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

[Government employees 1](#_Toc434137751)

[Kebele manager 1](#_Toc434137752)

[Development Agents and vet 2](#_Toc434137753)

[Health Extension Workers 4](#_Toc434137754)

[Head teacher of primary school 7](#_Toc434137755)

[Government volunteers 8](#_Toc434137756)

[Youth leaders 8](#_Toc434137757)

[Development team leader 10](#_Toc434137758)

[Male 1-5 cell leader 11](#_Toc434137759)

[Female 1-5 cell leader 12](#_Toc434137760)

[Woman leader 12](#_Toc434137761)

[Service co-operative leader – none 13](#_Toc434137762)

[Credit organiser 14](#_Toc434137763)

[Elites 14](#_Toc434137764)

[Leading farmer 14](#_Toc434137765)

[Woman model farmer 15](#_Toc434137766)

[Leading male trader 16](#_Toc434137767)

[Leading female trader 16](#_Toc434137768)

[Leading businessman - NA 18](#_Toc434137769)

[Leading businesswoman 18](#_Toc434137770)

[Knowledgeable people 18](#_Toc434137771)

[Best local economist – NA 18](#_Toc434137772)

[Opinion leader with urban links 18](#_Toc434137773)

[Irrigation expert 20](#_Toc434137774)

[Experienced migrants 21](#_Toc434137775)

[Customary leaders 22](#_Toc434137776)

[Customary group - PHOLEA 22](#_Toc434137777)

[Religious leaders 24](#_Toc434137778)

[Orthodox Christian leader 24](#_Toc434137779)

[Muslim leader- none 24](#_Toc434137780)

[Protestant leader - none 24](#_Toc434137781)

[NGO worker 24](#_Toc434137782)

## Government employees

### Kebele manager

 I have been working here for the past two years, I plan to stay here for one more year, afterwards I am planning to work on my own farm mainly in irrigation by using a motor pump from a waterwell of my own. I am from this kebele, I studied at Diploma level in Human Resources in Debre Zeit private College.

I liked working for my own community; I wish to assist the kebele even after I leave this office and engage in my own farm activity. I am given the role of coordinating the extension programs of agriculture and health, but the government employees in these programs are not cooperative with me when I try to coordinate their work, and when I want to comment and correct them, I face conflicts with them. This is the challenge for me. There is no other problem here at the kebele office. The cabinet and committees are working well, they have meetings every week and they evaluate their work. They are committed and the work is done on time, there is a smooth working relationship between me, the manager and the cabinets and committees.

The development team and one to five groups are working well and they are helpful for mobilising the public work in the kebele, mainly in the watershed management. Meetings are organised and people are traced by the one-to-five groups. Previously people were not mobilised easily to reach the community, lots of letters, and door to door mobilisation was needed, but now these groups helped as a pool system for meetings, government development issues, and also to share skills on farming.

Women’s development teams and one-to-fives started just last year, and now it is well organised in a short period of time, they even began saving money in the development team which holds 30 women. They participate in development activities, they are involved in health package implementation, and there are model mothers among them called ‘Ade Durea’.

The woreda is linked well with the kebele, previously the wereda was less involved and there was no frequent visit to the kebele. Now an assigned cabinet from the woreda comes everyday to see how we are doing and to give support. There is a meeting at woreda level with the kebele administrations at Ada woreda office/at Debre Zeit.

There is a meeting with the kebele council every month on the 19th. The agendas are about the kebele work in general, evaluation of the work and the administrators, development issues are also discussed. The council is active because every member is involved actively and they keep time and dates of meetings regularly, no one misses these meetings. They are courageous to evaluate any kebele leader or any mistaken work. Therefore I would say they are very good in all areas of their roles.

The relationship with the kebele chair is very good, and division of authority is: the chairman signs any letter, and based on the signature, I, as manager, put the stamps which I am mandated to hold.

The community respects me, and I also respect them, there is no problem I faced from community members, I work smoothly with them. Only when there is agreement on land rent people come and want me to sign and stamp for them, but I tell them that I am not mandated to sign. At this time they feel bad, demanding me to do it for them.

If I were mandated to make changes, I wouldn’t change the structure and the way the kebele is working, because everything is convenient, and things are going smoothly.

### Development Agents and vet

 The land in the village is generally flat. There is no river that starts in the village or crosses the village. There is only the Mojo river which is adjacent to the kebele (but not within the kebele). There are three types of soil: the block soil which comprises 50% of the soil in the village, Gomberie which comprises 40% and the sandy soil which comprises 10% of the soil in the village. The Black type of soil is suitable to produce such crops as taff, chickpeas, wheat and lentils. The Gumberie type of soil is mainly important to produce beans, peas, barley and wheat. Most of the community members produce taff, chickpeas, wheat and lentils.

There is a hilly area which covers 81 hectare of land. The land size used for farming activities is 295 hectare; whereas 120 hectares of land is used for residential purposes. 16.5 hectare of land is unused land because it is eroded by flooding. There is only 12.5 hectare of land which is used for forestation.

The kebele agriculture office does different activities in the watershed together with the community. There are works done on terracing, construction of different structures to reserve water, protect grassland, forestation, soil conservation activities (by putting stones along the sides of the land exposed to erosion and tying the stones together with the soil by *gabion).* The different DAS (Crop DA, livestock DA, Natural resources DA and Vet) said that there was no forest land some five to six years back. The land was exposed to erosion by the wind and by water. At this time, the hills and most of the non-farming areas are covered by trees.

There is little increase in the temperature in the last five years and most of the daytime is hot. The amount of rainfall is not as much as it was in the past (but I couldn’t get statistics of this data) and there is variation in the rainy season. Meaning to say that the rain comes early and stops early one year; and it comes early and stops late at the end of September in the other year. However, there has been no drought or no severe impact on the farming activities of the community.

The agricultural extension programme introduces different farming inputs to help the community increase productivity. It provides improved seeds of taff, chickpeas, wheat, hybrid livestock, reservation of natural resources, seeds of livestock fodder and introduces farming technologies, such as BBM and farming equipment. BBM was introduced to the kebele for the first time in 1997EC. In addition to this, the improved stove has been introduced during the last ten years and many of the households have used it. Before 8 years, the improved stove was distributed in the form of subsidies where beneficiaries had to pay only 40birr which was 50% of the total cost. Now, beneficiaries must pay the total cost which is 80birr and buy it from the agriculture office.

