# Interviews with wereda officials re Oda Haro, West Shewa – Stage 3 questions

## Bako Tibe wereda

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## About the wereda

### Wereda policies and budget

The most important regular government programmes which take most of the wereda resources are agriculture and road construction (mainly internal roads and paths, and dry weather roads). The internal roads are partly financed by the government as part of the MDG fund budget and partly carried out with contributions from the people.

The programmes which suffer from lack of budget include drinking water and education respectively. The third programme which faced budget shortages is the small scale enterprises. Of course, all the programmes face shortage of budget but these are the most disadvantaged sectors. There are large numbers of young men who are seeking jobs both in the urban and rural areas. The problem is more prominent in the urban areas of the wereda. Due to budget shortages the wereda is not able to help them to form cooperatives and involve them in small scale activities.

The regional MDG fund budget is mainly allocated for the construction of roads in the rural areas. The wereda properly use this budget to the expansion of internal roads in the rural communities. They also use part of this budget for the expansion of drinking water in the urban areas, mainly of Bako town and to construct a Hospital in Bako town. The construction of the Hospital was started four months ago. The construction of the water reservoir was started two months ago by the German company on the Gibe River and Bako town is expected to get drinking water by the end of August this year. The town has been suffering from shortage of drinking water for a longer period of time and now it seems that the problem will be resolved. The wereda also used some MDG fund for the expansion of spring gravity in the rural areas. The problem with the MDG fund is that projects are stopped before finishing because the contractors have low capacity to accomplish the activities which leads to a conflict between the contractors and the federal offices which are responsible for the follow up of these projects. We repeatedly faced this in relation to drinking water.

One of the new programmes which were started last year was the construction of internal roads and paths. Half of the budget for the construction of these feeder roads was covered by the government as part of the MDG fund budget, and the remaining half was carried out through the construction from the people (cash and labour contribution). In addition, there a new plans to construct a youth recreational centre in the Bako town. The project has not yet started because of budget shortage. The other new programme recently announced is the Agricultural Growth Programme (AGP). It is focusing on expanding the agricultural activities in the rural kebeles. It also gives priority to improving the drinking weather, internal roads, health services, protecting natural resources, and expanding non-farm business in the rural areas. The training of farmers on how to implement this programme was recently launched and the priority areas are being identified. As a whole, 11,300,000 birr is allocated for this programme which will be implemented in 17 rural kebeles where FTC activities are already deep-rooted. The implementation of this programme will be started next year.

### Wereda progress

The most successful wereda programme is farming. Farmers have been using modern and improved technologies to produce crops. They use improved seeds, and artificial fertilisers which results in the increasing of farm products obtained from a small plot of land. The last year data indicates that on average farmers were able to increase their production (for all crops) by 38%. Specifically a typical model farmer was able to produce 92 quintal of maize from a hectare of land. This indicates that farming is becoming the most successful programme in the wereda. In addition to crop production, improvements have been shown in livestock production. Many farmers have been engaging in the improvements of milk and milk products, and fattening activities.

The most important reasons for the improvements brought about by the farming programme include the provision of intensive training to farmers which has helped them to increase awareness on the importance of the programmes in changing the livelihood of their hhs. The role of extension workers is also another important reason for the changes. They have helped the farmers to get actively involved in farm activities and to use improved technologies. The other factor for the improvement is the clarity of the government policies and strategies.

The second successful programme in the wereda was the expansion of education. There have been good improvements in terms of access to education and in reducing gender parity. There are now 2-3 schools in each kebele within the wereda. The gender disparity improves mainly at primary level. Over all the enrolment rate has reached 94% which is a big achievement. The problem is related to quality. Though the wereda has strongly worked on improving the quality of education at all levels, there are still a number of challenges including: decline in the participation of people in school management and activities, shortage of trained teachers, shortage of budget to employ additional teachers and to buy necessary materials, etc. To solve these problems the wereda has been engaging in mobilizing the people to increase their participation in school activities; grouping the students into 1-5s so that the clever students support the weak ones; urging the teachers to provide tutorial classes to students; arranging specific trainings for teachers so that they can improve their knowledge and teaching skills. The regional government is training more and more teachers which is expected to reduce the shortage. The wereda are also urging the schools to properly use their school grant budget for the maintenance activities, etc.

The problematic area is the internal road construction. While the budget of the MDG started in other weredas in 2004 E.C, it is started in this wereda only this year. The budget was not released last year because the constructor had no interest to start the work in time. As a result the first constructor was changed. Even the current constructor did not bring all necessary logistics and construction materials in time. Until now only one constructor started the work while the other two are on the way to starting. Last year the plan was to construct 31km feeder roads but it was not done due to the above reason. This year the wereda has planned to construct 48 km. Until now 15km have been completed. The other problematic area is water which showed very little improvement. The wereda plan for the GTP was to reach 100% by the end of the GTP period. Until now they have reached only 65%. Budget shortage is the main factor for the delay. There is also shortage of professionals trained in the area of drinking water provision.

In order to improve these problems, the wereda feels they need to employ effective and efficient contractor to reduce the problem of the road; to use all available resources to improve the shortage of drinking water in the wereda.

## NGOs in the wereda

Currently only very few NGOs are working in the wereda. Before last years the followings NGO were working on a number of activities:

* UNICEF:- working on health and education
* NEVA (New Education Vision Association):- working on education
* WASH: - working on the improvement of drinking water.
* World Bank- supporting family health services

None of these organisations are active in the wereda at the moment.

No major problem has happened to NGOs in the wereda due to the new regulation on Societies and charities in Ethiopia. There is an NGO called CPM (the wereda administrator do not know what this stands for) which financed the Boarding school in Bako called Merha Muha. Following the new NGO regulation it greatly reduced the budget of the school which created major problems to the students and the wereda. The wereda was forced to provide some budget for the school as the school reached a level where it could not properly perform its activities. Students coming from the rural and poorer hhs had suffered a lot from food shortage, which finally resulted in decline in the quality of education and decline in student performance. Now this NGO has been increasing the budget of the school though still it is not enough to properly run the activity of the Boarding school.

## Investors

### Has land been leased to investors from outside?

The wereda leased rural land to two investors: the Karaturi Agro industry and JAKARANDA agro-industry.

The Karaturi has engaged in producing different kinds of grain and vegetables crops. These include grains like maize, and rice, and vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, potatoes, cabbages, etc. Initially in had created large number of employment opportunities for local and non-local labourers. It also introduced new technologies such as tractors and new crops like rice. In addition, the organisation borrowed machines for digging deep wells for different drinking water projects of the wereda. It was also involved in digging springs for the local people.

Initially it took a large plot of land (10,800 hectares) in the Bachera Oda Gibe kebele. The land was given to them by the federal government with very little involvement from the wereda administration. Though they received this big amount of land, the investor did not produce crops on all of the land. As a result the farmers and extension workers repeatedly complained that the land was not being cultivated whilst local farmers are suffering from a shortage of farm land. The wereda repeatedly warned the investor to either cultivate all the land they received or to return back part of it to the farmers. As they received the land through the federal government, they were very reluctant to accept any advice from the wereda. Finally the wereda and the region discussed and reduced their land into 5000 hectares and redistributed the remaining land to the farmers.

In recent years, they even reached the level of not working properly on this 5000 hectare plot. Now they use only 2000 hectares. Following the death of the owner of the company two years ago, the company’s activities have declined. It lacks experts to run the activities. The existing experts lack the knowledge and skill to properly manage the crop production. It has been realised that currently it has been producing an average of 30 quintal of maize from a hectare whilst local farmers produce 40-50 quintals. So, farmers still request the wereda to urge the organisation to return the land to the local farmers or properly cultivate it.

The other major investor is JAKARANDA agro-industry. They took 300 hectares of land from the government to produce maize, vegetables, fruits and sheep. The investors came from Addis Ababa and made many local farmers become shareholders in the company. It has created good job opportunities for local people. This investment is located in Oda-Gibe kebele of the wereda. The land was originally given to FUB (no one knows the abbreviation) which finally became the shareholder of the JAKARANDA and transfer the land to it. The FUB had produced improved maize seeds. As the organisation failed to be profitable, it transferred the land to JAKARANDA.

