other  | Son  | Male  | 6 months |

### Youth in the community

Regarding education, there is no problem, but there is low access to job opportunities. Currently, there are many educated male and female youths from our community who have no job. For jobless people getting married is so difficult. As a result, a large number of male and female youths are unmarried. There is no problem for male and female youths in the service of church because they have equal opportunity to give any service in the church.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a kebele. I am still living there. I cannot remember how my life was in my early childhood, especially during the first six years. There were five family members in my parents’ house. As far as I know, there was no major shock I remember when I was in my parents’ house and in my new household. Thanks to God, I did not face any serious illness so far. I started my school in 2001 and I completed grade 10 in 2011. I got married last year (in 2011) and I have a six month old child. I was circumcised. I am an active follower of Protestant Christianity in the Kalehiwot church. For me, the most important people in terms of support are my church members.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

No government interventions affected my life.

Government interventions have not played any role in my life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

I plan to improve my life by increasing all my efforts.

## Rich young woman mid-20s

### Your household

I am single and living with my parents. I have three brothers and one sister.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | Daughter  | female | 20 |
| Head | Father  | Male | 68 |
| Other  | Mother  | Female  | 53 |
| Other  | Son  | Male  | 15 |
| Other  | Daughter  | Female  | 13 |
| Other  | Son | Male | 9 |
| Other | Son  | Male  | 7 |

### Youth in the community

There is no problem to attend school and learn for both males and females in the community. But those who have completed their high school and college education have no job opportunities in the area, particularly at this time. If the young generation of the community want to participate in the work of agriculture, there is no access to getting farmland in the kebele. If someone wants to marry at the right time of their marriage age, it is impossible to do that due to lack of basic necessities or personal property, which are necessary to set up a household. Young men or women participate in wedding or funeral ceremonies. There is no problem for both male and female youths to worship, serve and participate in any church affairs.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a and am still living there. My childhood life was good because I was free and with no worry as I was a child and living together with my parents, brothers and sisters. Currently, there are seven family members in my parents’ house. My family never experienced any major shock during my life. I have never faced any serious illness or accident in my life. I started my school in 1990 and completed grade ten in 2008. But I do not have any job. I like education and wish to upgrade my education even up to university. I am single and I do not have a boyfriend. I was circumcised on the insistence of my mother. I am an active member in the Kalehiwot church. My parents are important people in terms of support to my life.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

No government interventions have affected my life.

Government interventions have not played any role in my life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

I wish to improve my life if I get a job opportunity.

## Middle wealth young woman mid-20s

### Your household

I am twenty years old and married. I am living only with my husband.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to HH head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | wife | female | 20 |
| Head  | Husband | Male  | 27 |

### Youth in the community

There is no problem regarding education in my community. But shortage of learning materials adversely affected the education of adolescent girls. In terms of marriage, every one marries anyone she/he wants to. But to marry a girl or a boy, living conditions hinder them from leading a good life. I do not have an independent household. Having children after marriage is obvious and allowed by God, but some educated people bear children by minimizing their expenses. In our area adolescent girls are mostly responsible to work at home. But sometimes, they are involved in planting and harvesting crops in the field. Adolescent girls do not have obligation to practice in the community. They participate and serve in the church. There are problems for adolescent boys because they do not have their own basic necessities such as money and land. Some young men face a lot of problems in terms of school fees, clothes and learning materials, so that they are forced to drop out of school. Young men suffer in getting a wife because they do not have their own income source, better educational background or independent household. When they marry and have children, their family suffers a lot because their parents have a small plot of land and the production is small. Their children get emaciated and weak. The church teaches what the Bible says about work, living a dedicated life and to live a peaceful life with others in the community. The young men serve in the church.