At this time, most of the farmers use improved seeds and fertiliser. Education is also provided to the farmers about the best farming system, keeping the seasonality of the farming, the amount of fertiliser which the farmers have to use in proportion to the size of their farmland and use of pesticides to prevent crop diseases.

Training was given to members of two associations in 2002EC which have 150 members about preparation of improved seeds. These associations prepare different types of seeds on their farmland and sell it to local farmers. An NGO called JICA (Japan NGO) trained (two years back) 30 model farmers from the kebele about seed quality and preparation of improved seedlings for one year. These farmers were selected as innovative farmers who could accept technology and who are willing to keep the quality of seeds. Another NGO called OSRA also provided education to the community about hybrid livestock, preparation of livestock feed (fodder) and trained one farmer on castration. This organisation also supplies livestock food seed like Elephant grass for free.

The kebele Agriculture office works closely with the Debre Zeit Agricultural Research Institution, Asela Agricultural Research Institution and Melkassa Agricultural Research Institution.

The agriculture extension packages are spread to the community through the 1-5development teams and iddirs. The DAs visit house to house to provide information about the packages. Besides the 1-5team members meet once a week and discuss the extension packages. The agriculture office calls a meeting with the development groups every two months.

The main cash crops produced in the kebele are taff, chickpeas, beans, lentil, wheat and peas. There are hybrid livestock distributed to the community on the basis of credit. These include Boren, Holistesian and Jersey. There are also types of breed poultry known as White and Black Egyptian types and local chickens. The kebele agriculture office supplies these types of livestock and poultry in the basis of demand by credit. The office gets supply from Genesis Farms, Lemma farms and ELFORA.

The office supplies fodder from Debre Zeit Agriculture Research institution. There is supply of Elephant grass and local grass (straw). The DAs said that there are no livestock which farmers are rearing successfully but are not included in the extension programmes.

There is a veterinary clinic in Udie where the livestock get vaccination and medical treatment. It also provides delivery and castration services. There is surgeon in kebele 15 who provides surgical services on the basis of appointment. According the vet of the kebele, the common livestock diseases that occur in the kebele are: Astrolosis, FMD (sores around the mouth and nose), Aba Senga, LSD (skin disease), parasites, African Horse sickness, plunders (disease attacks horses), typhoid (attacks mainly poultry) and rabies (attacked dogs).

Most of these occur few days before the rain comes and right after the rain stops. Others occur when it rains and when the grass gets wet.

The main problems the vet explained were: lack of sufficient medical instruments, shortage of medicines such as intramonal which is used for breast, lack of multi vitamin supply, penistedy, adbenzadol, tetrandazol and spray. The vaccination service and supply of deworming (anti-parasites) are widely used by the community. Farmers take their sick livestock to the clinic. So far, there are no parts which the farmers refused.

In the past (5-6 years back), there were some harmful traditional practices like cutting the tongue of sick livestock and burning the skin of live livestock. At this time none of the farmers practice these habits.

The innovative farmers in the kebele are those who implement the agriculture extension packages properly. These farmers take improved seeds in credit and pay their debt on time, right after they harvest the crops. They buy sufficient amount of fertiliser and use it to farm all their plots properly. These farmers are also willing to contact the DAs at any time and ask important advice and guidance from the experts. They always participate in meetings regarding the agriculture extension programme and provide important information. These are also considered model farmers where they are used as promoters of the packages to all other community members. In this case, the model farmers are also selected on the basis of their performance to implement not only the agricultural packages but also the health extension packages. Thus, they display their houses, compounds, kitchen, livestock and farmland to other farmers who want to learn from their experiences in health and agriculture.

There are two private investors who are involved horticulture (COOP flowers and Lemma Flower farm). These investors contact the agriculture office for some technical assistance. There was no report that these investors were involved in any of the extension services.

Finally, the DAs suggested that:

* The veterinary clinic would provide better service if the medical equipment could be supplied.
* It is important to have more supply of breed livestock as the awareness to keep breed livestock and the demand has increased.

### Health Extension Workers

 There are sixteen (16) packages of the health extension program. Out of these, Vaccinations, Child and mothers’ health, the sanitation and hygiene utilisation, water quality and safety measures, solid and liquid waste disposal, food hygiene, latrine construction, family planning, health house condition and personal hygiene are most popular in the community. This is because they have been introduced intensively during the last three years and because their impact on the health of the people is directly observed. So, community members started to learn the benefit of each of these components and applied soon.

The IEC (Information, Education and Communication) and BCC (Behavioural Change and Communication) packages are also widely introduced to the community. However, a lot is left to be done regarding the BCC as many youth have not yet changed their practice towards HIV/AIDS. Despite their awareness of the disease and their attitude to prevent the disease, there is a tendency of increasing new HIV infections.

The packages of nutrition, TB and Leprosy prevention are not as popular as the other packages because they are not raised as big problems in the community.

The community’s awareness towards the packages has been improved and the majority of the community participates in the packages actively. The following table shows the planned activities of the health post in 2005 and the percentage of achievements.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| R.No | Planned Activities (2005)-September-March | Quantity | Achieved (so far) |
| 1 | Home visit (by the health extension workers) to supervise the implementation of the packages in each household and to ensure all households use Bed net to prevent malaria | 2384 | 100% |
| 2 | Latrine Construction | 60 | 66% |
| 3 | Solid Waste Disposal | 60 | 66% |
| 4 | Liquid waste disposal | 60 | 50% |
| 5 | Family Planning Services | 992(women) | 100% |
| 6 | Health Education | 2,100(people) | 100% |

The health extension worker said that there are problems that some people are not easily convinced about the implementation of the different health packages. For instance, latrine construction and utilisation takes a long time and people need to be visited day and night to convince them to have it. But such packages as vaccination and children’s health are simple because the mothers are interested to see their babies’ healthy life. This is also because the health extension workers can provide it easily. Most of the time, the mothers come to the health post to attend the health of their babies and to have the regular vaccination service. Besides, there are shortages of some medicines as *Quinine* (for malaria), lack of transportation to help delivering mothers.

