**Interviews with people playing important roles in the Kormargefia community**

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## Government employees

### Kebele manager

The kebele manager was hired in October 2010. He had been working in a kebele named, Baso Shengora, in the same wereda administration. He was transferred to Kormargefia kebele by the order of the wereda; it is common for the wereda to make managers change their working places periodically.

He doesn’t want to stay in the kebele because he doesn’t like the work itself. He was born in a kebele named ‘Mendida’ in the same wereda administration, Basona Werena woreda. He got his Diploma in Mathematics from Addis Ababa University. He attended his classes at the summer school program.

He says, “The only thing I enjoy about my job is the good opportunities that it gives me to solve people’s problems, especially the poor, in relation to government administration. It gives me satisfaction to see the poorer get answers to their problems related to their basic rights on which their livelihood depends. For instance, dealing with questions of divorce as well as widow women’s right to land give me more commitment to my job”.

He described, “My job has risks attached to it. For instance, recently two people from Debre Berhan came to our kebele and asked for kebele identity cards. The two young males had migrated to Debre Berhan while the rest of their family is living in the community. When the kebele chairman and I tried to investigate why they needed the kebele ID, we found that they had been involved in crime; they bit two males who used to live in Debre Berhan town. They were looking for the ID just to deny the charges and to persuade other people that they are not residents of the town”.

He elaborated that there are many problems in relation to performing the job. For instance, he mentioned that the members of the cabinet and others in kebele administration are not active and committed to discharging their responsibilities.

In addition, he mentioned that the kebele is less urbanised and that prevented him from getting goods and services for himself. He says that he is forced to go to Debre Berhan town, to shift from the kebele to the town, because of the lack of facilities to lead a decent life in the kebele. As he mentioned, living in the town with the minimal salaries of the government is so difficult. The costs of transportation again make the living cost shoot up tremendously.

He believes that the cabinet is not working as is required from the structure. There is a knowledge as well as a skill gap for all cabinet members. Some of them are very dedicated and have the ability to discharge their responsibility. As he mentioned, all cabinet members meet together rarely; there is absenteeism.

There are four main committees responsible for the cabinet. These are the health, education, agriculture, and administration, security and justice committees. Regarding to their performance, the respondent mentioned that the education committee has been more active and successful. This is because the leaders of the committee are very hard working.

At the sub-kebele level, ad hoc committees are operational. For instance, committees to hear complaints, justice committee, and case investigation committee can be mentioned.

Here, he stressed the overlapping membership in committees which he thinks is the cause for less effectiveness in their area of responsibility. As most of them are farmers, they complain about the time they waste doing the kebele administration jobs.

Regarding to the development teams of males, the respondent said that the structure has been there since about 2006. The kebele administration restructured the male development team in 2010. The restructuring emphasises rearranging the size of development teams, electing new leaders with better capability and commitment, and enabling the team leaders to get to know each other in such a way to make the teams more active and interactive.

Concerning the development team of the women, he said that in 2011/12 the kebele administration organised 28 development teams for women. The membership includes the female household heads. In this regards, it means female household heads belong to both the male and female development teams.

The development teams are involved in community work such as watershed management, road reconstruction and so on. The leaders of the development team played a leading role in mobilising the members for work as well as dissemination of party and development messages. They also register attendance in public work days and report back to the kebele office. Regarding the linkage between kebele administration and development team leaders, the kebele has been following a regular reporting system to follow up the activities of teams. He said that though all leaders of teams are expected to deliver reports once a month, there are four leaders who have never provided a report since they were elected. Most of them also provide reports irregularly.

The report, as he said, has two objectives. Firstly, it is prepared to let the kebele administration know what is going on in the team in a month. Secondly, it is a channel to let the administration know the new social, economic and political changes and problems that the specific part of the kebele is facing, and what the people want the kebele administration to do to solve the problem.

On the kebele-wereda linkage, he said that the Development Agents deliver weekly reports to the wereda agricultural office. Similarly, the HEWs report weekly to the wereda health office either in written form or orally by phone.

In addition, he mentioned that different sectors in the wereda have supervision teams. They send individuals to assess the performance of their relative sector in the kebele. For instance, the supervision from the wereda administration team is carried out once or twice a year. They check the reports submitted by development Agents, HEWs, records related to the social court activities, complaints of the people and so on.

He said that the kebele council is comprised of people who have different socio-economic status. There are people who can’t read and write, people who completed grade 12, and so on. In principle, the kebele council is expected to meet once a month. However, in the current year, within the last 8 months, the council managed to meet only three times. The council has several roles and functions. Among others, preparing plans and the budget of the kebele are the core roles.

The kebele manager said that he has a good relationship with the chairman. As he said, they are working together in both the political as well as development projects of the kebele. He mentioned that he meets the chairman at least twice a week. Nevertheless, in the last month, they had been together in the office only once for a very short time.

Regarding the community-kebele manager relation, he said that he found it to be very good and progressive. He describes, “We respect each other. I am usually happy to discuss with them. We do jobs in a friendly manner”.

The kebele manager says, “If I got the chance to design a new management structure, first and foremost, I would make the kebele chairman paid. And, I would also make the cabinet members paid depending on their position in the cabinet. I prefer to take this measure because it would be an incentive for cabinet members to dedicate time for their kebele office work. Furthermore, I would reduce the number of the kebele council by half. Because I believe 300 members are too many to be organised and come up with common ideas and suggestions on kebele related issues”

### Development Agents and vet

Group interview was conducted with all the three DAs together, crop, NRM, animal science. Among the problems they mentioned for agriculture are: 95% of the land being flat so most of the farmland submerges underwater/ there is much surface water during the rainy season so that waterlogging is a common problem. Strong wind and intensive grazing followed by heavy hail rain have been causing serious top soil erosion resulting in soil fertility decline. Erosion prone hills and slopes have been terraced since the Derg time, and rain caused erosion is improving, but some farmers have recently started selling stones from farm and hill stone built terraces contributing to soil erosion.

They reported that heavy pounding hail rain is a constant threat against field crops. In most cases it completely destroys crops. Frost is another serious problem damaging all types of crops partially or fully, especially crops in fields at flat or lower places. They noted that even planting of trees at terraced hills, including native ones, is abandoned after repeatedly failed damaged by frost, and only eucalyptus tree is said to be frost resistant/unaffected.

They insisted barley, wheat, and faba beans are well adapted to the environment, and are given extension focus, encouraging farmers to increase scale of production and productivity, because food grains are also providing good prices if they produce surplus. Linseeds and lentils are important cash focused crops and they advise farmers to grow them. Market focused crops include irrigated vegetables grown on 86.5 ha of land so far. The Das facilitated access to pumps, improved seeds, markets and advise them on methods of planting, tending, and irrigation management. The DAs provide extension services, dividing the 3 sub-kebeles between them. Each of them provides advice on all aspects of the extension programme as they stay working at their respective sub-kebele Monday to Thursday every week and come back to the kebele centre on Friday to evaluate weekly performances and problems encountered in each site, and design work plan for the next week. They use development teams and 1-5s to mobilise farmers for extension work activities, trainings, meetings and festivals. They use leading farmers (party members) to introduce new methods, technology/inputs and convince the community. They use model and/or leading farmers’ farms as demonstration plots, organising festivals at each sub-kebele for the community to see the well growing crop on the field and the yield when it is threshed, during which the models explain their success and give answers to question raised by farmers. Annual extension programme status/performance is regularly evaluated by the leading farmers conference in which problems, successes, weaknesses, strengths are assessed and the work plans for the next year are designed. Wereda experts and the DAs could also give explanations and advice to the participants. They indicated that they couldn’t use the FTC since it became part of another kebele when Faji was reorganised into Debre. Instead they have been trying to help farmers through participatory extension methods using development teams, 1-5, leading and model farmers. Development teams consist of 20-35 members each and directly report to the DAs office. Each team has 5 leaders, each of them brings another 5 nearest neighbours into a 1-5 led by him. They ranked, in order: development team/1-5, the primary party organisation, leading farmer’s conferences as good instruments of extension implementation.