In the urban areas, there are smaller investors mainly engaged in hotel and tourism, education, fuel/gas station, etc.

In the future the wereda has no extra rural land to be given to the investors. Although there is some irrigation land along the Gibe River, the government, recently passed an instruction not to give the lands along the Gibe River to investors because there is a plan by the government to construct the 4th Gibe Hydro-electric power station. When the station will be constructed, the water is expected to create man-made lake on the low lands kebeles of the wereda. In the urban areas there is sufficient land to give to investors. As the wereda has no power to give the investment licence, the weredas responsibility is to identify the potential areas suitable for various kinds of investment and report to the region which has the full power to decide on the land.

## Kebele structures

The current kebele structures in the wereda are as follows: below the main kebele, there are four structures: the General council, the cabinet, the social court and political party organisers.

Under the General council, there are 100 people out of 300 kebele dwellers.

Under the cabinet there are 8 structures:

* 1 kebele chairperson
* 1 kebele vice chairperson
* 1 kebele manager
* 1 security/militia head
* 2 HEWs
* 3 DAs
* 1 school Director
* 1 Women’s Affair Head

There is no information desk. The kebele manager can act as the head of information desk as well. He is also the secretary of the cabinet.

Under the social court, there are three positions: 1 head (sabisabi), 1 secretary and 1 member.

The political party organisers are four people who play roles in leading the party cells at the development team and 1-5 cell level.

The kebeles are dived into three zones which are led by the zone leaders. The zone leaders are accountable to the kebele administration and they are responsible to organise and lead the activities of Gares (Got?) which have similar roles as the development teams. There are 7-8 Gares (development teams) under each zone. Gares are responsible to follow up the activities of the 1-5s and to report to their respective zone. The 1-5 team leaders are responsible for mobilizing people to get involved in public developmental works. To encourage the members to be actively involved in farming and farm related things both privately and in groups. The 1-5 leaders report to their respective Gares.

In most cases the leaders of the development teams and 1-5 are the political party cells at the Gare level. The political party cells are playing leading roles in organizing and mobilizing the people for developmental activities. In short the structures at the lower levels are working well and bringing important changes in the lives of the people. However at the higher levels mainly in the structures above the Gare, there are some kinds of disorganisation including refusal to accept instruction from above, alliance of the activities and decisions, etc. the main cause of the problem is that the heads of the development teams are working without payment. The government has not budget to pay all of these people. The direction from the government is to try to convince the Gare and zone leader to voluntarily contribute to the development of their community. In order to reduce the impact related to these organisational problems, the wereda plans to involve the model farmers in the managerial roles of the development teams.

## Wereda report on Oda Haro kebele

According the wereda administrator, the most important achievement in the kebele we are studying is the expansion of irrigation activities. In the last few years the people in the kebele have been engaging in irrigation works and are benefiting from the production of grains and vegetables. They are able to produce crops and vegetables at least twice a year.

Generally the kebele has a good relationship with the wereda and plays an important role in the establishment of security and safety at the wereda level. However, there has been huge destruction of the natural forests over the past few years which greatly contributed to the decline of the forest lands in the community. The deforestation activities are mainly carried out in areas which border with other kebeles. They are accusing each other when the wereda try to involve stopping the deforestation. Until recently, the wereda faced to take actions on those who are engaged in the deforestation. There was no guideline on how to punish those who involve in deforestation. There was a law which was declared 10 years ago (1990 E.C) it has no manual/guide to implement it. Three months ago, the wereda received the guideline and the wereda is preparing to take action against the deforesters.

### Wereda’s future livelihood plans for the kebele

The wereda has a number of plans to improve the livelihood of the people. These include:

* expanding small scale enterprises both in the rural and urban areas by raising funds; the strategy in the rural area is to organise youths and landless people into cooperatives and help them to work on fetching animals, afforestation and forest protection, development of honey bees, and in business activities including trading.
* Expanding irrigation activities in the rural areas to help people to produce twice on their farm lands. As there are a number of rivers and streams in different kebeles of the wereda, it is possible to expand irrigation works. Our concern is that we may face a shortage of water due to the increasing of the dry season from year to year. Again the expansion irrigation means the usage of large amounts of water from the rivers and streams which may lead to the decline in the water in the rivers and streams.
* To use the model farmers as an example in order to mobilise the other farmers for better achievement, and make them self-sufficient in food.
* To continue to improve the security and safety of the people in each kebele.
* To work on improvement of people's engagement in non-farm business in urban areas including hotels, bars and restaurants,
* To improve the internal roads in the rural areas
* To continue to work on expanding drinking water both in rural and urban areas, and to try to achieve the GTP (100%).
* To try to help the people in the rural areas to get access to electricity. The GTP plan was to reach 75%. So, it needs hard work to achieve this target in the coming 2 and half years.
* There is a strong commitment on the part of the wereda to improve access to quality educational services at all levels of the education system. So, the wereda will work hard to achieve the MDGs.

The wereda is also working to improve the health series in each kebele and to help people to get quality health services within the community.

### Future Regional and Zone plans for the wereda?

The future plans of the zone and region are mainly to improve agricultural productivity and production through the use of modern techniques and improved technologies. Moreover, important focus has been given to improving the quality of education and to continue to reduce gender parity and dropout. Important focus is also given to improving the quality of drinking water, improving gender equality in economic and political affairs, and to improve non-farm business as a strategy to transform the economy to industrialisation.

## Wereda relations with their neighbours?

There has been a monthly meeting with all of the neighbouring weredas to discuss relationships between weredas, safety issues, and how to cooperative in a number of development interventions. This meeting is hosted in the Bako town. The meetings help to improve the relationships among the wereda and strengthened the cooperation among them. For example, the weredas could cooperative in sharing the improved seeds and fertilisers if one of the weredas faces shortages. Again there is sharing of SC and medical services. There have not been any historical and current conflicts among the people of the neighbouring weredas. There has been the wide spread deforestation activities on the boundaries of some of the wereda but these have been resolved through the monthly discussions.

## Nutrition in the wereda

The Wereda health post head explained, Bako Tibe Wereda is known among the highest rates of child mortality and malnutrition in the region. Child malnutrition has been a big problem in the Wereda due to less awareness of child feeding, care practice and inadequacy of nutritive type of food in the community. Since the problem is identified, government (MoH) and WFP have been working hard to bring significant change. As a result of this, identification of acutely malnourished children under five years old is conducted twice yearly as are campaigns of vitamin A supplementation. UNICEF is playing an extensive role in the wereda and have developed a funding strategy for different kinds of trainings, advice and distribution of supplementary food aid, supervision and improving the screening activity. They do not work in Oda Haro.

Among the supplementary food distribution plumpynut, F100 and F75 is highly nourished food provided to children in the Wereda. The criteria used to select the beneficiaries are children acutely malnourished below 12 cm tall. There are two types of identification level i.e. moderate and sever acutely malnourished children. Those children who are found at moderate level are given the supplementary food. In addition to this, there is training and an advice programme provided to all households particularly for mothers concerning on how to feed and care for their children. On the other hand, those children found at severe level are given medical treatment and additional food in the health centre. These services are provided in 5 health centres and 20 health posts in the Wereda. This programme has been contributing a lot in reducing the high ratio of child mortality at the Wereda level. By the end of the follow up of the last six months, there were 7,736 children registered throughout the Wereda; 269 children were found to be malnourished and 184 were severely malnourished (less than 12 cm). Among all these children, many have recovered after continuous follow up. This shows that how the recovery rate is increasing from time to time at the Wereda level.