The health extension workers has been working in the health post for four years and she mentioned that there is a great improvement in the health and participation of the community to implement the packages. She said that, before two years the health programs were reached to the community through the volunteers called the health army. As many of the members of these volunteers were men, the health programs were not effective. She believes that targeting women is the best way to deliver health related information rather than targeting men because most of the health extension packages are directly linked with the daily life of women more than men. These voluntary groups have now been replaced (since 2004EC) by the 1-5 team in which women have active participation. The 1-5 teams which are formed especially for the health packages are all women. So far, there are 6 1-5 teams, in total 30 women (5women\*6groups), in the kebele who are supporting the health extension programme at the community level. She believes that this structure is effective to implement the health extension packages. As the members of each team have strong social interaction and social links with the different sections of the community, they have become effective to disseminate important information. Meanwhile, large meetings, trainings and formal or informal women’s meetings are helpful to provide health education to the community. When she ranks the methods in accordance to their importance, she puts them as: 1-5 team, Women’s meetings, development teams and model farmers.

She thinks that she and her two colleagues (who were out of the kebele for personal reasons during the interview) have a good relationship with the local community. Most community members are familiar with them. She said that she sometimes assists the women whom she supervises to complete their domestic work so that they can concentrate on the information she wants to provide.

With regards to contraceptives, the HEW said that it is the women who use family planning methods more than men. Men are not likely to use any contraceptive. However, the young men use condoms from the condom dispensaries in the youth center or by buying from the pharmacies in. Only a few young unmarried men take condoms from the health post. Most of the beneficiaries are married women, some unmarried young girls who have sexual partners and some students**.**

The health post keeps condoms, Dipoo (injectable), pills and Implants. Implants were introduced recently (4 months ago) after the health extension worker received training by the wereda health office about its insertion (the training didn’t include the removal of the implant). Before the implant insertion was started, there has been a community awareness programme done to introduce the contraceptive. However, none of the women in the community has demanded an implant yet.

The HEW has an opinion that contraceptives have reduced the local birth rate greatly. The number of women who are interested to use family planning methods is increasing from time to time. However, as many of the registrations and records of the health post were burnt during the fire accident in 2004EC, she couldn’t provide statistical data of the birth rates during the last years. The fire accident was caused after the Oxygen tank of the refrigerator exploded suddenly and destroyed four rooms of the health post and burnt all the documents of the health post. It was on a Sunday when all the workers had rest and there was no harm caused to humans. The wereda health office and the local community are trying to allocate some funds to rehabilitate the health post.

Since the year 2004EC, the government’s policy to reduce maternal death has been implemented better than the years before. The HEWs spent a large part of their energy and time preventing maternal death by providing the necessary information to the community. The intention is to bring all pregnant women for health services at the health post or at the health centre so that it reduces the death of mothers during delivery. Despite this, the programme has a big obstacle that there is no ambulance service in the kebele that hinders most mothers to come to the health facilities (she said that she has heard an ambulance will be given to serve the kebeles of the Ada’a wereda soon in April or May). Besides, the community is still dependent on the help of traditional birth attendants. The good thing here is that the traditional birth attendants are trained to provide safe delivery services.

In addition to this, the two HEWs are trained (in 2001and 2002EC) to provide safe delivery services and they are involved with deliveries and do their best to help mothers. The HEWs have a monthly meeting in each village with the 1-5 team members in the community and discuss the issues of mother and child health. At this time, the HEWs provide education to the mothers about the consequences of unsafe delivery at home, the need to deliver at health facilities and the need to have timely pre-natal and ante-natal follow ups. She believes that the health centre of the kebele is located in a central place where it is accessed from different villages of the kebele. Although there are also two private clinics in Udie; they don’t provide delivery services. The health post refers complicated cases to the health centre of the kebele. When the case is so difficult for the health experts at the health centre, it is referred to the Hospital in. There has been no report of maternal death during the last months of 2005EC.

The health extension worker suggested that the monthly meeting of the HEWs with all women in the villages is very helpful to prevent maternal death because all women get the information through the development teams who have close daily interaction. She recommended that it would have been much more helpful if the transportation problem could be solved soon.

Regarding to fistula, there has been no problem that has been reported to the HEWs. Although she thinks that it can happen to one of many women, she doesn’t believe it is common in the community.

There are cases of abortions by unmarried adolescent girls who have unexpected pregnancies. However, they all go to Hospital or private clinics there and she has no records of abortion.

Infertility is not a common problem in the community; but there are some women who visit her to discuss their problems in relation to infertility. She advises women to have the number of children who they like to have before they use long term contraceptives because it might cause delaying of pregnancy. She also advises clients to use different contraceptives rather than use only one type of contraceptive which might cause a delay in pregnancy. Indeed, most of the married women prefer to use the injectable (Dippo) which is injected every three months. However, there are also complaints by people who blame this type of contraceptive for increasing their body weight and causing some increase of bleeding during menstruation.

She has no information of any problems related to menstruation. She believes that most of the adolescent girls are aware of the menstruation period as they learn in schools and get guidance from their teachers. The high school in the kebele keeps some sanitary pads to provide to girls who suddenly have their period while they are in class.

The HEW said that there is no female circumcision at this time at all. It has been abandoned thanks to the government ten years ago. The woman who was known to practice female circumcision in the community was detained in jail in 2003EC (for three months) where she learned about the harmfulness of the practice and changed her mind. After she was released, she stopped circumcision and started to teach the community about harmfulness of the practice. So, it is believed by the health experts and other government officials and most of the community members that there is no female circumcision at this time. The girls also learn about its consequences in their school that they don’t want to be circumcised.

### Head teacher of primary school

 The head of the Sirba elementary school thinks that there is a good relationship with the wereda education office. She has contacts with the wereda office to report activities, to discuss about certain problems in her school, to send results of students, etc. The wereda office also may ask clarification of the reports sent and calls monthly meetings.

As the wereda education office has financial constraints, it couldn’t allocate a sufficient number of teachers to the school. Hence, there is a shortage of teachers. She had asked for at least two additional teachers. There is also a shortage of classrooms. She requested the construction of additional classrooms. In addition to this, the school has no electricity so that students couldn’t learn from radio lessons. There is a shortage of text books especially for the grade 3 and 4 subjects. Consequently students do not get textbooks to read at home.