They noted that the FTC would have become the most important, had there been any in the kebele. The indicated they provide all types of extension advice to farmers in general and didn’t have any separate services for women. The DAs insisted they have seriously tried to advise farmers to use BBM, but the majority couldn’t accept it as they have learned from the first few adopters that it was too heavy for the oxen to pull and frequently got broken. They showed us one badly broken broad metal plough in their office. They indicated that planting in lines was taken by the wereda as a focus of extension just last year so that the previous DAs didn’t leave any report if any line planting was implemented. But they will try to advise farmers to apply it in the coming Meher crop planting season. The DAs record the needs of each farmer requesting fertiliser and they would take the total fertiliser demand of the kebele for any given production year and the wereda would facilitate its bulk purchase and distribution through the Union down to primary service cooperatives. Each farmer could buy and take from the respective service cooperative according to his/her purchase requests. Farmers could get all inputs, fertilisers, improved seeds, BBM, through the service cooperative, except pesticides and weed-killers, which they used to buy from private traders. Since last year, the wereda has stopped providing fertilisers and improved seeds on credit, except for a very few poor people selected by the community as not capable of paying. The DAs argued that the majority of people could afford to pay in cash. Some people even went directly to the wereda and bought covering transportation costs, rather than waiting until the cooperative could bring and distribute it.

They reported that the community has good market access nearby so their advice is focused on telling farmers to produce market oriented crops in good quality, increasing the quality of livestock and products by growing improved fodder as their crops are under constant threat of frost and pounding hails and focusing on irrigated cash crop production. They indicated that fertiliser use is already popular - it doesn’t need any more promotion involving incentives such as providing it on credit. Teaching farmers about its advantages is becoming irrelevant as they know it well. Dairy marketing, fattening, and rearing of improved cattle have become well understood and accepted practices in the community; the importance of production of irrigated cash crops is getting wide acceptance by the majority of farmers.

They insisted farmers were resisting planting in lines, because it needs an intensive weeding activity and they believe weeding exposes the crops to frost. They argue that it reduces their crop stalk/straw potential for livestock. BBM was another thing that the majority of farmers refused to use, although the DAs were working with great focus to promote its adoption. Farmers have already lost any interest in it, arguing that it is not suitable for their oxen, too heavy to pull, and easily breaking. All the DAs explained that almost all farmers well understood the theory of terracing and watershed development, but in practice they usually decline to actively participate in its implementation, and it remained difficult since the government’s principle is to mobilise them through persuasion. The DAs singled out Sinar (wild oat) as the only crop farmers grow that they had advised the community to avoid. This is because it is poor in nutrition, gives very low yield, requires much domestic labour (husking, roasting) to make it ready for food/Tela preparation, and has no/little market demand. But many continued growing it as they argue it provides them with very high stalk for livestock feeds.

They reported that dairy production and fattening of bulls and sheep is identified as having great potential for the community income development, and increasing improved dairy cows, bulls for fattening, sheep rearing/fattening are all focuses of the extension work. The DAs use all the different methods used in agricultural extension to provide advices/services related to livestock. They transmit livestock extension education through meetings and leading farmers conferences, they advise farmers about livestock health problems; they facilitate their access to artificial and bull insemination services from government and NGO sources; they facilitate treatment, drugs when farmers report cattle/sheep illness by calling or going to wereda for veterinarians to come and help, they mobilise the community through the 1-5 or development team leaders for total cattle vaccination campaigns just before the rainy season starts and immediately after it ends.

They used to provide education and trainings on livestock health, fodder preparation and feeding, vaccination, rearing of improved quality, dairy farming, poultry production and modern beekeeping. They could also facilitate access to artificial/bull insemination services from the Agricultural research centre or wereda or NGOs. From last year to now 11 hybrid dairy cows (25%) and 9 bulls were provided by the wereda and Food for Children distributed them to farmers. 10 foreign breed sheep inseminators were distributed with one for 10 farmers and another group of ten farmers was about to receive one the day after we conducted this interview. The wereda made the sheep inseminator available for cash, but Food for Children covered the costs and has been distributing them to farmers on credit with 2 years repayment term. Regarding chickens they provide advice about improved chicken management, poultry production, feeding, healthcare, but they indicated that there wasn’t any vaccination and drug services for chickens so far. They have already sent requests for the wereda to make it available by next year. 90 foreign breed chickens were distributed for 15 farmers, 6 chicken per household (5 hens/female and 1 cock/male) by Food for Children.

They argued that they were advising farmers to produce honey using modern hives, as part of the extension programme, although they know that honey productivity in the area is very low due to shortage of vegetation, strong wind and cold that prevents bees from traveling long distances to find flowers. No farmer has ever used improved hives rather all of the few beekeepers produce small quantities of honey in traditional hives.

The DAs indicated that their primary task has been to advise farmers to improve the qualities of their livestock/products to obtain the highest possible prices in the market and not to sell livestock until there is high demand /prices. But farmers continued selling them whenever and wherever they chose, except milk which most of them regularly sell at fixed prices (7.50 birr/litre) through their dairy cooperative or to a private milk purchasing company shop on the main road a kilometre or so outside the kebele. In response to farmers’ complaints about milk price reduction by the private processor from 8 to 7.50 birr, the DAs are trying to find them a better market in consultation with wereda officials and the UNION. They indicated that improved livestock, dairy, fattening, and vaccinations are very much popular as the community have well accepted their importance and farmers increasingly practice them. But most farmers were reluctant to use external parasites killer spray for sheep complaining it was too expensive (0.75 birr/sheep). Most also didn’t dare to implement the extension advise that they could obtain higher incomes by managing fewer better quality livestock rather than holding larger number of poor quality, arguing that disease could kill all the few improved livestock they would have at one time. They indicated that development of both the local and improved breeds is promoted by the extension programme. The DAs reported that leading farmers (party cadres) have been the first experimenters/demonstrators of any new farming methods, technology/BBM, and inputs.