The Wereda head mentioned that among the 32 Kebeles of the Wereda, 16 Kebeles has been found to be highly affected with child malnutrition. This situation is highly exacerbated because the areas grow just maize, sorghum and red-pepper production. Thus, the farming practice aggravated the existence of poor nutritional food access in the Wereda particularly in those specific kebeles. Moreover, recurrent malaria prevalence is contributes to the child mortality rate and malnutrition. Since children cannot not get nutritious food they are more vulnerable to malaria. However, the Wereda health post office head of information say there have been no recent child deaths from malnutrition in the Wereda.

On the other hand, there were no records that indicate pregnant women, and women in a period of lactation suffered from a malnutrition problem. The pervious screening standard for pregnant women and women who are in a period of lactation was below or equal to 17cm. Based on this scale, the Wereda had estimated to find 5135 pregnant women and lactating mothers but it is only 3018 pregnant and lactating women found to be malnourished. This number was found because of the recent measurement scale change. The government changed the measurement scale from 17cm to 21cm in order to increase the probability rate of victim women. UNICEF is extensively operating the programme to help children and women who are affected by acute malnutrition. To bring the programme into sustainable achievement, UNICEF started community based activities by promoting training and advice, with a special emphasis on mothers in order to enable them to carry out the regular nutritional improvement activities by enhancing supplementary food feeding and care practice as well as home based follow up and treatment.

Since 2009/2010, national nutrition programme (CBM) has been providing training on nutrition improvement. This programme promotes community participation in nutritional improvement activities, it facilitates the implementation of nutritional improvement activities by the health extension workers and households, strengthening collaboration between health centre and health post, strengthening with other sectors including agriculture and education sectors to bring sustainable nutritional improvements. To achieve all the above listed programmes, development team leaders and the women's health army has been trained. The training includes on method how to avoid measuring error and screen out the acutely malnourished children, enhancing community awareness and motivating for home based nutrition improvement utilisation. The trained team has been provided measurement and other kits. The screening activity takes place every three months. The former voluntary development army which is currently named the women development army has led at least 30 households and delivered nutritional improvement education according to the training they have received. Community based nutrition training programme (CBNP) is also provided in every school found in the Wereda. To enhance the nutrition improvement activities, the programme focuses on and uses school club groups. The education is provided by the help of HEWs. This programme is effective in promoting the student based transmission of education into the community. Moreover, the programme is also extended to provide training using different social connections like church, iddir and Kebele meetings to create awareness among the community. There is also training for the assessment programme every three months which is very successful. It helps to evaluate the awareness and performance of each target groups in the community. The former development army were paid incentives but now the service is free with the intention of promoting community initiative change. This strategy has brought a lot of change; the volunteer teams are losing their commitment to work without payment. In the last 9 months, throughout the Wereda, about 635 severely malnourished pregnant and lactating women were screened out above 17cm and below 21cm. There is vitamin A supplementation to children 6 - 59 months old and albendazole (anti-worm) tablets are administered to children 2-5 years old. Vitamin A supplementation was estimated to be administered for 21, 771 children but the performance was for 20, 409 children which is 92 % covered. The distributions of anti-worming tablets were estimated to reach for 13673 children but the actual beneficiaries were 1496 including the nearby Wereda kebeles and the performance is 103%.

However, there is lack of money and shortage of variety of food resources which hinder community based nutritional improvements and developments. Focused anti-natal care service from the visible pregnancy season up to 9 months is an important way to ensure the nutrition improvement activities. Health extension workers provided home to home visiting service and follow up to identify the actual condition of pregnant women. At the end of the last 9 months follow up, about 4218 (100%) women were found to be beneficiary of the nutritional improvement services which was estimated for about 3582 women. This number includes the nearby Kebeles too. Children below three years old obtained growth monitoring service (body mass index) by Gross monitoring service programme. Children, pregnant and lactating women who are eligible to get targeted supplementary food services must be registered in a book and given supplementary food ration card. The ID card contains serial number of the beneficiaries. There are about 11,650 children who have registered and have an ID card. The health post in each Kebele provided 8 types of vaccination programme for both children and mothers. There are about 62 HEWs in the Wereda where 56 HEWs are providing services in the rural kebeles with 2 HEWs staff in each Kebele. HEWs are given plan and directives from the Wereda and carry out the operation. In most health care cases, the HEWs brought a number of improvements. HEWs promote the community and households’ participation in health packages improvement activities include nutritional improvements. These are important and there are visible success achieved by HEWs.

Despite the fact of vital progress achieved by HEWs contribution, there are also challenges and barriers that hinder sustainable improvements and developments. HEWs may not be in the Health Post to be notified of different service desired by the community particularly labour or delivery cases. Pregnant women may not be able to properly estimate the due date of the pregnancy which is a major cause for mothers to give birth in their maternal home, outside of the health institutions. Also pregnant women or their husbands may not desire or seek clean and safe delivery service thus they mostly stick with traditional birth attendant services where commonly family and immediate neighbours are first informed of labour and deliver, not HEWs. This limits the quality of healthy birth reports in the Kebele.

HEWs may mostly tend to focus on their personal issues including their family case and they may take off for prenatal and postnatal leave which is a big challenge for the Kebele. Frequency of kebele or community meetings for various activities limits availability and full participation of HEWs. Moreover, their position in the Kebele cabinet members affects their working hours. The limitation of knowledge and skill affect the quality of data and completeness, particularly of births and deaths, children, pregnant women and lactating women malnutrition screening, recording of scientific names for tablets and diseases because of the limitation of English language skill. To solve these problems, government should focus on motivating the HEWs. They should get access to higher professional education programme and different trainings programme. Despite this fact, in 2012 the government has started to give education opportunity which is not yet satisfactory. There were three HEWs who received education opportunity in last year at the Wereda level. There is also a plan to send four HEWs in the coming summer. On the other hand, education opportunity is another impact that affects the HEWs allocation and activities. Moreover, HEWs don’t access any kind of transport means to teach the community through home to home visit where they spend averagely to hour walk to reach at one household house.

Shortage of budget is another hindrance to initiative in implementing and developing health package activities. Government should allocate enough budgets to help the facilitation, supervision, support and surveillance programme. There should be transport service and incentive for those who work voluntarily and for HEWs. The female targeted education programme is very effective but as they lack incentive they lose their regular commitment. They also face challenges from their husbands and family. Regardless of this fact, the Wereda has received a letter that explains the allocation of budget for incentive programmes recently which is a good opportunity to solve the problem. This budget could help to provide promotion, advocacy and to continue training for the women's voluntary development team which promotes community based awareness and sustainable improvement of health package activities.

## Maternal mortality in the wereda

As far as the Wereda health post office head reported, the current policy at the Wereda level gives a great emphasis to pregnant mothers to give birth in a medical institution under the care and supervision of trained health extension workers and skilled health care providers. The main purpose of this policy is to promote child survival and reduce the risk of maternal mortality. The proportion of women accessing safe and clean delivery service in the region and particularly in the Wereda is very low. About 3/4th or 75% of maternal mortality is estimated to be reduced in providing ante natal care, safe and clean delivery help, HIV/AIDS test. Prevention of transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child and post-natal care services are also provided.

The Wereda head said the practice of safe and clean delivery at health institutions is not yet significant. Because of this, there is no significant reduction in maternal mortality at the Wereda level. However, the Wereda is working on education programme at household level promoting community based awareness on the importance of institutional delivery and increasing accessibility to the delivery services. The Wereda is also trying to address male household heads and every household member in the community. To implement the MoH policy and strategy, Bako Tibe Wereda is providing a monthly education for pregnant women and every member of the family at household level through Geri/developmental team leader and 1 to 5 cells. The education programme helps to identify pregnant women who delivered at home, who have less awareness or can't afford to take the initiative for safe and clean delivery service at the nearest health institutions.