The other problem is that the community’s awareness towards education has not yet been improved and so the community has low participation. This becomes worse when it is about female education.

In 2001EC, an NGO called Engage Now provided 62 desks, 3 additional classrooms and one office. Again in 2004EC, Passion Connection helped by providing 54 desks and two classrooms.

The school was opened in 2001EC and she has directed it since 2002EC. There is a plan that it will be upgraded to grade 1-6 in 2006EC. At this time, there are enough classrooms; but there is a shortage of budget to hire teachers.

Recently, the schools’ compound has been well fenced and trees as well as flowers have been planted to decorate the school. It also has a door and guard hired by the school grant budget.

Education

She said that the school dropout rate has increased at national level due to various reasons. In her cases, there were 11 students who dropped out in 2004EC; and this has increased to 15 in the first semester of 2005EC. The main reasons are: low community awareness about education, family separation/divorce, lack of interest, or divorce, illness and migration with the family.

She thinks that the reason that many college students have poor English is because they start to learn all subjects in English only when they are in grade nine. Although they learn English as a subject since grade one, English is only the language of instruction in high school. This leads to poor results in the language.

As the students all are children at the same education level (1-4), they have similar performance in all the subjects.

She suggests that the self-content system (that grades 1-4 have only one teacher for all subjects) has been difficult to ensure quality of education because one teacher can’t have the same performance in all subjects. They may not be interested in all subjects. So, it would have been good if the teachers could be assigned to their main subject of interest so that they could teach effectively.

Child Labour

Children help their parents in doing different household activities such as fetching water, fetching dung, preparing coffee, cleaning the house and livestock yard, taking messages, washing clothes and kitchen items. Boys help in looking after the livestock. Children may start paid work at 14 or 15 years old. There are children who look after livestock for payment. But these are very few and it doesn’t mean they finance for their education.

In 2004, there were 52 students registered as being seven years old in Sirba. But only 30 of them had started grade one. However, overall most of the students, 80%, are at their proportion age and grade. There is only one 14 year old who is in grade 2. The oldest age is 15 and the youngest is 7 years old. 96% of the students don’t dropout. If students drop out, the teachers help them and try to get them back by discussing the problems with their parents. So, far, 10 students have come back to school with the help of the teachers. Permission for absence is only given for three days in a semester.

The expectation of children regarding education has being decreasing because they see their older siblings get no job after completing grade ten. So, they have the idea that it could be better to get ready for work than to spend time in schooling.

## Government volunteers

### Youth leaders

 There is no youth association or other formal youth organisation in the kebele. Although there are the youth leagues and the youth federation as structures since 2004EC, they both are not functioning because they have no acting leaders. But I found a group of youth who have a leader and are trying to operate as a youth club. This club currently has 42 members of whom 22 are young girls. The leader of this club said that he is trying to act in different issues of the youth such as rape, abduction, migration of young girls to Arab countries, and unemployment. It also tries to provide different information to the youth about the credit and saving services and other job opportunities at the kebele.

The club leader said that the youth club has a youth-centre constructed and equipped by an NGO called RASTON and was this given to the youth club two weeks ago (two weeks before the interview). The members of the club have free access to the computers, musical instruments, tape recorder, TV and a stage where they perform their art. The club members write poems, stories and perform dramas. They learn from each other’s experiences and try to participate in the different clubs in their schools. He believes that at this time the interest of the youth to participate in political affairs has improved when compared to the situation of five years ago.

Land is not accessible to young males and females unless they get a share of their parents. He estimates that only 1% of the youth have access to land from their parents or from their siblings. The majority are landless. In fact, there are young men (about 2%) who have good economic capacity and access land by renting. But this is also becoming expensive.

Most of the youth are unemployed; but some are engaged in the factories in the local towns such as HuJai Shoe Factory in Dukem, China Communications Construction Company in Udie kebele and flower farms. The respondent said that there are about 50 youth in the kebele who have completed grade ten, some graduated from colleges but couldn’t yet get a job. These youth are dependent on their families’ support to live.

Young women also face the same problem of being unemployed after completing their education. Most of them prefer to migrate to Arab countries and work as housemaids and some work in the flower farms in the local towns. He thinks that only a few of those who migrate to Arab countries are successful and most of them do not want to come back home because they don’t earn enough money to enable them to establish a better economic life in the kebele. Recently, there was a case of death for one girl who used to live in an Arab state. When her body was sent to her parents, many people who already have sent their daughters to Arab state were scared. The cause of the death was not known and her parents didn’t have any idea how to claim her rights. There was a rumour that the girls went to Arab states through illegal ways where it complicated the claim of her rights. Her death was reported by her friends who live there and who called her parents in Udie. Her body was sent to her country. He knows about 80 girls from Udie town who migrated to Debre Zeit, Addis Ababa, Mojo, Dukem and Arab states. There are also girls (among the 80) who are hired at the plastic and shoe factories in Dukem and continue their education in the evening class. These girls improve their work positions at the factories as much as they improve their educational status.

There are some girls who continue their education in the preparatory school in Debre Zeit as well as in Mojo. Those girls who are from better-off households attend their higher education in private Colleges in Debre Zeit and Addis Ababa.

Some of the youth who are from the better-off households who have some business in Debre Zeit or nearby places are not willing to go far from the *kebele*. However, almost all the youth want to have an urban style of life and most of them are not happy to continue living in the village. There are some youth who are engaged in metal work, *Gomista* (tyre work), keep shops and help parents in their business (restaurants, drink houses, selling crops, etc).

The respondent said that there are 90 youth who are registered to participate in some volunteer activities in the *kebele*. For example, there was an event at *wereda* level to commemorate the late Ethiopian Prime Minister and a competition held. The youth from the *kebele* participated in the poetry competition and art performances. He (the respondent) wrote 20 pages of poems about Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and he was a winner of the poetry competition. He was rewarded with 600birr. The youth also participate in different art performances organised by NGOs such as the RASTON (in 1998EC). This NGO printed the respondent’s poetry in a magazine (which was annually printed) of the NGO about harmful tradition practices against women and children.