Their recommendations for improving extension services include; experts/officials should listen to what farmers say about anything and take them as inputs to improve services. They should not give unrealistic promises to rebuild the declining trust farmers have in the DAs/government officials. Only practically tested, efficient technology should be distributed for adoption or it should be modified immediately when it fails such as the case of the BBM. They also indicated that once they announced to farmers that organic fertiliser was available at the wereda and recorded lists of names and quantity of needs. Many applied for it, but the wereda told them that there was not enough and all had been taken. Thus the DAs felt farmers considered them to be liars. They also argued their focus on eucalyptus tree planting as part of NRM development could cause long-term harm to the environment and should not be promoted anymore. Watershed public work sites were just terraced and left without further development activities, no tree planting or beekeeping has started so far. Finally they argued that the DAs salaries should be reconsidered and increased in relation to the workload they have to bear, one of them said ‘we are excluded from the 8 hours per day work norm, our assigned norm is working 24 hours’ and complained for all this they are poorly paid and denied further education access

### Health Extension Workers

They said that in relative terms the most popular packages in the community are latrines and smoke free houses. The reason is the strong support that they get from the kebele officials especially in latrine introduction in the community. Beside this, smoke free houses have been common there and so it is established in the culture of the community.

The least popular package, according to the respondents, is usage of solid and liquid waste disposal. The reason they mentioned is shortage of water; it means that because there is shortage of water in the community, people use liquid wastes to make dung cake, drinking water for livestock, to use dung for walls of houses and so on.

The health extension workers elaborated that they had succeeded in training people, especially women, to use improved stoves for making enjera. As they explained, they used the 1-5 structure to make all households learn and make improved stoves with easily accessible materials such as stone and dung.

Among others, the main problem they have been facing in their work was less attention from the kebele administration which resulted in a lack of response to their request for support. In addition, the spatial distribution, geographical location as well as topographic type of the community have been mentioned as the challenges in their work. Last but not least, the shortage of water has hindered the adoption of health packages.

There is no problem in connection to the regular supply of vaccines, contraceptives and so on. As they mentioned, materials for clear delivery were plentiful in the community. However, to date, they have run out of gloves. One of the health extension workers received training in clean delivery. As mentioned above, the kebele officials do not give much attention to health extension rather they prefer to work closely with the development agents. The health extension workers said that the residents of the kebele are too conservative to accept new interventions, especially the health packages. They further elaborated that the kebele has among the lowest rates of adoption of health packages.

They believe that targeting women is the best way to deliver health extension programs. The reason they gave was the likelihood that women meet and discuss the packages is higher than that for men. Men, as they said, usually spend their time on their own farmland which minimises the chance of meeting others and having discussions. In addition, they mentioned that women are very close to their environment as well as the other members of 1-5 groups. In this regard, they have a better chance to keep both personal as well as environmental hygiene of their surroundings.

The main way for getting advice and resources to women is discussion within 1-5 groups. Previously, the health volunteers were the main channel for the program. Nowadays, the focus has become the leaders of the 1-5 groups; though the position of ‘health volunteer’ was abolished, the members are still active and are agents to deliver health programmes to the community. In addition to this, the health extension workers use the annual conferences of farmers to meet and train the kebele residents. They also organise meetings at sub-kebele level.

The best method to deliver the programme is 1-5 groups. As they explained, 1-5 groups are usually neighbours that meet and talk frequently. The rank of delivery methods in order of their importance is 1-5 groups, sub-kebele discussion and kebele discussion.

Previously, 152 households graduated from the health packages. This year, as they said, 505 households had graduated.

The respondents said that usually adult married women use contraceptives. The data collected this year show that 223 women are using contraceptives. Among them, 164 use long-term contraceptive method such as an implant. They said that students do not take contraceptives from the health post but they suspect they might go to the nearest towns, Checha and Debre Berhan to get them.

They said that contraceptives have an impact on lowering the birth rate. Nevertheless, they are new to the kebele and data are unavailable.

As mentioned before, among other things, the government has been working to eliminate mothers’ death in or soon after labour by assigning at least one health extension worker with a skill of clean delivery. In addition, they said that starting from this year there is one Ambulance owned by the wereda to serve mothers in times of labour.

They said that deaths of mothers in times of delivery is almost non-existent. Moreover, the access of the community to hospitals and private clinics in nearby towns has contributed a lot to preventing mothers’ death in time of delivery.

Though they mentioned that the provision of ambulance is a positive change, they think the government has still a lot to do regarding childbirth. As they mentioned, recently the Ambulance was not working for three months which led mothers to pay more for a private ambulance. For them, this shows the government lack of interest in women in childbirth.

They said that there is no modern service to treat fistula and infertility in the kebele or the nearest towns. Problems related to abortion and menstruation can be treated in Checha and Debre Berhan town.

Regarding circumcision, they said that the community already stopped practicing it since around 2011. As they explained, they have been following up the new born baby girls regarding whether they get circumcised or not. Based on their observation, they said that the practice is becoming an old style and people do not want to continue.

The health workers said that the young and newly married women are very positive towards usage of contraceptive and prevention of female circumcision. However, as they mentioned, in time of labour, they prefer to be assisted by traditional birth attendants than professionals.

As they mentioned, for their work, they mainly target the ex-health volunteer workers. There are about 14 in number and now most of them are leaders of 1-5 groups.

### Head teacher of primary school

The head teacher of all schools in the kebele said that the school has maintained linkages with the wereda through reporting. As he described, the school provides reports in different time periods; weekly, monthly, two weeks, quarter year, 9 months and finally annual report.

In addition, he said that there is a sudden supervision by the wereda education sector. This supervision of the school started in 2009 but has become more regular recently. At present, they usually come twice a month. As he said, the schools do not have a problem related to teachers’ allocation. But there is considerable absenteeism of teachers for various reasons. Almost all teachers live in Debre Berhan and Tebase town. And often there is a problem accessing transportation that makes them late or absent.

As he said, starting from 2011/12 the schools have received a relatively huge budget to finance different activities. Every student has access to text books for private use. This year the government allocated 67,000 Birr for the education sector of the kebele. The school purchased new chairs, built toilets and so on. Moreover, the school has started to build a library.

The head teacher said that the main problem the school is facing is the shortage of water. There is no water point in the schools at all. The success story of the kebele is the increase in students attending classes.

Regarding to the recent improvement, he mentioned that the building of toilets, four additional classes (financed by FFC), chairs for teachers and students, tables, and an old typewriter machine. Previously, there were 12 rooms in the school compound; now it has increased to 19 rooms; five years ago there were 10 teachers now it has increased to 21. Before the schools were teaching up to grade three, now at the school one of them has started to teach up to grade 6. Now, there is one teacher’s office in all schools in the kebele.

He said that the reason for the decline in illiteracy and lack of numeracy of school leavers are various. Regarding to the decline in illiteracy, he mentioned that better access to education, including adult education, has supported people to come out of illiteracy. For instance, he mentioned that the numbers attending adult education are 440 Males and 68 Females. And, the number of students in formal school rose from 292 to 809 in the past five years.

He believes that the reason for increasing school leavers is rural-urban migration. In addition, divorce and migration of parents to other place has affected the school leavers’ rate. However, concerning the kebele, he mentioned that the school leavers’ rate had declined in the past five years. He also believes the numeracy of school leavers have also declined in wereda level too.

Regarding adult education, he said that it started in the last year. The course will be given for 6 months. It has two parts, introduction and intermediate course. The lessons are provided on holidays (days when working is prohibited because of religious reason), and Sunday. The lesson mainly emphasises agriculture, health, good governance and democracy.

Regarding poor English performance of college students, he said that parents and teachers are responsible for the problem. As he mentioned, parents are reluctant to follow up with their children and teachers do not have the time and the energy to follow up large class sizes.