Moreover, the Wereda is using a peers experience sharing programme to help change family awareness particularly mother’s awareness. In addition to this, there is one ambulance service in the Wereda that provides service to support the community in transporting the pregnant women during labour and delivery time to the nearby health institutions. However there is a shortage of budget to put fuel in the ambulance allocation of ambulance is a recent and very important change in the Wereda. So the Wereda ambulance is only used by those households can afford to cover the fuel expense. This is a big problem that hinders to enable the full access of safe and clean delivery service which is very critical in promoting the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality rate in the Wereda. The HEWs have a follow-up book and ID card for each pregnant woman. This system is very important as it helps the HEWs to estimate the duration and analyse the due date of the pregnant women which facilitates their supervision. As a result of the recording system, HEWs do home visits and support the women to access clean and safe delivery in the nearest health centre. The health institutional delivery cost is covered by government which motivates most of the poor people to seek safe and clean delivery services at health institutional base. The total costs for ante-natal checks, mother’s and child vaccination and any treatment during pre and post level delivery are covered by the Wereda health centre. In 2013, the government has allocated 39 million birr which mostly cover the staff wages. This shows budget scarcity to cover all health improvements programme activities at the Wereda level.

As to the Wereda head report, in 2012 about 3582 mothers were estimated to access safe and clean delivery at the health institution. However, the performance was about 4218 (117.8%) mothers which is encouraging progress at the Wereda level. According to the recent regional static, maternal mortality ratio is 676 per 100,000 live births and the Wereda shares 37% rates. This is due to the poor access of modern health services and poor community awareness to utilise modern health services. However, institutional delivery demand has been increasing since the last five years. The following table shows the child delivery progress at modern health institutional facility:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2000 EC** | **%** | **2004 EC** | **%** | **2005 EC** | **%** |
| HEWs | 292 | 15.8 | 386 | 25.1 | 302 | 35 |
| HC | 423 | 22.6 | 874 | 51.3 | 706 | 65.1 |
| Hospital | - | - | - | - | 860 | - |

As to the Wereda health post office head, even though there are no satisfactory achievements the progress in demand to give birth at institutional level is encouraging. The community attitude is changing time to time. Compared to the last five years, community become aware and seek health centre provision for its best, clean and safe delivery services. HEWs have been trained on safe and clean deliveries. This has helped support the reduction of home based delivery since 2012. In 2008, 122 mothers delivered with the help of TBAs but since the distribution of HEWs in each kebeles the TBAs activity declined rapidly. In 2012, HEWs were given integrated refresh training on the 16s package activity. HEWs have received different trainings including experience sharing programme with different Wereda where this helped them to receive and transfer skill all together at Wereda level. However, a lack of HEWs sustainable capacity training programme is creating a skills gap. Therefore frequency of trainings given to HEWs should be improved. On the other hand, there is poor infrastructure which is mostly creating difficulties in improving quality of health activities. The limitation of electric power, clean and safe water source is a big problem in the Wereda. As a result, Amerti Gibe Kebele is the only Kebele that has access to electric power among 28 rural kebeles. The rest of the kebeles are using stove power. There was a plan to distribute solar power but the region didn’t deliver to the Wereda yet. However, in the long run plan Abay project is expected to solve the electric power shortage which is estimated to cover 75% of the demand in the Wereda. Moreover, all health posts in the kebeles don't have access to water in their compound rather they use a nearby source. At health centre level, there is access to clean water in four health centres. In addition to this, three of the health centres have access to electric power. There is electric power line in one health centre but not power fixed yet.

There is access of pregnant women to delivery beds in 25 rural Kebeles health post there is no access in the remaining three rural kebeles. There is no HEWs residential house near to the health post location. This is another barrier that doesn’t allow giving 24 hours services in the community. Regarding the HEWs residence, about 150,000 ETB was provided to build HEWs houses only for three kebeles at the Wereda level. However, the Wereda has been utilizing the money to enable HEWs house construction for 15 kebeles where part of the construction has already started.

According to the Wereda Health post office head recommendation, the government policy should be fully utilised and sustainable action has to be taken in order to bring successful improvements in all health activities. He also appreciates community based movement as it brought good beginnings and changes in the last three years. He also said, community based activities should be promoted by allocating enough budget to facilitate the health sphere activities. On the other hand, the Wereda health post office head calls for government attention to improve the equity in the health delivery system by allocating enough budgets and attracting NGOs to give better support than before. As the head reported, the Wereda Hospital is under construction in the Bako town and 40% of the construction phase has already covered. There is free health service programme in the community to promote the health service programme.

## Preventive health services in the wereda

As far as the Wereda health post office head concerned, much progress has been made in preventing prevalence of diseases at the Wereda level. The head mentioned 29 kebeles identified as a high malaria risk area 16 of which were the worst risk areas. Bako has been selected among the three top places for malaria risk at Wereda level in the Oromia region. To prevent malaria, pest control spraying has been takings place for three weeks (during the interview period). As the head mentioned, this is the first time they have applied malaria pest control spray at the Wereda level. In this pest control spray campaign around 9000 houses were covered. To prevent malaria the current policy targets community based preparation strategies. These are:-

* Bed net distribution
* Surrounding cleaning
* Preparing houses for pest control spray programme
* Alert the community to take patients to the health post and provide support as soon as possible
* Conducting sustainable surveillances in each households house using development team and 1-5 cells

The Wereda head reported that malaria has been reported as the top disease since 2004 at the Wereda level. In 2010, about 6,400 community members have been suffered from malaria (25.2%), in 2012, 9,064 (34.9%) and in 2013 (only 9 months report) 7,553 (42.4%). The second leading disease in the Wereda is, intestinal parasites, diarrheal diseases, RTI (lower and upper respiratory tract infections. No recent records that confirmed death from malaria at Wereda level.

There is a health development army at the Wereda level which promotes improvement of health packages at the Kebele level. Development team leaders facilitate and strengthen the health implementations activity and community based awareness programmes include the 1 to 5 cells. There are different meetings and discussion programmes concerning the 16 packages in the community. 1 to 5 cells examine and discuss every household performance when they meet every 2 weeks meeting and they select best model practitioner and transfer as the best experience to the other household members. There is a command post in 28 rural kebeles which consists of 8 members. The command posts identify the strengths and weaknesses of the health army, HEWs and household performance and they carry out the programmes and present a progress report every week. The 16 packages awareness transfer occurs through adultery education programme and home to home visits. Health volunteers and model families receive trainings for 96 hours. Those who complete 75% or more of the training are selected as model families after a performance assessment by the command post. This works well particularly in the rural kebeles. Development teams do regular follow up, assessment and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each household. They report to the HEWs and command post and who in turn present the results in meetings at Wereda health office.

## Credit programmes in the wereda

Oromia Credit and Saving Share Company (OCSSCO) is one of micro-financing institutions operating throughout Oromia region. It was been established in 1998 at the Wereda level. OCSSCO is of Oromia Rural Credit and Savings Scheme Development Project working in rural kebeles. This project has shown significant achievements during the project phase -most borrowers in Bako Wereda have been able to make changes and improvements in their livelihoods.

OCSSCO has provided credit and support for those rural farmers who lack money to buy fertiliser, seed and oxen at the Kebele level. There was no direct distribution of fertiliser and seed provided by OCSSCO. But, farmers take loan from OCSSCO to buy fertiliser and seed from the Kebele service cooperatives. Since its establishment OCSSCO has been offering training and advice, Credit Service, Saving Service, and Micro-Insurance Service for loan clients and micro-Banking Service.

The association has been providing training and advice on how to save and how to use credit efficiently. Previously, OCSSCO had started to provide services for 7 kebeles for only 400 farmers in the Wereda. However, over time the number of beneficiaries has increased rapidly. Currently there are about 4,500 farmers including 442 women farmers. In 1990EC, about 600,000 ETB has been provided to farmers and this amount increased year by year. However, at this instant including the last 9 months report, the amount of credit has reached 15 million birr. The Wereda is expecting to increase the credit service up to 20 million birr.