Although the interest of both young males and females to participate in different economic and cultural activities is high, the opportunities are very limited. Despite this, the youth have been organised into different income generating activities such as selling stones, horse cart and petty trade.

He noticed some difference in ideas of the youth and the older generation about some of the basic livelihood issues. When the older generation want to see the youth participating in the farming activities, the youth would like to have urban lifestyles and to have higher educational status. There are some conflicts among the youth and their parents when the parents try to force their children to strictly follow their rules and regulations; but the youth reject them as they need to have a different lifestyle to their parents. Besides, conflicts arise when the young men and women request their parents to give them some money so that they can migrate to another place in search of a job or to continue their education in private colleges in the towns. Most of the youth think that their parents have enough resources to help them to learn in Private colleges; but the parents do not want to see their young children go away from the kebele. They think these young men and women may not ever come back to them after they learn about the town life and they may learn some bad habits like chewing chat, smoking cigarette, being thieves, etc from the town people.

Although there are some young men and women who are interested in religious activities, the majority have less interest in religion. Most of the youth who visit the church and attend the religious events and ceremonies are young women. Indeed, the young girls use going to church as some means of recreation because they spend all of their time at home and they are free to go anywhere they want to go. But the young men have better access to some local recreational places such as the drinking houses, tea house, Jettony houses, playing football and walking along the streets. The girls meet with their friends (including their boyfriends) at the church. They are welcome by their parents to visit churches as much as they want. During annual religious celebrations, they spend the night in the church and most of them enjoy the time.

The dominants are Orthodox Church followers; but there are a very few Muslims who came from other places recently and started to live in the kebele (in rented houses). There are also a few followers of the protestant church and they are likely to have better participation in the economic activities of the kebele. They own shops and have some wage labour jobs.

Most people (older men and women as well as young men and women) participate in New Year celebrations, *Demera*/*Meskel* (celebration of the foundation of true cross), *Gena* (Christmas) and *fasica* (Easter). Some ten years ago, some of the old people were participating in a traditional religion ritual which is locally known as *iricha.* At this time, the respondent has not heard it to be practiced by local people. However, he said that there are some young men who go to Hora in Debre Zeit where the celebration takes place just to enjoy the celebration and the social gathering there. They go there as visitors and not as believers.

Finally, the youth club leader suggested that it would have been good if the youth could get some skill trainings like, hairdressing, food preparation, business, woodwork, metalwork, etc so that they could create some job opportunities for themselves and the other community members. They would also not spend their time in drinking houses and in gambling. Besides, it would be helpful to provide the current youth centre to have well trained leaders, teaching materials and other incentives so that it could attract many young men and women to spend their time there.

### Development team leader

 RO1 The development team leader’s role is to make sure that all the community members participate in development activities in the kebele, such as water and soil conservation activities, planting trees, terracing and clearing of stagnant water to prevent malaria. This structure has leader, vice and the 1-5 team leaders. The leader meets the 1-5 team leaders twice a week. But it depends on the program/season of the work. For example, he doesn’t need to meet the 1-5 team leaders in the rainy season because most people will be busy in their individual activities.

He is the kebele chairman but he also facilitates the development activities by leading the group. The successes include: the kebele’s land has been covered by grass, there are many new trees planted. And the forest is now being recovered during the last 3-4 years. In the past, the land was degraded and there was high soil erosion. Now, it has reduced although a lot has to be done.

The main obstacle is that there is less community participation and the development leader spends his private time to convince the community. Besides, some of the 1-5 cell leaders are not effective because of their old age and health problems. The other problem is that they are not well trained to lead their teams effectively.

The development team leader suggested that the kebele staff should support the 1-5 leaders by providing technical support and training. The leadership capacity and technical trainings would improve their skill. Moreover, it would be helpful if they could get some incentives when they perform good tasks.

RO2 Gerea or development army has head/Dureta Gerea, Secretary/Beresa, treasurer/Kershi kebdu (the contribution is just to cover refreshments during meetings), Gurmayna/political representative in the team responsible for public organisation and party activities.

I am also one-to-five cell leader. My role in the Development team and the cell as a head are; I organise the group and lead meetings every fortnight with the development team, I follow up and have continued contact with members of one-to fives three times a week. We discuss security issues in the neighbourhood, development work like on natural resources development, terracing, about internal roads, about health interventions such as preventing diseases mainly HIV in the neighbourhood, sanitation in the village, about government contributions and tax to make them discharged on time.

There are rules and regulations which are written, and agreements and plans to be performed are listed and a copy is given to the kebele administration. If anybody fails to go along with the rules , the plans, and expectations, I, as a head, am allowed to penalise members. Penalties usually are additional workload/public works.

As a leader of development team/Gerea, I arrange discussions to resolve disputes among members of the Gerea, and if not solved. elders will be contacted to intervene. If this fails, the case will be referred to the keble then to the police.

The success of development group is the ability to mobilise the community for public works more than ever before, and also we could be more secure by maintaining peace in the community. Before the existence of these groups, the keble a great burden dealing with disputes of community members in various issues, but now the burden is lifted and these groups can manage such issues at the village/neighbourhood level.

The community could have more improved interactions mainly in one-to-five, and also in the development team. Previously neighbours were fighting on various issues like; your donkey ate my heap of grass, your dog bit my dog, your child bit mine, etc...But now such minor things are not reasons for the neighbours to fight as they interact continuously which could develop their intimacy.

There is no problem that prevented me from doing my role as head of the team, and therefore everything is going well.

We meet with one to five leaders every week on Sunday, the discussion may take 1:30 hr and we usually talk about the progress and challenges or issues related to the cells, and concerns of any leader from his group. The discussion also involves the time of meetings and how to time the meetings to avoid affecting members farming activities.

The cells are doing well, because they are helping each other, and also in regard to security, we are cooperating. Moreover, If training were given to leaders and if leaders orient members there could be much more improvement.

### Male 1-5 cell leader

I am also leader to a cell, and I organising the members and mobilise them to work on public works. Like for the development team, we have written rules to govern our work. We should abide by these rules. Educating the group is one role. This is mainly regarding the keble programs mainly political that we are oriented or told from the keble.

More intimate interaction is the result of the work among cell members. Very high initiation for public work is achieved. There is no problem in doing the work for one to five groups, we meet three days a week at least, and if any issue arises we arrange meetings at any time since we are close. There is no problem that affected me to carry out my role.