He said that the performance of students in literacy as well numeracy is medium and balanced. But there are a few students who have extra potential beyond that of their class mates.

The head teacher does not have information about grade 8th and 10th school performance of students as he is head of the primary school.

He suggested continuation of the government policies and strategies to improve the literacy in educational process.

Regarding the effect of child labour on education, he mentioned that the demand of the parents on their children’s labour has affected the capacity as well as the commitment of students toward learning. He described, “Students come to school after having completed a dozen farm or non-farm tasks. They feel very tired and in that case they might even sleep in the class. Because of this burden, they may not be interested in coming to school and try to avoid education as much as possible. It undermines their ability to learn new ideas in the class”.

However, as he mentioned, currently the kebele is working hard to minimise dropping out as well as absenteeism in school. The education committee passes messages through development team leaders or at general meetings to alert the community to send children to school and minimise the work burden on students.

He mentioned that starting from about 13 years old, students may start to work for themselves. Nevertheless, all students are living with their parents and engaged in their work for additional income. In this regard, he said that a new change might be the students’ interest to look for a means to generate money independently. He said that the educational cost of all students in all schools in the kebele is financed by parents or relatives.

The head teacher says, “It would be advantageous for the students if they were able to learn during a full day. But, because of the labour demand from their parents, this could be difficult to implement. Consequently, the shift system was designed to be a way to balance schooling and parents’ demand of labour. Besides this, if unseasonal rain comes in harvesting season, we give a few days break for students to support their parents in harvesting crops”.

He estimated that the proportion of 7 year old children enrolled in grade one to be 99%. He described that grade 7 students who did yet join grade one are not more than seven in their number. The education committee is planning to bargain with the parents of the unrolled 7 year old children for the coming year.

He estimated that the number of pupils in the school who are not in the grade in which they should be for their ages to be 30%. And he said the oldest people in the school are aged about 20 to 21.

The head teacher said that there are no drop outs from the school found in the kebele. But, from empirical data, we found a few students who dropped out due to various reasons. He also denied the existence of returning after a period of drop out from education.

He said that there could be negative perceptions which resulted in less expectation from school. The students tend to be more negative towards schooling than their parents. Nevertheless, concerning the kebele, this can’t be a major problem since there is no unemployment of educated people in the kebele.

## Government volunteers

### Youth leaders

Two of the 5 discussants insisted that getting land was not a serious problem for the young as they could obtain it from communal land, their own parents, and land taken from persons who have got government employment. It was indicated that 28 Timad of irrigated land was given to 60 youths in groups, and 15 Timads to 24 other youths from waterlogged land, and around 10 youths received from Mote-keda land (those who died without descendants to inherit it). The other respondents argued that getting land was very difficult for many young people from poorer families and even richer farmers who have many children could not give enough land by dividing it among them all. They also indicated that so far only the above 100 young people got some land, but there are more than 500 dependent young people and there is not enough communal land left to allocate for any more youths. They estimated only 1-2% in their twenties may have their own farmland and some of the rest could be involved in daily labour, irregular carpentry work in the community or in nearby towns for few days. In a few cases some may buy and sell sheep for profit, a very few could go and work as porters in Debre Berhan or Chacha, but the majority of the dependents are said to be fully engaged in their parents’ farm work activities. It was indicated that unemployed young women couldn’t work in any of the activities that young men could to obtain money as parents would not approve it. Around 15 young men had left the kebele to go as far as Addis Abeba and Arusi in search of work, and 3 or 4 young women went to Addis Abeba or Debre Berhan. They all agreed that all young people would like to remain in the community if they could get work. Many were involved in road maintenance, repairing and arranging the kebele hall /seats for farmer’s festival celebration and conferences, and 25 young men cooperated in harvesting crops and repairing/building fences for weak people who didn’t have helpers (old/with ill-health).

They indicated that in times of rest some would go to Debre Berhan, Chacha and enjoy drinking alcohols or soft drinks with friends. The students usually play foot/volleyball at the school field. They all agreed that unlike the past, young people are now marrying much later, waiting until they are sure they have enough resources saved to maintain a household. They argued that this didn’t affect young women because marriage is now based on agreement between the partners, not their parents’ choice. So marriage now is delayed by their mutual agreement. It was reported that the young and the adults understand each other well on most things, but among the differences, many adults do not like/support the practices/idea of the young considering marriage to be based on mutual agreement/love of the two. Adults [parents) do not think young men need modern recreation facilities; they don’t support communal land allocation to the young.

The youth association has only 60 registered members; the league has 45 members and the Federation doesn’t have any separate membership, but it has only 15 leaders represented: 5 from the league, 5 from the association, and 5 from clubs such as the HIV/AIDS club (actually none of the HIV clubs exists, but the seats are pre-allocated anyway). One of the discussants is chairman of all the three and explained the main activities for each of these: the League is engaged in recruiting party members, mobilising the young for elections, and development work. The Federation facilitates work and land access opportunities, defends young women’s equal right for equal payment, represents/promotes the interests of the young at kebele cabinet/council meetings and decisions. They reported that young people who are involved in political activities, especially League and Federation members, could receive incentives such as trainings/meetings with per diems, get irrigable land in groups, and could be elected as kebele leaders.

They agreed that education has very much changed the attitudes of young people; previously many were saying education was becoming useless as it couldn’t help them to get jobs, but the young have now understood that with any educational level they can create works by their own efforts. So that many of them who completed or failed grade 10, dropped/failed from elementary education could be engaged in growing irrigated crops, organising themselves in to group cooperatives, in carpentry, sheep fattening/trading. All the young people who have attended school to any level are now aspiring to accumulate their own wealth through irrigation cash crops, trade/businesses, and daily labour in construction in nearby towns. It was also argued that the young are increasingly marrying whom they choose and they negotiate against parents’ wishes to choose/ arrange for them. The youth believe communal land should be allocated to landless young people in order to create work for them in the kebele, but parents (adults) oppose it, arguing that this would aggravate the already existing shortage of grazing land for livestock. They reported that young men and women respect older ones as much as before. They actively observe religious rules, they fast, attend church mass, contribute money for church construction, buy Tuwaf (waxed threads to burn) and incense.

### Male development team leader

He reported that a development team is managed by 5 leaders; a chairman, a secretary, and 3 ordinary members. He is secretary of a development team. He is not a party member as he was among the people politically excluded and identified as ‘bureaucrat’ farmers (linked to the Derg), and he was chosen as development team secretary just in this year. Their exclusion from political participation was lifted after the 2005 election, but they remained with the 4 Timads of land they were allowed to hold when all their land was taken away by the EPRDF and distributed to landless people. As secretary of the team he receives orders/work assignments and he presents them to the team leaders for discussion and records minutes/decisions. During public works he would record the amount of work done every day, the lists of work participants and absentees, and he prepares and sends work reports to the concerned body that gave the assignment- the DAs, HEWs, or the kebele chairman. He indicated that he is the leader of one of the 1-5s in the development team. Together with the other 1-5 leaders he takes his group’s daily work performances to end-of-work daily meetings with the team leadership for collective evaluation of successes and problems.

### Female development team leader

The respondent said that there is no other official position at the development team level other than leader of the teams. She is an active party member. As she said, in times of election, she mobilises the women to vote. But, she is not a party cell leader. She is a member of the social court since six months.