For access to the Wereda credit and saving company, farmers who want to access credit services must save 20 birr per months after the Kebele confirmed their eligibility for the credit and saving services. The head of the company mentioned, that there is a supervision programme through home to home visit in each farmer’s house and follow up activity to check whether the money is invested according to its plan within 15 days of them taking the credit. According to the rules, farmers must invest the money on the proposal they submitted to the company i.e. if they took a credit to buy oxen the money should be invested in oxen. However, if the farmers consumed and invested the money out of their proposal they are forced to return the money.

The credit is provided for a small groups consisting of 4 to 6 people. This system helps to control debt risk as the groups are responsible to pay back any debt resulted among themselves. The credit and saving service is essential as it supports the farmers in improving their livelihood income sources. It is also a profitable organisation. Previously, farmers were provided the cash credit including fertiliser and seed. They had been receiving the cash from credit and saving association whereas fertiliser and seed from service cooperatives. But since 2011, the service cooperatives stopped to providing fertiliser and seed in credit in order to avoid unmanageable payment practice. Many farmers used to invest the money for consumption purpose and failed to pay back the credit taken for fertiliser and seed. As a result, the service cooperatives changed to cash system. So therefore, farmers receive money credit from Oromia credit and saving association and buy fertiliser and seed from the cooperatives. The credit is distributed based on the farmers business plan such as if someone requests money to buy ox, or fertiliser for some amount of hectares land.

Regarding debt, the company did face a huge debt of 178,000 birr in 2013 this has not been paid back yet. The area is known for red-pepper and maize production. However, red-pepper failed from disease and the price of maize dropped to 40 birr for 100kg. Because of this crisis, farmers were not able to pay back their debts. To recover from this outstanding debt the association tried to transform the farmers saving account to pay off the debt but this was not still enough to pay off the total amount of their debt. Finally, the respondent explained, the company decided to enforce the debt payment in longer duration so it is still being collected. The association has recovered as about 113,000 birr has been collected back and only 65,000 remains with the farmer’s. The association is still trying to recover from the total debt. According to the respondent, the association didn’t face big debt crisis other than the former one.

In the service cooperatives only members can get access to credit services but in the credit and saving association those who have Kebele ID, who own land, are free from any other debt, a person who could submit collateral and a person who is accepted in the community are eligible to access credit. All beneficiaries have to be aged above 18 and below 60 years old, they should be fully capable of working (no disability), no assets (those who are at 0 balances), and the poor of poorest. Before the credit and saving services were only centred in rural kebeles but recently people who live in the town kebeles have also become beneficiaries. This organisation has become affiliated with government since 2013. It has started to provide credit for those young people who have finished their school and become unemployed. This service started based on the government proposal.

Although the company has a long run plan to strengthen the economic base of the low-income rural and urban people especially young people who are graduated from school and become unemployed as well women who are household heads are the major target groups in urban area. Through increasing access to credit and saving service, OCSSCO has a vision to bring sustainable and cost efficient financial services. However, there are some problems that need to be improved at urban service level. Unlike the rural farmers, the Credit Service is not easily affordable rate and source of saving is becoming difficult to many of urban areas especially for young people as they don’t have any income source to establish a link with the company. The interest rate and the pre-saving percentage are the major problems as they discourage beneficiaries. OCSSCO plans to increase the number of beneficiaries and raise it up to 60,000 farmers in the next year. There is no crop and livestock insurance service in the Wereda. But there is a plan to start crop and livestock insurance programmes in 2013/14.

## The wereda’s safe water programme

In the 5 year plan of the GTP, the wereda has planned to reach 100% of the population with drinking water in both rural and urban areas. In the last two and half years the wereda has tried to improve the availability and quality of drinking water. The focus is to dig smaller wells and expand hand pump for people in the lower areas of the wereda. For the highland areas, the focus is to expand spring on spot, gravity spot. Also there are activities focusing on digging shallow wells, mainly in the low land areas. Deep wells are also within the wereda programmes. For some smaller town, there has been a plan to distribute water using cars (mainly in two places).

As a whole more than 100,000 people need pure drinking water in the wereda. Until now, about 76,000 have access to safe drinking waters. We expect that the remaining population will get safe water in the coming 2 and half years.

To plant and make available the hand-pumps, we are focusing the simplest, least costly ways of providing water for the people. According we mainly focus on spring on spot in which install a pump on the water points that was already used by the people- by improving its quality; work on spring gravity in which water is collected in a reservoir from a small stream and people use it by using hand pump; motorised spring in which water is collected in the reservoir by motor pump, etc.

The hand pump can be divided into two =shallow wells-up to 50-80m deep and deep wells –up to 80-120 m deep- digging is carried out by machine in both cases. Currently, deep well is available in the Shoboka town of the wereda (9km from our research site to the west). The water for Tibe town is a motorised pump (the nearest town to the research site (less than 2km). In the past this town was using a deep well but it was dried and recently it was replaced by a motorised pump.

In additions there have been smaller hand-dug wells in the compound of the farmers which are owned privately. As water from these wells may not be safe, we advise the farmers to use them for their gardens watering animals, washing clothes but when there is a shortage of safe water in the area, they can use them for drinking by boiling the water.

In order to improve the availability of safe water to the people in the wereda, it is extremely important that people participate in the development of water points. In some places people dig wells and the government provides the pumps and experts. The community participation in all activities is a key to achieve the GTP. It is also important that the government allocates sufficient budget for implementing the plans. Last year our office proposed fair budget for the implementation of the projects but the wereda cabinet rejected it saying that the priority is for agricultural activities. The government should assign knowledgeable and skilful experts who can help improve the safe water. So the people and the government can work hand in hand in order to satisfy the safe water need of the people.

Some years ago, an NGO called CUM was working on safe water developments in some kebeles of the wereda but since the last five years no NGOs are working on water in the wereda. Also 5 years ago, the Mekeneyesus church was involving water developments in some places but it stopped in the past five years. As a whole the current water development programmes have been carried out with the budget from the government and with the participation of people.

Maintenance: - there is a water committee in each kebele. These committees are responsible for managing and controlling the water points. The wereda experts check the purity of the water. The wereda experts also maintain the pumps when they are broken. There are some spare parts from the wereda which are used for the maintenance of the pumps. When there is a serious problem above the capacity of the wereda experts, they ask for support from the zone or from the regional government. Our experts have training (10+3-diploma) in maintenance and plumbing. They provide the technical expertise and support to the water committees in the kebeles. Now, the wereda has two experts who have diplomas in electro-mechanical, and their main duty is to maintain the pumps. The main problem the wereda drinking water office faces is that the experts want to change their profession because they cannot upgrade their profession in their maintenance and plumber (electro-mechanical).

Even with the existing staff we cannot cover all the maintenance needed. There is a shortage of staff two experts are not enough for all the water points in 32 kebeles. In order to solve the problem of dissatisfaction on the part of the experts we reported to the zone drinking water office either to improve the salary of these experts or to help them to upgrade their education. The response from the zone was not encouraging. It responded saying that before they ask for salary increment or for further education, they experts should pass the COC and get the certification. Moreover, there is a shortage of transport to quickly reach the communities and do maintenance when the pumps are broken. The office doesn't even have a motor bicycle. The experts travel to the communities using public transport and by foot. In order to improve the problem of staff shortage, we plan to give short trainings to some people in smaller towns. These people will provide minor maintenances when problems arise in the nearby rural kebele.

With regard to the spare parts, until now we have had some spare parts in the wereda stock. But now we are finishing them. Though the offices provided the budget proposal for buying spare parts to the wereda council last year, it refused to accept it considering the request as the luxury materials. Now he reported the problem to the zone drinking water office, and they are waiting for the response. One of the problems with spare parts is that most of the time the materials needed are not available in the market.

In the future they cannot work like this. It is extremely important to have extra parts in our store. It is not good to ask for the materials only when the problems are happened. The problem is that the zone and region are not committed to providing these materials in sufficient amount.

For the next budget year, the office wants to urge the cabinet to accept and approve the budget for the purchase of the spare parts. In relation to the shortage of experts, the cabinet are keen to employ additional experts but increasing the salary of these experts is not the responsibility of the wereda cabinet, it is the responsibility of either the regional council.