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### Female 1-5 cell leader

 RO1 The (women’s health-focused) 1-5 cell leaders’ role is to follow-up the households which have to fulfil the health extension packages such as follow up of pregnant women, delivered mothers, infant feeding practices, construction of toilets, personal hygiene, malaria prevention. She then reports to the health extension workers of the kebele. She also assists the health workers when there is a vaccination campaign. She mobilises the community and disseminates important health related information to the households through her team members. She does this work at informal bases for one day in a week. It may take her 3-4 hours. She has being doing this work for three years.

She thinks that most households, at this time, have toilets and use it, use bed net to prevent malaria and use family planning services. Despite this, there are some households who don’t use bed nets properly. If she reports about these, they may not get other health service at the health post of the kebele.

 There are 30 HHs called as development team member under which there are 6 1-5cells. As a leader of the 1-5cell, she has a role to supervise and follow up three pregnant women, under five children, construction of 25 toilets and liquid and solid disposal mechanisms in all HHs at her neighbourhood. She also is involved in mobilising women to be grouped to saving some money. There two groups of women: one has 14 members who have finalised the legal process and the second group has 11 members and it is on process to get legal body.

The main obstacle to do the work is that the women are not active to complete what they are told to do. Most of the women are not interested to follow the health extension packages that they need very close follow-up. They think that it is hard work to dig the hole for toilet. Besides, most husbands are not support.

### Woman leader

 The women and children’s office leader is a volunteer to serve the women in leadership. Her office works to see ways where orphaned children can be supported and to assist women in respecting their constitutional rights. She works to help women in times of divorce or marriage conflicts by providing the necessary information on how to deal with the cases. She said that her effort is to resolve any marriage related conflicts and put maximum effort to save the existence of the families. However, when it becomes impossible to reconcile the partners and divorce becomes the only choice, she tries to ensure that the woman has got her equal share of the family property and the cases ends safely. When divorce cases are sent to the wereda court, she does follow up till the end of the case to ensure the woman’s rights are respected.

The office also works to empower women economically and to protect them from any kind of male violence. It is responsible to mobilise women’s groups to be organised into different income generating activities and to participate in the political and economic activities. The office cooperates with other sectors of the government to ensure the participation and beneficiary of women. These sectors are agriculture and health.

Before four years, an NGO called Engaginal Foundation provided credit to a group of 30 women through the Oromia Credit and Saving Institution. The amount of the fund was 30,000birr which was planned to be used in the form of revolving fund. These 30 women were trained about leading small businesses and petty trade. Each member had membership in this credit and saving institution to save 10 birr each/month. At this time, most of the members of the group do business, such as selling local drinks and owning small shops to sell consumables. This is because the group work couldn’t be effective as most of them focussed on their private businesses.

The Agriculture office supplies improved stoves to the women in the community. The office also gives a kind of orientation about the benefits and utilisation of these improved stoves so that the women teach other women in their localities.

The women’s leader said that women have equal rights to share any property of their families with males. They can inherit land from their parents and they can share it equally with their husband during their divorce. Besides, the ownership of land is considered to have equal title where the name and photograph of both marriage couples must be there in the land ownership certificate.

With regards to marriage, the respondent said that there has been no marriage by abduction for the last two years except one case reported in 2004EC. That case was reported by friends of a girl who was abducted by a man; but the case ended when the girl was convinced by her parents and her partner to arrange the marriage. There has been no formal reports that came to her office about this case. This means that the harmful traditional practices such as marriage by abduction, which used to common, have reduced greatly. People have believed in the need of the consent of the two marriage partners to decide upon their future life. At this time, most of the marriages are arranged by the agreement of the male and the female partners. Despite this, the respondent suspects that there can be some occurrence of abduction in the remote areas when the parents of the couple don’t accept the marriage. The young couples then decide to shorten their engagement by arranging abduction (but not violent one).

There is a rare case of underage marriage which occurs when the parents believe that the girls are mature enough. The office of the women and children’s affairs faces such challenges as a lack of birth certificate to prove their age. In addition to this, most cases of abduction and underage marriage are not reported to the office.

Similarly, the case of rape has come to reduce from time to time; but it occurs roughly once a year. Like the other cases of underage marriage and abduction, cases of rape are not also well reported to the office or to the police. If there are some reports, they are usually incomplete to be seen in front of the law. There has been no report of female circumcisions. She believes that female circumcision is not an issue in the community because a lot has been done by the government as well as the community leaders to stop female circumcision for the last ten years.

During the last year (2004EC), there was only one report of abduction and no report of rape case.

The government’s interventions through the agriculture and health extension workers have helped to reduce these cases. The HEWs have home-to-home visits and provide education about the consequences of female circumcision, underage marriage, abduction and rape in relation to their mother and child health packages. The reproductive health services have been improved in the last two years when the health centre started services in the kebele. There is a maternity service provided at the health centre by trained health workers. Women are treated in a way that they can feel at home when they deliver at the health centre. The health workers prepare *genfo* (porridge), charcoal, flour soup and a Coffee ceremony. This has encouraged many women to deliver at the health centre and to get family planning services there.

Regarding male violence, wife beating has been a common practice in the community. The women also have a belief that it is not strange to be beaten, to see or to hear wives being beaten by their husbands in the community. There are some reasons for this (according to the respondent) which includes: the males get a lot of alcoholic drinks continually (drinking local *areke*, *tela* and *teji* and beer are common), lack of money to give wives for consumables, the need to dominate all decisions in the house by men and trying to confine wives at home are common causes for the violence. Besides, there are some women who feel jealous when they see their husband spend a lot of time with women who sell local drinks in their localities. Indeed, some men have extra-marital sexual partners which create serious conflict in the households.

### Service co-operative leader – none

 Credit organiser

 The formal credit institute here is WALKO, which is actively helping farmers, mainly those who unable to access farm inputs. This is the only government credit organisation in Ude Kebele.

GUDINA is a credit and saving association in the kebele formed by farmers, and it started lending credit six years ago and the loans are distributed for members only in June every year. There are no MFIs working here, we have only WALKO and GUDINA. There are no NGOs working on credit here. No one from this kebele took a loan from the bank yet. There is no service cooperative working that is providing credit.