The respondent described that as a leader of a development team she works for the implementation of government interventions, giving much emphasis to health and sanitation. She is a model farmer and received praise from the kebele health extension i.e. digging equipment. As she elaborated, she was praised because she implemented almost all the health packages. The household has implemented latrine, kitchen cupboard, improved stoves, and separate house for livestock.

She said that currently almost all households in her team have implemented latrine and smoke free houses. This could be regarded as the biggest success that she had in her job. Moreover, recently, they have started to contribute money every two weeks to enable people to own more equipment that helps them to maintain personal as well as environmental sanitation.

As she said, the members are resistant to new modern ways of living. And, they push works, such as environment sanitation to her because they perceive that she is a divorced woman without a husband to control or look after.

She said that there is no meeting for 1-5 groups. She described, “I used to visit members’ houses turn by turn. i warned people to implement the health packages otherwise there will be punishment. Beside this, I am sure that no one will come to me if I want all to meet”.

She was elected as a leader of the women’s league three years ago but the structure has never been functional. For this purpose, she had taken three days training in the wereda. She described, “As to discharge my responsibility, I tried to organise a meeting for women and to pass messages. But, the women rejected my proposal. They said it has nothing to add for us than simple talking and propaganda”.

### Male 1-5 cell leader

He is a member of the kebele primary party organisation managed by 16 core cadres and is also leader of a cell. As chairman of the cell, he leads study discussions on party issues from newspapers regularly conducted twice in a month. He prepares and takes study reports for each meeting to the kebele party organisation. He said some members complain that the study meetings were harming their household work activities, and so meetings were not held due to the absence of the majority. He reported he holds meetings always when there is any public work assignment or during elections and as meetings are called. He attends and brings all the 1-5 members under his command.

### Female 1-5 cell leader

The leaders of 1-5 groups are the leaders of development teams. They take the same role in both level of leadership. Even though they are expected to lead the development team, they divided the 1-5 groups among themselves.

### Woman leader

She is the head of women affairs. She was elected to the position in 2010. She completed grade 12 in 1998 but she failed to get a grade that enabled her to join university. Before she became head of women’s affairs, she was elected as a model farmer.

As she mentioned, generally women’s affairs is less active and they did not yet start to mobilise women to work together for the benefit of themselves. She said that for the time being since she has been elected to the position, she has been trying to pass messages when she meets women in iddir, mourning, market and so on. She explained that the wereda provides her with training on different government strategies and direction concerning women at least twice a year. The women’s affairs office of the kebele arranges meetings for the women living in the community at the end of a training given by the wereda. However, as she said, women in the community are inactive and less interested to work together.

Regarding women’s economic empowerment, she mentioned that although the wereda and the kebele have been trying to organise women together in such a way as to enable them to generate their independent income, because of less interest among women, there is still no change regarding women’s economic empowerment in the community. She mentioned the only programme that shows a step forward in making women less dependent on their husband for income is the support that comes from food for Children (FFC). Women have taken improved seeds of vegetables which at least help them to sell the product and purchase clothes and other basic need for themselves.

Concerning land and other property rights, she mentioned that there is significant change among the community, specifically regarding women’s equal right to land. As she said, before she became a cabinet member, she was a member of the committee working on land administration in the kebele. She also worked in the certification of land ownership. As she elaborated, during the certification period, there had been men who tried to deny land rights to their wives by providing different false reasons to the kebele administration. She says, “a farmer had lost land a few years ago because he get divorced. Then, he married his second wife. During land certification, we (the land committee) asked him to bring the photo of his wife. He denied that the woman who used to live with him was his wife, he said she was just a housemaid. However, their marriage was known to all. We pushed him to do what we said. He brought the photo and his wife to the kebele office. While we talked to her, we learned that he had never talked her about the land certification that was a hot issue in the community at the time. He tried to did this because he wanted to avoid losing more land if he got divorced from his second wife”.

Regarding marriage, the respondent said that women are able to choose their own partner and to refuse the pressure from their parents to marry someone who they choose. Similarly, male violence is becoming rare in the community. The reason that she mentioned is that women now know more about their rights so they challenge and bring the case either to formal or informal structures when they feel it is going the wrong way. Female circumcision, as she said, has declined since the kebele and church are working to create awareness. However, she pointed that some conservatives have had their children circumcised secretly.

The second important women in the community said that women’s economic power has risen as a result of fattening and milk sale. As she described, those women who are married engage in fattening but it is rare for unmarried ones. Both married and unmarried women engage in rearing cows for milk. Regarding women’s economic empowerment, one thing that she fears about the future is the unwillingness of women to organise and work together. Even though the woreda women’s affairs official has been trying to make women in the kebele organised under an association and start working by taking credit for productive activities that they think are proper for them.

Regarding to women’s property ownership, she said that it has been a long time since women secured their equal rights. She says, “My husband passed away 10 years ago. Nobody tried to deprive my right to the property that I used to own with my husband. In the time of EPRDF, I have never heard about a woman denied her property right”.

The respondent said that the kebele administration works in collaboration to ensure the rights of women. For instance, she mentioned that the community [police and the militia] will get involved in cases related to women’s right if the one who is suspected to be the abuser hesitates to come to the social court. She says, “If the suspect refuses to come, he will be forced to pay 200 Birr for the accuser and 240 birr for the police who bring him before the social court.”

Regarding male violation, she mentioned that the formal as well as the informal structure of the kebele will punish the violators, mostly in such a way as to compensate the victim. For instance, she said that recently a man bit his wife and elders decided that he should purchase cloth for her as compensation.

She said that the women are using contraceptives from the health posts. Nevertheless, women still prefer to be supported by traditional health attendants rather than by HEW who are trained in clean delivery.

Regarding female circumcision, she described that it is a deep rooted culture and difficult to abolish it within a short period of time. She admitted that still community members get their daughters circumcised secretly.

### Service co-operative leader

There is only one service cooperative formed by and providing services to 6 different kebeles, including Kormargefiya. It is located in Faji kebele on the main Addis-Debre Berhan road. It was formed during the Derg, around 1972/4 by 6 of the then peasant associations (corresponding to the current kebeles) in the surrounding area. He said original members were 1007 household heads and only 42 additional members were included since then. Currently there are 1049 members from all the 6 different kebeles. He insisted that almost all household heads in Kormargefia are members of the cooperative. He reported that the cooperative had lost huge assets including 2 grain mills when it was looted when the EPRDF came to power, so there haven’t been any dividend payments made to members. They have planned to start dividend reallocation by next year. It provides services to both non-members and members. It supplies inputs and consumer goods to non-members at the same price. He indicated that the number of users has increased as the children of the cooperative members could also get services when they form their own households. It is a member of the Wedera farmers’ cooperative union formed at zone level, consisting of 127 primary service cooperatives.

Fertilisers and improved seeds are the regular inputs being provided to both members and non-members at the same prices, except that members could take them on credit in the past. They never give priority to members as there is always enough fertiliser available and they have even sold it to anyone outside the member kebeles. It also supplies consumer goods purchased in bulk from the Union or wholesale traders. He indicated that the Union could supply them with iron-sheets, nails, sugar, food oils, blankets, and coffee beans in bulk in the past, but it couldn’t provide them in this year so that they purchased all these from big traders. He said that since last year, fertiliser/improved seeds are sold to members for cash, but could be provided to a very few poor farmers on credit. He insisted that farmers haven’t any access to buy fertilisers from traders, because, following the formation of the Union, private providers were banned from selling any fertilisers.