### Your life story

I was born in Mathara when my parents were living in the area. But I grew up in Aze Debo’a. My household did not experience any major shock when I was growing up. As my parents told me, the first five years of my life were good because my parents prepared whatever was necessary for me. Before I left my parents’ house, there were seven members. I left my parents’ house because of marriage. I did not have any serious illnesses and I did not face any accident during my life. I started my education in 2004. However, I am not attending this year because I got married. I desire to return to school. I completed grade eight. I chose my husband on my own. My parents also agreed to my decision of marriage. I was married to him and he is my first husband and is living in Aze Debo’a. I and my husband decided not to have children at this time because we are married while we are teenagers. I started taking contraception immediately after our marriage. My major income source is coffee trade. On average, I spend four days per week in the market. The major market places are Durame, Shinshecho, Shone and Adillo. I mostly bring the coffee from Shinshecho market by public transport. I was circumcised some years ago. I am a follower of Protestant Christianity and an active member of the Kalehiwot church. I used to serve in the choir before marriage. The important people for me in terms support are my parents.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

I do not pay land use tax because I do not have land. I did not contribute anything in terms of cash, kind or labour power during the last year. I am not participating in the kebele office, development team, 1-5 cells, youth organizations, in iddir or equb.

The government built a school in my kebele. Because of that I am lucky for learning in that school, but I am not getting anything from government directly. Since I am a woman and newly married, I have no role involved in any co-operative or other government interventions. Health extension workers and KMG are providing training. I was trained about HTPs and particularly about FGM.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

I wish to continue my school and I will be fruitful in my studies. After that I wish to bear children. It is better if the government creates income generating activities for youth, and provides credit and jobs for those who have completed their studies.

## Poor young woman mid-20s

### Your household

I live with my parents, four brothers and two sisters.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | Daughter  | female | 20 |
| Head | Father  | Male | 70 |
| Other  | Mother  | Female  | 61 |
| Other  | Daughter  | Female  | 24 |
| Other  | Daughter  | Female  | 18 |
| Other  | Son | Male | 14 |
| Other | Son  | Male  | 13 |
| Other | Son  | Male | 10 |
| Other  | Son  | Male | 7 |

### Youth in the community

In my community there is no facility for female youth because they do not have any property of their own. Moreover, they have no independent house, farming land to perform any agricultural activities and no job opportunity. These are common for both female and male youths in the community. They are participating in weddings and funeral ceremonies in the community. In addition to this, they equally participate in worshipping and in other church services.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a kebele. I am still living there. I cannot remember how life was in the first six years of my life. There are eight members in my parents’ house. There were several major shocks of drought that happened in our family in 1984, 2008 and 2010. As a result, we faced many problems especially in 1984 and 2008 because we did not get assistance in time. In 1984, we got a little food assistance from our uncle in Angacha wereda. But I did not face any serious illness so far. I started my school in 2001 and I completed my education in 2011. I was circumcised before I knew the health hazards of FGM. I have no income of my own. Hence, I depend on my husband for everything. I am an active member of the Kalehiwot church and my parents are important people for me in terms of support.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

There is no government intervention that affected my life.

Government interventions have not played any role in my life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

I try to improve my life by using all my efforts.

## Rich young woman 16-17

### Your household

I am single and live with my parents and one brother.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | Daughter  | female | 20 |
| Head | Father  | Male | 68 |
| Other  | Mother  | Female  | 53 |
| Other  | Son  | Male  | 17 |

### Youth in the community

In my community there are no facilities for female youth. Because at this age youth do not have their own property, independent house, or land to perform any agricultural activities and no good job getting opportunity. All this is common for both young females and males in the community. They are participating in wedding and funeral ceremonies in the community. In addition to this, there is no difference in the church service area, both females and males are participating in worship and serving equally.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a kebele. So far, I am living there. I cannot remember what type of life I had in the first six years. There are eight family members in my parents’ house. There was no major shock in my family and I did not get seriously sick. I started my school in 2001 and I completed grade 10 in 2011. I was circumcised at the age of 13. I am an active and convinced Protestant Christian and a member of the Kalehiwot Church in our kebele. My important people in terms of support are my parents.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life - NA

### Aspirations and plans for the future -NA

## Middle wealth young woman 16-17

### Your household

. Now I am living with my husband and his mother only.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | Wife  | female | 17 |
| Head | Husband  | Male | 26 |
| Other  | Mother  | Female  | 72 |