The Government used to give fertiliser but it was discontinued 3 years ago though I don’t know the reason. But still the woreda gives improved seeds for farmers and they are expected to return the same amount of grains they have been given. There is no credit for non-farm activates by the woreda. There is no big debt here; most farmers repay their loans on time. For a farmer to be able to access a loan from WALKO, a letter is needed from the kebele stating that he is free of any court case/record, free from any Government debt, and has some property and is active in his farming activity and would possibly repay his debt. The other thing is, if the husband is about to take a loan, his wife will sign and if the wife is about to take it he will sign for her.

Those who couldn’t get access to WALKO credit are those who failed to receive support later from the kebele administration office. Non-members of GUDINA village saving association couldn’t get a loan from this source

## Elites

### Leading farmer

I used to plough my own land only, which was about 2 hectares, but now I rented 4 hectares and my farmland which makes 6 hectares in general. I had only 4 oxen and now they are eight and in the past five years I began to use irrigation. This is the change in farming activities to my family. There was no problem for me in the past year in regard to farming. I ploughed 20x20 meters of land in front of my house for irrigation and I am also a member of the Irrigation association, and my share of land there is about 500 square meters. I rented 4 hectares, I own 2 hectares of rain-fed and the above mentioned irrigation land. I pay 4000 birr rent for a hectare of land. Land has been occupied and has become scarce even more than five years ago, and I can’t mention any change, but rent is becoming high.

I produce crops like Teff, Lentils, wheat, beans, and also vegetables like onions, carrot, cabbages. The changes are that the amount of crops produced has increased, because of increased land size, and larger number of oxen used. Vegetables are new products in the past five years. My wife doesn’t grow crops or vegetables separately for herself, we cooperate and work on it together.

I am an agent to the wereda for improved seeds, and I get them for myself. There is no service cooperative for farm inputs, but the kebele with the DAs facilitate it with agent farmers. Those who took the seeds are expected to return the same amount of seed. The Kebele brings fertiliser for sale, which was provided on credit 3 years ago, and we buy pesticides and weed killer from Debre Zeit Market.

I use a drip irrigation system, partly provided by passion connects Ethiopia/NGO. This NGO also gave me one hybrid cow and 50 chickens for eggs as a gift to encourage me, when they saw that I took the initiative to buy 3 such cows and 50 chickens. It was like a reward it is not credit in kind. There is a vet where I get some drugs for cattle, but I buy vaccine and feed from Debre Zeit for the chickens.

Between May-August most of farming activities like ploughing, sawing, weeding, are practiced. November and December are months for harvesting and MEWKAT/Crushing/combining. In the rest of the months we get rest and do other things - whatever we want. But for those of us who have irrigation we still work on it to have a double harvest from our small plots of irrigated land. Females assist in weeding, and during combining, they prepare the land, and they take care of chickens, and cows at home. During seasons where harvesting is completed livestock are left out on the farmlands and in the villages and sometimes children look after them, but mostly they come back after they have eaten enough, every cow knows its respective house.

The irrigated land is governed by the association of irrigation users, which collects contributions for seeds, fertiliser and other costs, and manages the water for the 18 members. Everyone cultivates his respective irrigated land by using the labour in his hh, and the share of the product depends on the size of land cultivated and the sale from this land. But the association helps in searching for markets by contacting traders from towns. I work on the rain-fed land and I sometimes hire others for harvesting, weeding etc. Children sometimes help, and my wife also in the weeding. The irrigation land is cultivated by me, and my wife follows up on weeding and watering mainly on the land which is separate from the irrigation association. I keep the cows at home all the time and the family cooperates to feed and clean their house. I also clean it. We don’t need children to look after the oxen, they move around the farms and they come back home, but when plants are grown on the farms, me and the children tend them so as not to cause conflict with other people.

I sold most of my agricultural output by taking it to Debre Zeit, and the rest was sold at home to traders from Debre Zeit. I have a store in my compound, and I keep it for a while though not for long. This is because when everybody has harvested and takes the crops to the market, the price is a bit lower. However, for the vegetables, I couldn’t wait for a better market, as they are all perishable. I sold a fattened bull at Mojo Market, I provided milk for the milk processing at the village, eggs are sold to traders at Debre Zeit.

DAs help us by introducing fodder that is to be planted and used as animal feed. Besides they advise us on which pesticide, weed killer to use for which type of crops and planting in line also. With regard to vet service we take our sick cattle to the vet at Denkaka town and we get the service by paying a fair amount.

None of my family members migrated for work, or was employed elsewhere except one of my daughters who migrated away to Dubai in search of a job. No one in the family engaged in non-farm business.

I serve as community elder, cell and development team leader. But I don’t have any involvement in kebele administration.

### Woman model farmer

She was chosen as a model farmer on the basis of her implementation of the agricultural as well as the health extension packages. Besides, her household has demonstrated the bio-gas which has enabled her to be chosen as model farmer. The selection was done on the basis of household and her husband was also chosen as a model farmer. She said that she accepts any information and guidance from the DAS and the health extension workers openly and implements it correctly. She has kept breed cows, breed chickens, she has constructed a standard toilet, she has separated the rooms of the livestock and humans, and she has a neat kitchen and living room, and has been using different agricultural inputs. She uses fertiliser and improved seeds of crops as well as fruits. She has demonstrated the drip irrigation in her backyard farm and has planted Mango, Apples and Papaya. She sells taff, chickpeas and lentils as cash crops; she sells eggs of the breed chicken. She has hired farm labourers who look after the farming activities and take care of the livestock. She has one housemaid and her children support her in completing the daily domestic work.

### Leading male trader

I buy and sell grains throughout the year. The problem I faced is lack of capital and limited interest of farmers to bring their products to me, rather they sell it to big traders at Denkaka, Debre Zeit, and Mojo towns. I buy Teff, Wheat and Lentils mainly from farmers usually in market days, but they bring their products to my house where my store is located. I sell these products to big traders who come from Debre Zeit and Mojo but rarely from AA. There is no difference for each crop sold. I have a store in my compound and I store it for a short time until it is sold. I couldn’t keep it for long due to limited capital. I didn’t employ anyone, but the family helps me and those who want to buy grains come with a vehicle and labour to load it. I don’t use transport at all, I sit at the door of my store and farmers bring it by themselves, they might carry it or load it on a donkey depending on the weight. I sell it from the same spot and I didn’t want transportation so far.