Other than inputs, it sells iron-sheet, nails, soaps, sugar, food oils, table salt, and coffee beans purchasing in bulk from wholesale traders in Debre Berhan, who could bring it by their own trucks. He said most of these items are bought at slightly cheaper prices than from retailers, but 500 soaps remained unsold because the retail price had fallen much lower than that at which it was bought. They have food oil packed in 25 litre units from the previous year’s purchase due to the lack of demand. So they are selling it at below market prices to dispose of it before it expires. The cooperative was never involved in buying/selling of members’ outputs. He argued that the cooperative has been able to provide its services so far by generating enough to sustain itself, although its growth has been slow. He reported a lack of sustainable wholesale suppliers of consumer goods has been the main problem. They tried to get it through the Union or from government wholesale Trade Corporation, but the wereda officials refused access, saying it supplies only urban consumers’ cooperatives. He insisted the cooperative doesn’t have any short term plan to buy members’ crop outputs as farmers are not that much accustomed to selling crop produce. Rather they have some thoughts of getting involved in milk and sheep marketing.

### Credit organiser- none

## Elites

### Leading farmer

He insisted that there was little difference in farming production as frost, heavy hails, and absence of belg rain continued to affect crops in one year or another as before. He said his farming production has increased a bit compared to what it was 5 years ago, because he has been growing using compost along with fertilisers, planting through Ziqosh (doing manually what can be done by BBM) and he has also started growing irrigated crops by renting land for the last 2 years. He reported that they had good harvest in the last year, but he and most of the other farmers could obtain very little harvest for this year because crops were badly affected due to too much rain in the previous Kiremt, and frost caused some damage to make it worse. He said he had planted 4 Timads of land mainly with barley and other grains and cereals in the previous Meher season, but there was no/little Belg rain to plant any crop. He said he grows all types of food crops on rain-fed land, as before, except that he recently started growing vegetables on irrigated, rented land, mainly onions, potatoes, and carrots. His wife doesn’t grow any crop separately.

He said he always buy fertilisers, and sometimes improved seeds from the service cooperative; he didn’t use any weed killers and pesticides, but knows these are available in private shops as others buy them. He insisted he got his livestock by rearing his own cattle/shoats and buying some cattle. He could receive artificial and bull insemination services from the wereda/the research centre nearby. He bought some drugs for his shoats suffering from foot/mouth diseases when the wereda veterinarian brought it to the kebele centre. His cattle were vaccinated by wereda experts,

He indicated that adult and young men are involved in land preparation/ploughing for Belg September-October and land preparation/ploughing 1-3 times for Meher March-April. They are engaged in ploughing and planting of Meher crops. Adult and young men/women are involved in weeding late July-early September. Adult/young men and a few women are engaged in harvesting November-early December. Men/women are engaged in threshing crops in late December-January. Mainly men and sometimes women are involved in weeding irrigated crops, but planting of these is done by men. He reported that he and his sons are mainly responsible for the household farmwork on rain fed land and irrigated vegetables. Smaller children were usually herding livestock and his wife milks the cows and collects fresh dung from the livestock area. He said he always sold livestock and farm outputs in Debre Berhan market. He insisted he didn’t have any special store for marketable outputs, rather he sells some by taking it from the same Gotera (granary?) in which he commonly stores grain. He mostly can wait until prices increase, but he guessed that his wife might have rarely sold some when the price was low if she urgently needed money for other things. He said he applied all the extension advice, fertilisers, compost, livestock drugs/vaccination, dairy production, but his crops didn’t give him much due to frost and too much Kiremt rain. He could obtain good income from milk sales. None of the household members were ever involved in non-farm trades nor migrated.

He is a cell leader, member of the primary party organisation, development team/1-5 leader, Iddir judge, chairman of one water committee and secretary of another, and secretary of the service cooperative.

### Woman model farmer

She said that she was chosen as a model farmer because she has been working hard on her farmland for many years. She did not get married but she has a child. She is living with her and they are commitment to engage in agriculture and give lessons to others. In addition, she mentioned that farmers should be in favour of the ruling party and various government strategies and policies.

She owns about 1/8 hectare irrigated land. She owns another 2.5 hectares of rain fed farm land. She explained, “I have never given the land for share cropping. When it is possible, I mobilise my neighbours and relatives to work on my farmland. I prepare food and drink for them. In times when it is difficult to get such labour force, I will hire an individual temporary. For instance, I usually have to look for an individual outside the community in harvesting season. As all farmers want to collect their crops before the rain comes, it would be very difficult to make them to work on my farm which includes Faba bean, barley and wheat”.

She said that she is the one who cultivates vegetables on the irrigated land since last year. Before, the household had been using the land to grow grass for fodder. However, as she said, since last year she has started to cultivate potatoes. She rents a water pump when it is needed. She used to pay 50 birr per day. In addition, she covers the cost of the kerosene to run the water pump. She informs that the water pump needs about 3 litres of kerosene for a day. This means she pays 50 Birr more to buy 3 litres kerosene for a day. She uses pump water at least three times for a single cultivation year. Last year, she produced and sold potatoes for her neighbours and at Debre Berhan market.

Regarding farm inputs, she has been using inorganic fertilisers for many years by taking it from the service cooperative of the kebele. Once, as she said, she took improved seeds of wheat from the NGO (FFC). She has never used herbicides on her land.

The only mechanised technology that could be mentioned is the usage of the water pump on the irrigated land.

In relation to farm labour, she said that that males from the kebele migrate to ‘cheffe donsa’ to engage in seasonal agricultural work. Usually the migration takes place in harvesting season, November to January. There is no seasonal agricultural work migration for females. Usually, those farmers who own a large amount of irrigated land hire labour from the community or outside for different agricultural activities such as weeding, digging, watering and harvesting.

She says, “My mother and I are responsible for looking after livestock. We provide them with fodder and water, we clean the yards, we engage in milking and so on”.

Except for the potatoes that are considered a cash crop, the household does not provide crops to the markets. As she said, to purchase some consumable commodities, she provides dung cake and firewood to the market. The storage of crops is just for consumption and they use traditional materials. They sell livestock as well as livestock products in Debre Berhan market.

As she elaborated, she has been getting extension advice and visits from the Das. And, she believes the advice helped her especially regarding the cultivation of potatoes on irrigated land.

Regarding nonfarm activities, the only activities that the household carries out are selling dung cake and firewood. There is no one employed by someone from the household.

Currently, she owns 2 ox, a bull, a cow, and 4 sheep. Except the bull, which is semi-breed, all are local. As she said, she has never tried fattening because she does not think she could have the time as well as the energy to feed and take care of them.

She is the leader of the kebele women affairs but not elder, clan leader, religious leader or customary leader.