Regarding the coverage of the drinking water in the wereda, the majority of the people in the wereda have access to safe water. Of course there are still many people who have no access to drinking water. When water points are prepared and pumps are installed, the priority is given to areas which have little access to water sources. Moreover, access to roads is also a factor to quickly install the water, so the remote kebeles/villages get access to drinking water last. We also focus on areas which have high water discharges in order to reduce the budget constraints.

Major Challenges:-

To summarise the followings are the major changes to providing safe water for the people in different kebeles:-

* Lack of logistics- no car,
* Inaccessibility of some communities by public transport
* Shortage of budget to effectively run all the plans
* Shortage of experts who can provide maintenance support
* Shortage of spare parts
* Sometimes, lack of support from the communities- refusal to contribute labour and cash
* Sometimes, people do protect the water pumps from damage
* Sometimes people continue to drink unsafe water –lack of awareness
* In some places the wells and springs have dried up due to changes in the climatic condition- shortage of rain. Even during the long dry seasons the springs dry up and people have problems getting drinking water.
* In the motorised pumps like that of the Tibe town, the shortage of water leads to the mixing up of the water with the dust which reduces the purity of the water. This has happened this year and the people in Tibe town are complaining about it.
* In the last five years, the wereda has not had any outbreak of acute watery diarrhoea and cholera diseases.

The followings are the total number of different kinds of water points in the kebele:-

* Hand- dug wells = 61(functional) in all the kebeles
* Shallow well = 20 (functional) in all
* Deep wells = 1 (functional; 2 non-functional) in all kebeles
* Spring motorised = 1 (functional; 2 non- functional) in all kebeles
* Spring gravity = 4 (functional) in all kebeles
* Spring on spot = 71 (functional) in all kebele
* Total = 162.

As a whole 146 of these water points are providing proper functions while the rest needs some maintenance.

The total number of hhs getting access to drinking water in the wereda (excluding the wereda town of Bako) are 14,667. The total numbers of people getting access to drinking water are 73, 335 (last year's data).

## Marriage interventions

### Under-age marriage

Empowerment of women, child protection (from any violence or abuse) and gender mainstreaming are the main activities carried out by the Wereda women and child affairs office. The respondent mentioned that the Wereda women and child affairs office is part of the Wereda structure and plays a pivotal role in promoting government policies and strategies to ensure the growth and development plan. The major activity carried out under the office includes women's empowerment, development of women's participation in economic, political and social connections. According to the respondent, there is an encouraging start regarding the empowerment of women mainly in the economic and political spheres which enables them to fit with the development programme of the country as a whole. Generally, women and child affairs office has three experts who facilitate the mission and activities that should be carried out under the office. These are women empowerment; child protection and gender mainstream expertise who lead all activities carried out under the sector. Therefore, public participation, arrangement of women's associations and economic empowerment activities are carried out following the introduction of the government's plan and strategies. The women's association offers access to credit and savings opportunity in order to help the establishment of economic independence for group of women or individuals.

The women's association is more formal and legal organisation that consists of a chairperson, secretary and auditor. There are a number of women who formed associations and are working on; agriculture, irrigation based vegetables and small-scale enterprises. To establish a small-scale enterprise, they should save 20% of the credit they apply for. Bussa-Gonofa and Oromia credit and saving company are the main source of credit and saving services and support the women association in the Wereda. They access credit and saving from Oromia bank and Bussa-Gonofa. Bussa-Gonofa provides 99% of the credit for women. Since the last few years, under age marriage has been declining in the Wereda. According to the respondent, Women and child office of the Wereda provided training and advice in collaboration with HUNDEE organisation.

The Wereda law prohibits marriage of couples whose age is under 18 years (men and women). She said that the Wereda has been providing training courses and advice to implement the policy in the last few years. As mentioned above, the laws have been enforced by government and NGO intervention. Moreover, other sectors also have been collaborating to teach the community. As a result of this, underage marriage is no longer a significant problem in the Wereda.

### Abduction

The Wereda women and child affairs head said, as part of GTP, women rights have been given special emphasis at the national level. As a result of this, the oldest family law has been reformed at the regional level and sent to the Wereda in the last few years. Following the revision of the old family law, the Wereda has given training about abduction and some other gender related issues. However, as the head said, abduction is still a big problem in the Wereda. As to her explanation, forced abduction was very common in the Wereda but it has been declining since the last five years. There was a huge training and advice provided to people in the community. Trainings on gender issues and women rights have been held in schools, churches, Keble meetings and other community places. But voluntary abduction and compromise marriage is becoming more common in the Wereda. Traditionally, the parents were the most influential decision makers on when and who to marry off their daughter to. However, since the recent times most marriage is completed without parents’ involvement. This kind of marriage is ‘eloping’ where the couples’ parents are forced to accept the decision and bring together their parents during the wedding/melse (a kind of ceremony in the bride house; this kind of ceremony takes place after the bride left her family either by her own consent or during the wedding day. In the melse programme, couples and their mates’ will go to the bride relatives’ for dinner or lunch programme and the groom must give present to the bride parents). As to the head explained, the couple do most of the abduction in agreement so it is becoming so hard to take the case into the court in order to prevent abduction from the Wereda. In this kind of arrangement, an early marriage is becoming a major problem. For instance, school girls whose age is below 18 could agree to be abducted which forces them to drop out from school and get married. Unlike the previous time, now most of the girls’ parents want their daughter to continue school and they bring such cases to women and child affairs office and seek to take to the court. Nevertheless, as long as the couples agree the court can’t take any legal action. Moreover, most of the girls lie about their real age to avoid the legal action.

On the other hand, the women and child affairs office at the Wereda level is working to prevent abduction especially since the last five years. But, there is a big problem to convince people, girls and other sectors to collaborate with the sector to bring successful change. According to the head other sectors do not have any interest in preventing violence against women in the Wereda. There is negligence amongst the Wereda officials to work together with women and child affairs sector concerning women and children issues. Especially since the last year, said the head, since the death of the late Prime Minister Melse Zenawi, officials have become less interested in enforcing the implementation of the programmes particularly programmes on women affairs. She said this might be because of less control from the regional level. According to her perception, the late prime minister was a very special and dedicated person especially to the poor and vulnerable. In addition to this, he had a special emphasis and support to women. There were sustainable trainings and experience sharing programme at Wereda level during his time. Officials and courts were better at taking action on illegal issues. However, in the first four months after his death, about 6 underage girls were abducted from elementary schools in three Kebeles. She explains that some people were saying “the judge of women has died; no more discussion about the issue of women rights!” Moreover, since his death, corruption and bureaucracy have become major problems in the Wereda. She said everyone in the public positions including higher officials and judges are corrupted or favour their friends/relatives. Especially the Wereda court and this has been a big challenge for women and child affairs sectors. The women and child affairs office take different cases in relation to women rights to the court but there is no justice. Most of the court officials’ mischief justice due to bribe, illegal bell, nepotism, friendship and so on. These violate women rights and particularly poor women are not able to get ahead of the bureaucracy to seek justice. However, there are also a few cases, a man punished and went to jail for three years after he got accused of abduction. He abducted a 17 years old school girl forcefully in the last year.

### Choice of marriage partner

In Oromo tradition, said the head, choosing marriage partner was done by the family and the male partners. Women were not privileged in choosing their partner. But now, this tradition is ignored by the community (except some customary leaders and older people who remain conservative). This is the result of government intervention in women rights. Government and NGO interventions have brought a significant change in attitudes towards women. Women have become very aware of their rights since the different trainings and advice provided to them. In addition to this, there has been a big change in awareness of women rights amongst community members. As a result, the Wereda has adopted a new family law from the region in the last few years and the new law offers equal privilege to women in choosing their own marriage partner. The existence of schools has contributed a lot in solving family involvement in choosing marriage partner. Most community members send their girl children to school and hope for future change in her life. They expect girls to get a job when they finish school. The problem is women can be lobbied from school and want to marry while they are elementary or high school students.