### Youth in the community

In my area there are many schools to learn in. But in general, there is nothing that is good for young females. Because there is shortage of basic necessities, such as food, clothes and independent house; not only for females but also for young males’ life is hard. Youth are not owners of any property in the community. They may get a piece of land when they get married. Even after marriage many of the youth are dependent on their parents. There is shortage of school materials in general. If some of them completed their school they did not get job opportunities. Last year and four years ago, our family was hit by severe drought and was exposed to food shortages. During those years, we received relief from World Vision International and Samaritan's Purse. Relatively speaking, 2011 is better than 2010 and 2008.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a and in the first six years I had no problem in my parent’s household. There were eight family members in my parents' household. My parents have three sons and three daughters. Four of them are married and one son and one daughter are not married. I started my school in 2001 and dropped out from grade eight and I was married. Now I do not think to learn in future because I have a workload and all my family responsibility is on my hands. I got married in October 2011 on my own interest exactly at the age of about 18. My parents agreed to my decision of getting married. We have no child because I married recently. I was circumcised. Because of the severe circumcision I had undergone, I became faint for an hour and was sick for more than a month. Since then, my parents decided to stop circumcising their daughters. As a result, my younger sister is not circumcised and is ready to marry without undergoing FGM. I am an active member of Mekaneyesus church. My parents are important people in terms of support.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

There are no government interventions which have affected my life.

There is no government intervention which played a part in my life as an individual. I am not a member of any association or group. I did not get credit but the health extension workers are teaching and follow up. I pay 20 birr for land use tax, 5 birr for Red Cross, 5 birr for sport and 10 birr for Kembata People's Association.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

If it is the will of God I will bear a child and improve my life.

## Poor young woman 16-17

### Your household

I am single and live with my parents and two brothers.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person | Relation to household head | Sex  | Age |
| You  | Daughter  | female | 16 |
| Head | Father  | Male | 41 |
| Other  | Mother  | Female  | 41 |
| Other  | Son  | Male  | 11 |

### Youth in the community

Problems facing adolescent girls in the community are many in number. In terms of attending their classes, they are forced to be absent from school when they are in a period or observe menstruation, because they do not have money to buy sanitary materials. Having clothes and school materials are additional problems facing youths from poor families. If her family is poor, she may not get a good husband, and she may even not be married at all. She will be dependent on her family. Since I am the oldest one to my parents, I have a responsibility to do every work at home and in the field. During the planting and harvesting period, I have a lot to do. I have an opportunity to worship and serve in the church. I am learning now and living with my parents. I am not married and I do not have children. Young men are facing a problem of poverty because they do not have money to pay school fees and buy clothes and learning materials.

### Your life story

I was born in Aze Debo’a kebele. In the first six years of my childhood, my parents did whatever helped me to grow. There are many things I do not remember that happened in the first six years of my life. In 2008 and 2010, we were starved and faced serious food shortage due to drought. Our life was saved by the assistance of NGOs like Samaritan's Purse and World Vision International. Three years ago, I was seriously sick for one week, being infected with malaria. But it did not affect my education because it happened during our vacation. I started learning in 2003, and I am presently attending grade eight. My ambition is to join the university and have a good job because I do not have any problem that interrupts my study at this time because I am assisted by World Vision. I like attending school regularly and my parents also advise me to learn effectively. My work did not interfere with school because I did it after school hours. I started assisting my mother in household work when I was seven years old. I have not started taking an interest in boys and I do not have any boyfriend because I learned in our church that having sex before marriage is a sin and written in the Bible. I have no interest to get married at this time because I want to finish my education and get my own job. At the same time, my parents are not willing to see me married before I join the university. I am good at all subjects and hope to score a good grade in the examination. As a result of health education and an awareness raising campaign by KMG, I committed not to be circumcised. I attend the Catholic Church in our village together with my parents. My parents are the important people in terms of support.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

Government interventions have not affected my life.

Government interventions did not play a part in my life as I grew up.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

I try to improve my educational background and I wish to help my parents.

## Research Officer comment

Early marriage is not common among the Kembata. Traditionally marriages are performed after the age of 18 or above.