### Leading male trader – none

### Leading female trader – none

### Leading businessman - none

## Knowledgeable people

### Best local economist

The respondent is an individual who is known to be sharp in his thinking of the economic issues of the kebele. He is the secretary of the social court as well as a member of the core party structure in the kebele. Regarding the wellbeing of the society in the community, he said that there has been a general increase in price that deprived people of access to adequate basic need facilities. He says, “these days, we are selling more fattened sheep and ox with higher price in Chacha or Debre Berhan market for large scale traders at the country level. We even get a higher price from the sale of eggs and kitchen. The problem is we have to spend all of this to buy consumable and other goods for household members. For instance, nowadays, to purchase a piece of cloth for a 6 month baby you have to incur about 250 Birr which is too expensive, especially for the poorer. In general, we are getting more money from our sale and paying back more for our purchase.”

He mentioned that it is the fattening which enables many households to get better income than before. Without this, as he said, farming could not be a means of livelihood to depend on because there is erratic rainfall, hail and frost that reduces the productivity of land.

He described, “The rate of economic growth in the community could be improved through expansion of improved breeds for fattening as well as large scale production of milk for market. The establishment of processing enterprises will have a very positive push for the economy and livelihood of the people”.

He estimated the proportion of households involved in smallholder farming to be 100% (all residents mainly depend on farming though it could not assure food security without fattening), Agricultural labour on smallholdings (1%), special farming(0%), Agricultural labour on special farms(0%), trading(1%), nonfarm employment(less than 1%), commuting for work(0%) and migration(2%).

He said that the number of people who are interested in fattening has increased while the numbers of agricultural labourers on smallholdings has declined. According to him, the reasons could be attractive price for fattened livestock and option to migrate to the towns respectively.

Smallholding farming, as he said, has increased because the kebele administration has been redistributing lands without inheritance claims as well as communal land such that the land which is given to the youth cooperative. In addition, he mentioned that there is some positive change towards trading. Regarding to the number of migrants from the community, he replied that the number of migrants have declined in the past ten years because there is better access to education for the young people. He also mentioned that in previous times resettlement has been causing migration. Now, it is no longer a problem for the community.

He roughly estimated the proportion of very rich, rich, middle, poor, very poor and destitute to be 5%, 15%, 60%, 15%, 10% and 3% respectively.

He said that in the last ten years, the number of people who have medium economic status has increased; the number of very rich, poor as well as very poor has decreased; the number of rich has increased.

He says, “ before ten years back, the number of very rich had been more(10%); the proportion of rich has been less(about 10%); the proportion of middle has been less(about 40%); the proportion of very poor, poor and destitute has been more(15%, 20%, 5%) respectively”.

As he mentioned, the very rich category has declined because of less productivity of the land; they were taken as richer because they owned large size of land, which was relatively more fertile and productive. Now, this has changed, directly affecting their economic status in the community.

He said the poor/destitute category has declined because of the diversification of means of livelihood. Poor people have shown progress in their livelihood by engaging in fattening, especially sheep, keeping chickens, and providing more dung cakes and fire wood to the market (it has a more attractive price than before).

### Opinion leader with urban links

He argued that farmers have been changing their way of life, copying modern things from townspeople. Every farmer is now aspiring to save and buy urban land/houses as a means of getting rental cash income and many have urban homes already. He indicated that most of the farmers in the past used to go to Tenquay (spiritual healers) but the majority are now going to government clinics and hospital to get treatments/medicines even for light illnesses. More people are now accustomed to frequently use vegetables as part of family meals. He said the whole community has understood the importance of educating children and no one hesitates to send their children to school, even as far as Debre Berhan for high school. The majority have accepted and respect women’s rights as equals and give freedoms to their children in many ways: buying good clothes and shoes, even buying them mobiles. Beating children is now rare and politely advising them is the common way of correcting wrong doing. He indicated that farmers also fear the behaviour of their children could be contaminated by bad habits such as smoking, stealing, and idleness/laziness. He argued that all farmers are trying to achieve better wealth status by developing their farming production through hard work and many have improved/modernised their households’ standards of living. Many have iron roof houses, they replaced clay/grass baskets with plastic/iron utensils, they use sponge Frash instead of hides to sleep on. Some have sofas and many have bought household solar panels for light, tape players, and charging mobiles. He noted that 5 farmers have one each in Milki Got alone.

### Irrigation expert

The respondent has been chairman of the irrigation committee since Derg times. There are 80 household head members. He reported that they have been using traditional irrigation from the Abdezeriqi river at Milki Got since Imperial times. They had been growing only food grains mainly barley throughout imperial times and up to the middle of the Derg times, when they started planting potatoes, onions, carrots, and sugar beets. He estimated a total of more than 70 Timads of irrigated land is covered with vegetables, fava beans, and peas, irrigated by both canal and pumps. He insisted that all households in the Got have a plot of irrigable land as the land was originally distributed fairly based on fertility and irrigation access. Each was equally compensated with fertile-infertile and irrigable-rain fed land allocations. They could produce once in a year during the dry season because all the land is covered in surface water during Kiremt, growing much grass. In October they remove/cut the grass from their plots and conduct the first ploughing. They plant it in February, because from experience they understand that frost would attack it if they planted it in January.

He said water is available throughout the year and all the 80 irrigation association members use canal water in turn and other farmers with land where the canal water cannot reach, use pumps. Canal users are in the middle, farmers upstream use pumps to irrigate their individual plots on both sides of the river. Youth groups also use rented pumps to collectively grow vegetables downstream. He argued that there wasn’t any conflict problems among members nor between the canal-using association and pump-using individuals/ the youth cooperative. This is because they have defined turns assigned to each canal user for watering their plots sequentially. Individual turns are assigned at any time of both day and night. After canal users finished watering, the youth groups downstream have their turn. He insisted that there is enough water in the swampy river so that there was no problem of competition among the different users. He said government was not involved in providing any irrigation facility/resources, but the DAs advise them regarding the importance of improved seeds, marketing of vegetables, and pest control.

### Experienced migrants

Male seasonal migrant

He went to Bale last month and worked on a school construction project as a carpenter and returned after 15 days when the school roof work was complete and his contract was over. Two years ago he went to Addis Abeba and worked for 2 years as an assistant carpenter on a condominium construction project at Mekanisa. He went to Debre Sina in the last year and worked a one-week contract roofing work on a private building as an independent carpenter. He indicated that he started carpentry by going on and off to Debre Berhan and working on private building projects as a daily labourer and then gradually as an assistant to senior carpenters. His first migration was when he went and worked in Addis Abeba for a year in 2002. He reported that when he heard about the availability of much condominium work in Addis he went alone by public transport without informing his parents. As he arrived he called his aunt who lives in Addis Ababa and she took him to her home. She helped him to get accustomed to the city for a week, and one day as he and his aunt were passing through a street, he saw a line of people waiting around a construction site and he asked his aunt about them. She told him they were job seekers on a condominium construction and he asked her to let him try for himself. He went straight and inquired if they could provide him with a carpentry job. The employers told him to come the next day with a paper verifying his experience and he brought it and started as an assistant carpenter obtaining 70 birr/day for a year. He said the work was good as one labourer was assigned to him as his assistant. He could send some money back to his mother. He indicated he finally came back home at the end of the year because he couldn’t work full time, since the work was being slowed due to the start of the rainy season. He said he came back with some money saved which enabled him to buy household utensils, shoats, and he could cover the costs for his wedding. Most recently he went to Oromiya region, Bale zone and worked as a contract carpenter employed by one of the licensed private contractors who had won the bid for constructing a school. He went with another two carpenters by public transport and returned after a week, having completed the iron-sheet roof making of the school. He was paid 100birr/day but he didn’t save much due to transport, food, bed costs. He said he will continue going anywhere to work for short periods as far as contractor friends call him, especially in seasons when there is less farm work. He insisted that seasonal migration for construction work as a carpenter and builder enables him to obtain good payment and it doesn’t cause much harm to household farm work as they can do it on contract and return when there is agricultural work. He insisted all his travelling for work helped him to increase his farming by renting extra land.