### Polygyny

The Wereda has legal terms that prohibit two or more marriage partners. Culturally, polygamy is practiced whether the senior wife agrees or not. However, now the law has given full right to wives to claim against polygamy. According to the head, though women have a complete right to bring any case related to polygamy, there is poor awareness about this in the community. Another challenge, to avoid the legal consequence men are using different systems and tactics e.g. claiming one woman is his house maid. The community are very conscious about the legal issues and every legal consequence. So to avoid the legal consequence they may present an employment contract. The second wife may deny she is a wife because she is scared of the legal consequences. According to the law, it is illegal to be the second wife and the women know this has bad legal consequences. Moreover, the law couldn’t prevent this practice because some pretend as they are Muslim and it is their religious culture. They use religion as a cover which is very difficult to manage it legally. On the other hand, said the head, there is less attention from the Wereda in general and women and child affairs in particular. According to the respondent, polygamy has been given less priority compared to the other issues of violence against women.

### Widow’s inheritance

As they mentioned, there is a reformed family law which was issued in 2003 allows widow’s inheritance. According to the head, Widow’s inheritance has been a big challenge in the community. There is an Oromo tradition called “warrsaa/wolgeraa” which allows the widow’s inheritance to pass to the brother of the deceased husband. However, since 2008-2009 there has been an intervention prepared by HUNDEE organisation on HTPs. It was the longest training and education programme provided in the community at the Wereda level. The head said the organisation had a mission to create sustainable awareness on legal issues and harmful traditional practices. So, after this huge campaign, the community become very aware and particularly women brought about significant changes. Some have refused to be inherited and have taken their case to the court if they are forced. The respondent said she believe that the community will bring window’s inheritance to an end in the coming few years.

### Marriage to a dead wife’s sister

Similarly with widow’s inheritance, HUNDEE organisation trained the community that marriage to a dead wife’s sister is illegal and religiously prohibited. The community have become aware through the intensive training and advice about marriage with relatives (those who have blood relationship are legally discouraged to get married). The training convinced the community that this kind of marriage is legally, culturally and religiously prohibited. There have been no recent cases treated at the Wereda level in relation to the dead wife’s sister marriage.

## Female circumcision

In Oromia tradition, female circumcision is performed at an early age mostly seven years old. According to the head, female circumcision is desirable and culturally mandatory practice for reasons of social acceptance. In the last few years, the government and other NGOs like HUNDEE get involved to avoid female circumcision in the community. The community has received intensive trainings and education that female circumcision is harmful traditional practice. Even though, there is a glimpse of hope that shows the declining of the practice, she said, the community is very concerned that if girls are not circumcised; they will receive social dishonour and will be rejected by their friends. Moreover, she mentioned that, the community believe that circumcision is a great honour to the women and her husband in the future. It is a beautiful and respected culture of the community. As a result of this, there is a huge resistance to the government and NGO intervention against female circumcision. As the head said, this resistance is not only from the ordinary people in the community even Wereda and Kebele officials as well as some HEWs themselves do not appreciate the intervention against female circumcision. She said, according to the Ethiopia criminal law, female circumcision is a serious crime and taboo practice. Anyone who involved in the practice including the village knowledgeable practitioners and the family members could be punished legally. But even those who do not support the idea don't take any cases to court. However, there is a poor implementation of the rules in the Wereda because of huge conservativeness of the community including the higher officials about female circumcisions. Because of this, female circumcision is happening throughout the Wereda and there is no effort to present those who are committing the practice. No cases have been presented to the court or to the women and child affairs office in the last year. She said government and NGO should give more emphasis in creating awareness targeting primarily on those government officials and then community as a whole.

## Violence against women

### Rape

The respondent explained government and NGOs (UNICEF, USAID) carried out an intervention against rape. There is awareness creation programme in different social places. However, rape tends to be a big problem in the community because victims do not have the courage to admit what has happened fearing social disrespect, attack and that they would be discouraged from exposing their attacker because most of them are compromised. Also victims women/girls often don't have the evidence to support their case – court requires three or more witnesses and a medical report. In the last six months, a person committed rape on a 13 years old girl. His own family witnessed and confirmed him as the person who committed the crime but the court let him to go out free without clear reason. The Wereda women and child affair office is still following the case. According to the head, women particularly those who are poor and have no relatives are suffering because of injustice both at the Wereda and zonal level. She feels that if government does not take serious action against those people who are corrupting their responsibility and the country's law, crime will be everywhere and women will have no legal protection. This would create chaos in terms of the country's political, economic and social development. She recommended that there should be a huge campaign and special focus on women rights at the Wereda level. The existing policy and strategy need a serious motivation to be implemented throughout the country. The other thing she mentioned was that current officials should give equal emphasis to women as the late prime minster had in order to bring sustainable and complete development in the community. Finally, she said, there is no real development without the female population.

### Domestic male violence

According to the respondent, domestic violence is declining in the Wereda. Government and NGO (UNICEF) intervention has a significant role in minimizing the problem of domestic violence. Social institutions such as Iddir and religious institutions are playing a major and irreplaceable role in minimizing domestic violence. According to iddir rules, any women who faced domestic violence can report to the iddir committees and members could see on the cases on detail. If the person is found to be guilty, he will get punished according to the decision made by the committee. Such cases can also could be taken to the Wereda court. However, there is a plan at the Wereda level to continue with an awareness creation programme and training to protect women from domestic violence. On the other hand, there are some problems in implementing domestic violence intervention. Some elders and social institution including Wereda court could be biased and favour to the men. As she said, there is a budget limitation which means they haven't created a sustainable awareness creation programme both at the community and government officials’ level.

## Women’s rights after divorce

There is intervention undertaking by government and NGO (UNICEF) on Women rights after divorce. However, there are problems in implementing the law. To receive the full legal provision after divorce, women need to go some steps. In the first place, if she wants to get divorced and share her property equally, she needs to submit a petition letter to the court. In order to submit a petition letter, she needs to go to Para-legals to get a written document. She has to pay 27.50cents to get the written letter. According to the respondent, this amount of money is very difficult to get for most women and this is discouraging them from fully exercising their rights. The other thing is the Wereda court sends divorce cases to customary leaders which are not helping the women since the most part of the decision is biased as it favour the men. The elders believe women should accept every order from her husband and live for her children. However, the Wereda women and child affairs are working very much to enforce the implantation of the women’s rights after divorce.

Since the tradition is against women property rights after divorce; there should be active intervention in creating awareness. As the respondent said, in most of the cases women leave the house after the divorce. This exposed the women to different challenges and problems.

## Women’s rights after death of husband

The Wereda has legal terms that assure the protection women's right of ownership to all properties, including land that they owned together after their husband dies. This law attracted much focus after the establishment of Women, Young and Child office.

Customary practices are for the dead husband's family to take the land and are against women owning land. Most of the time, the dead husband's brothers are considered to be the right people to work on the land, at least on a sharecropping arrangement. The Keble officials are responsible for following up violation of this right and make orders to check the implementation of the law. However, most of them are reluctance to look for the case unless it is brought to them by a woman. There are 5 cases related to widow’s right recorded by the office in the last year. Most cases got a decision although some did not. The delay is caused by the absence of the women name in the land ownership registration book.

## Women’s rights to inherit from parents

There is intervention which has been made by the government regarding women’s rights to inheritance from parents. This indicates that, unlike before, women have equal rights with men to inherit land from their parents in the Wereda. So, the Wereda policy encourages women to inherit land from their family. In the previous time, women did not access land as inheritance from their parents rather it went to the boys in the house. Women have been denied for land access because the parents would think that land management is the role of men and in order to preserve the land in the family. Traditionally, family were not willing to pass their land into another household such as to their daughter’s husband. This is because customary people have believed land should not be owned by people who do not belong to the same lineage. However, there could be many cases related to women’s land inheritance. Poor and vulnerable women exposed to different problems. To improve the implementation of the law, the respondents recommended that strong awareness creation programme should be provided to the community. Officials’ at the Wereda and Kebele level should give a great emphasis towards women’s land rights.

## Other interventions to improve women’s status

According to the respondent, there is a big limitation on increasing women's participation in the Kebele structure because there is no one who is committed to making it happen. As a structure, there is a directive which composes women and child affairs leader with the Kebele cabinet member. However, in the actual performance women proportion is very small as compared to the number of men in the Kebele cabinets. The structure is very important to women in developing and encouraging women leadership and decision making ability. Women are very inactive at the Keble level as cabinet members because they are less aware and have a lot of commitments in the household sphere.

On the other side, the intervention to increase women's participation in the Wereda structure is also another issue that cannot yet performed and achieved fully. As a result of these, there are only 3 women who are in the position of Wereda structure among 35 different sectors. This is because of the negligence and less interest of Wereda officials. Wereda officials in other sectors, as the respondent said, are very inattentive and neglectful towards women and child affairs sectors. Other sectors are not interested in women and child affairs and do not want to get involved in any partner collaboration when it is needed. Women are not fully exercising their legal rights even at the Wereda level. Women might not get training and education opportunities because of less recognition at the Wereda level. However, the sector is working very strongly in terms of promoting community based awareness creating programmes that look at women's participation in public sphere roles and position at development work in the Wereda level.

Since the last five years, women and child affairs sectors at the Wereda level took initiative to organise women in different service co-operatives in order to enhance and empower women’s participation in the economic sphere. As a result of this, there are women in the Wereda who are engaged in farming, spice trade, tea and coffee cafeteria, spinning and weaving, vegetable and cash crop selling. This is going smoothly with the help of Bussa-Gonofa and OCSSCO since they enhance the credit and saving services to women. The Wereda also support and assist them in providing skill training and credit for the initial capital.

There is an intervention at regional and Wereda level about the issues of women’s land rights. The rules and directives from the Wereda encourage increasing women’s land rights opportunities. To go in line with the policy, as to the head said, awareness creation activity through large meetings and conferences was the major means to deliver the policy message and legal aspect of women’s right in the community. At Wereda level, women could have the right to access a land registration book.

There is a huge government intervention regarding the improvement of girls’ education. In terms of education accessibility, each school in all kebeles register those girls as well as boys who are old enough to go to school. There is a lot of change especially regarding girls going to school. The community are willing to send every eligible girl to school as long as the school is located near to their Kebele.

## Vulnerable women

Old and ill women without any body taking care of them, orphans, young women who do not have access to work, underage girls(children), poor, disabled women, women who are victims of HIV/AIDS, widows, divorced women and those who move to internal and external migration from the Wereda could be considered as vulnerable women. According to the respondent, there is no special programme from the government side or from NGOs to give support and treat targeted vulnerable women at the Wereda level. However, there are some interventions which could support some of the vulnerable groups’ i.e. orphans; poorest and destitute children get some support from compassion international at the Wereda level and Bussa-Gonofa. The Wereda doesn’t have enough budget to support vulnerable people. There is also shortage of access to give them credit and saving services to enable them involved in different kinds of business, however, Bussa-Gonofa is one private organisation helping and supporting vulnerable women at the Wereda level.

Another organisation that supports women by providing credit and saving service is the Oromia credit and saving company. This company has been providing credit and saving service with skill trainings and advice to support those women who have no relatives to support them engage in small scale income generating activities. The most effective intervention in favour of vulnerable women is Bussa-Gonofa services because it has been enabling women to establish small-scale business activities. However, there is limitation of budget so it cannot serve all vulnerable women throughout the Wereda. There is also preliminary business recourse shortage such as land, trading shade and processing enterprise to distribute among the vulnerable women. There are about 40 beneficiaries who have been organised to work on weaving business but they couldn’t access inputs to their business and they forced to quit until they could get access to materials. On the other side, poor female students who are vulnerable to different problem forced to quit their school. They drop out of school either because they have lost their parents or they haven't got support from family, relatives due to poverty. There are about 95 girls and 125 boys who have dropped out from school because of economic and family reason. To increase the economic empowerment of these vulnerable women, credit out of interest rate and input distribution should be provided either by government of NGOs.

## Research officer additions

### Bees

In the discussion with the wereda administration, I raised the problem of honey bees in the study kebele. Though people are interest to breed bees to produce honey, the weed killers spared over the maize and teff crops are destroying large number of bees and this has resulted in the decline of honeybee population. The administrator said the weed killer mainly affects the local bees. The wereda encourages the people to use new breed which can, according to him, survive the impact of chemicals. He blames the farmers for refusing to use the new breeds. He said some people say the new breeds cannot adapt to the environment but he does not trust this information unless it is studied and verified. So, he is not convinced when the farmers complain about the decline of honeybees due to increasing usage of weed killers on their farm land.

### Problem of Mango trees

I discussed the expansion of the mango tree diseasing throughout the wereda and any responses from the wereda/zone and regional government to curb the problem. The administrator said that the problems started in few kebeles some three years ago and now it has spread to all the kebeles of the wereda and affecting the leaves and fruits of mango trees. According to him, the mango trees have being playing an important role in improving the livelihood of the people of the wereda. The problem was reported to the zone and to the Bako Agricultural Research Centre. The research centre studied the problem and suggested that the chemical/medicine to protect the disease can only be sprayed by using aeroplane. The centre also suggested that as the mango trees spread over the wider areas throughout the kebeles of the wereda, it is not economical to spray the pesticides in all places. He said that the chemical can be applicable only on trees which are located condensable in smaller areas.

### The disease of red pepper

The kebele in which we are studying was known for its production of red pepper as the main cash crop. But due to the spread of the disease locally called ‘cholera,’ people are stopping growing peppers. They could not get support from the wereda and DAs. The administrator responded to the issues as follows:

It is true the red pepper is being affected by a disease in all the kebeles of the wereda and in some neighbouring weredas. Recently there has been a meeting it Gimbi town of West Wellega zone to discuss how to reduce to impact of the disease on the red pepper. Experts said that with the current knowledge it is impossible to control the disease but it is important to focus on managing the crop itself than trying to find the costly solution of protecting it using pesticides. It was decided that farmers need to protect their red pepper farm from any flooding, to use the best improved seeds, to use different kinds of fertilisers and to properly manage the fertility of the land as the disease is related to the condition of the land.

### Chicken Disease

I discussed with the administrator about peoples’ complaints about the wereda/DAs failure to protect their chickens from disease every year. He responded as follows:

I have no any report on the spread of chicken disease in the wereda/studied kebele. I believe that the vet offices are responsible to help the farmers by giving medicines for the chickens or to report to the wereda agricultural office about the nature of the disease and seek solution form the concerned bodies.

### Natural resource management

I asked the administrator about the wereda plans to improve the condition of environment in the wereda and he responded as follows: There have been important changes in terms of protecting the environment in different kebeles. As a plan we have to improve trees and grasses on terraced check dams in the communing summer. Last year there was a shortage of seedlings in many places and most of the terraced places were not covered with trees and grasses. This year the wereda has been working hard to increase the availability of seedlings in each kebele. Seedlings are being produced in schools, churches, and on public irrigation lands, FTCs and by private farmers. We plan to plant trees on public lands in highland areas and on terraced lands. As a whole we want to plant 13,000,000 trees and grasses (50% to be fodders).

There have been challenges to protect the natural resources from deforestation activities. There were no detailed guidelines to bring the deforesters to the court in the past. The law was formulated in 1990 E.C but it had no guideline until very recently. As a result, large hectares of forest land were destroyed by farmers and illegal wood/timber traders. In the discussions we made with the farmers, we understood that many people are still not aware on the negative side of deforestation. They want to use the forest and forest products and consider all the trees in their farms as their private property. As the guideline to protect the natural environment was received recently by the wereda, now we can legal actions on those who involve in the deforestation of natural resources.