Male urban migrant

No unsuccessful urban migrant returnees.

Female urban migrant

She is about 38 years old. She left the community to go to Addis Ababa in 1994. She returned in 2011/12. She was a housemaid from the beginning until she returned. For her, Addis Ababa was the first and the last place to migrate to.

As she said, she decided to migrate to the city because she needed to support her father. She elaborated, “My mother suddenly passed away. My father cannot work on farmland because he has a disability on his leg. I have two younger brothers and one sister. I felt that I am the only one who could take the responsibility to take care for all the household mothers. After my mother died, I stayed only for 40 days in the kebele. My cousin, who has been working in Addis Ababa as a housemaid, came to visit us when she heard about my mother’s death. She advised me to migrate to Addis and send remittances for my father. I came to Addis with her. “

She said that she used public transportation to go to Addis and stayed for a few days with the household where her cousin used to work and live. Within a short period of time, the boss of her cousin helped her to find work i.e. housemaid.

The only person that she knew in Addis was her cousin. Her cousin used to live in the same ‘got’ as her. As she said, she was uncomfortable with the burden of work as a housemaid. The payment was 40 Birr for the first ten years, and then it rose to 100 and then 200 birr. In her stay in Addis Ababa, 200 Birr was the highest salary that she got.

The first time she got work, her main responsibility was to take care of children. She stayed in the household for many years. Then after, she changed the place of the work where she stayed for few months. She moved to another household within a short period of time because the spouse of the household head used to hide food from her. Usually, as she mentioned, she may not eat anything until the evening.

As she said, she didn’t like to stay in Addis. She believes she spent a very lonely and unhappy time there. She stayed for the last 20 years because she had no option, as she mentioned.

She returned to the kebele because her father became too old and urgently need her support. As she said, her two cousins were living with her father and provided him with support to live a decent life. However, in the last year, both decided to get married. So she was the only one able to take care of him and finally she decided to return back and has started to live with her father.

She mentioned that she had been sending remittances to her father. In addition, in her break time, she used to bring clothes and other consumable goods for her father. Furthermore, she gave money for her cousins to purchase chickens and provide eggs to the market to enable them to cover the cost of some goods such as coffee, salt and so on.

She said that when she returned, she brought 800 Birr with her. Nevertheless, she spent more than half of it on her cousin’s wedding ceremony. She saved the rest of the money in her house.

In this year, she has started to attend adult education. She also said that she has started to participate in community public work representing the household. She never got married and she doesn’t have children.

International migrant

None have returned yet.

## Customary leaders

### Elders

He insisted that he and all the other elders are Amharas and they are also accepted by the very few Oromos as community leaders or mediators/reconcilers. He said there are few Oromos in Kabigizaw Got and Aloberet sub-kebele, and insisted they have the same culture and religion as the Amhara, sharing the same Iddir, Mehaber, church, they cooperate in Debo (labour exchange), mutual loaning of equipment/farm implements, and have intermarried.

He reported that some especially gifted young individuals could be respected by the community for good behaviour and being wise, but most act as elders after the age of 40 or 50. He is personally involved as an Iddir elder in mediating disputes among Iddir members, as ye-wenz Shimagle (river wide mediator?) or Ye-Dem Iriq (blood reconciliation) in which inter kin-groups conflicts over homicide cases within and/or outside the community. The elders are involved in reconciling the close relatives of the dead and the killers. He is also involved in mediating inter-personal and family disputes. He insisted government/NGOs didn’t help/work with them in any way, but the kebele used to ask elders to help by preventing conflicts from developing into serious security and peace problems. The social court could write letters urging elders to mediate/resolve dispute cases filed and report their decisions. The wereda formal courts also could write letters urging those elders mutually chosen by disputants to mediate and report the outcome. He said they could ask the help of respected religious leaders in mediating serious conflict cases, where one or both disputants were difficult to reconcile since the priests could persuade anybody by reminding them to act according to God’s wishes. He said inter-household disputes over borderland encroachments and livestock entering into households crop fields and pastures were common disputes they dealt with.

### Ethnic groups

*It was too late; the idea that I could have interviewed at least one respected elder from the Oromo residents came to my mind just while I was writing the report. But the views of the majority Amhara respondents about the Oromo residents as very few in number and having similar way of life must have influenced my approach.*

## Religious leaders

### Orthodox Christian leader

He reported that all residents with in the Egziabher church territory are Orthodox. There are 100 household heads who are Orthodox Christian faith followers, 17 of these are new /young households, and all family members of the households are Orthodox. He insisted the people have been strengthening their faith so that many have started observing more fasting periods that were not considered mandatory for the common people, but just for priests, monks/nuns, and the older devotees. Churchgoers have increased and their contributions to support the church are growing. He insisted that the introduction of other religions into the community is unthinkable as they will never allow anyone to bring Pente (protestant or Islam). He said educated preachers from the wereda church administration used to come and preach twice in a year, on Tir 13 and Ginbot 12 when special annual festival celebrations are held. He argued that the methods of teaching/preaching have been improved such that the Amharic versions of the bible and other prayers and song texts are used side by side the original Geez texts so as to enable the common people to easily understand everything read and said at the church. He indicated that in the past they used to sing, read out special texts all in Geez, but sibikete-wengel (gospel preaching?) and Kidasie have been conducted in Amharic for the last 5 years. Both Amharic and Geez versions of the bible are available at the church for the priests to use alternatively.

He said the church advises followers coming to the church to participate in government development activities such as in watershed work, and teaches them to stop harmful traditional practices. He argued that female circumcision has been maintained by custom and their religion never mentioned anything concerning females, while it says that male babies should be circumcised on the 8th day after birth and it is clearly indicated that the days of christening should be the 40th and 80th days for male and female children, respectively. But he insisted the church never advised people to work on non-workable holy days, but rather it taught them to strictly observe it. He said the church was not involved in helping the poor in any way, but it teaches followers to morally behave and avoid bad habits, to respect their marriages, and religiously shape children. He said religious leaders are actively involved in peace and reconciliation mediations as most of the serious conflicts used to be mediated at the churchyard.

### Muslim leader - none

### Protestant leader - none

## NGO worker – none

## Research Officer initiative – data on primary school

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year in Ethiopian calendar | No of enrolled students | | Dropped out | | No of teachers | |
| Female | Male | Female | male | Female | male |
| 2000 | 182 | 143 | - | - | 1 | 4 |
| 2001 | 166 | 194 | 10 | 23 | 6 | 1 |
| 2002 | 241 | 296 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 7 |
| 2003 | 294 | 358 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 3 |
| 2004 | 339 | 435 | - | 2 | 11 | 9 |
| 2005 | 356 | 438 | - | - |  |  |