My house is on the side of the main asphalt road and it was convenient for transport access for those buyers coming to me. There is no problem related to internal roads or other kinds of road that affected my trade. I don’t want to take credit from any source. I have been a rich trader when I was in Sebebta area on the way to Jimma, but I bought a big truck with my friend for share, half of the money for which was covered by a bank loan that bankrupted my whole property and my life. I ended up here with this grain trade with limited capital. I want to work with what I have, and keep my hands away from credits. I paid 4780 birr annual tax for the trade I am involved in.

The problem in buying is that big farmers want to transport their products to Debre Zeit or other nearby towns, others want to sell it on the market for big traders coming from other towns including AA, because they feel that they would get a better price there. For me it is tough competition to bring farmers to me and to buy more grains. In addition even if they come up with huge products, I can’t afford to buy too much as I have limited finance. I don’t have any communication with other traders. I don’t have any relationship with service co-operatives.

I am a bit old now and my boys have all left, I don’t think that I should plan for expanding my trade by myself, but I hope to progress gradually. If I could increase my capital for the future I hope that I will attract more farmers to sell their products to me and I might be able to take my products to other towns.

There is no suggestion that I give you for the improvement of the trading environment in general.

### Leading female trader

The leading trader of farm products is the wife of a successful business man in Sirba (but he refused to be interviewed for the M-7). She keeps a shop in which she sells consumable items; household items (e.g cups, jugs, bowls, cleaning materials, etc), cosmetics, etc. She also sells local drinks. Her main business, however, is selling farm products mainly *tef*f, wheat, *gesho* (a spice used to prepare *tell*a), lentils, chickpeas, beans and maize. She has been doing this business for the last 15 years. She started the business when she was living in Debre Zeit before she got married to her current husband. Her initial capital was only 100birr. That time she went to live with her grandmother in Sirba where she found her husband. Then, he helped her to open a small shop which was the first shop in Sirba. At this moment, she said that there are five shops in the village. Her customers are both from the village as well as from outside the village. There are retailers and whole sellers who come from *and Mojo* to buy her products. There are a very few customers who buy *teff* and wheat from her store when they pass by the road. These customers live in Addis Ababa or in Nazareth. She keeps all her products in a store in her compound. The store is able to keep 20-30 Quintals of grain at once.

Last year, there was a shortage of rain so her products have reduced. This has affected the price of the crops which she buys from the farmers. It increased as there was a general shortage of the products. When she tried to sell them at higher prices, it caused her to have few buyers (when compared to the previous years). The other problem she had been facing three years ago was a lack of transportation so she couldn’t sell her products on time to her customers in the local towns. Besides, the cost of transportation was increasing from time to time which affected her amount of profit. Thus, to resolve this problem, she (with her husband) bought a car in 2003EC. She has hired a driver as she has no driving license. Now, she transports her products using this private car. There has been also a problem of inflation for the last five years. This causes a lack of supply from the local farmers and an increase in the price of the crops. She tries to buy more crops from the different variety of crops and keeps them all at her store.

There are seven people who are employed (including the driver) in her business. They help her in farming activities, buying and selling products, storing crops, transporting and accessing customers.

She also had tried to keep a breed cow and sell milk. However, she stopped it because the labor cost increased. She also had tried fattening two years back; but it couldn’t be profitable due to the high cost of livestock feed and increasing cost of labor. She had to pay 300birr/month for one laborer to have the fattening business. But this increased to be 800birr/month/ laborer. The five laborers she has at this time are 2 young women and 3 young men. One of the men is responsible to look after the cattle of the household (4cows, 6 Ox and 2 sheep) and 8 chickens. One man is a driver who transports the crops from the farm to home, from home to and Mojo. He also buys foodstuff and other necessary household items from the towns. These items are both for the household consumption as well as for sale in the shop. The two women assist her in the domestic work and child caring. One man is responsible to store crops properly and to help in carrying loads in the household.

She had taken a credit of 2000birr 5 years ago from Bunna Gonnefa Credit and Saving Institution. But she thinks that this was not helpful because it was too little to make great profit. She would like to have a great amount of credit, at least 300,000birr, to expand her business and make a great profit. For the future, she aspires to open a big Supermarket in where she sells homemade food items (*baltena*), processed food items and packed flour. She believes that it is a good business to sell processed food and packed food items because there is increasing demand from the community in the towns.

She has bought a house in which she rents for 2000birr/month. She also has bought a place in (she couldn’t remember the size) where she has planned to construct a modern residential house.

She owns (together with her husband) farmland which has size of 10 (2.5hectare) *kert* . She produces *magna* white *teff* (first level and highly demanded type of teff), wheat, chickpeas, beans, peas and lentils. Before eight years, her household could rent additional farmland at a price of 200birr for 5-6hectare of land. At the moment, the same size of land is rented by the household at a price of 3000birr. She thinks that the price of renting farmland has increased because many people have been involved in the business which increased the demand. Although most of the people who rent farmland are from the local villages, there are also people who rent land from local towns for production of cash crops.

She said that she doesn’t know how much tax her household pays for the business because it is her husband who deals with matters of the tax and license fees.

In the village, she is a very famous trader and has dominated the business in the village as she has done it for a longer time than any other person did. She cooperates with other traders in the community to exchange information about the market. She also shares her experiences about the business affairs with other local traders.

She believes that her business environment could be improved if she could get a bigger place in the village where she could expand her business. Besides, she would be happy if she could get a sufficient amount of credit which could help her to improve her business activities.

### Leading businessman - NA

### Leading businesswoman

This businesswoman sells tella, areke, beer and soft drinks. She started the business 8 years ago. She also keeps a small shop in which she sells consumable items, packed food items, charcoal, etc. She is widowed and has three children. Her older daughter has completed grade ten and she is currently working in a flower farm around Debre Zeit.

She has no farmland because she was not married during the land redistribution. She also couldn’t get land from her parents. So, she buys the crops which she uses for household consumption and for preparing the local drinks. However, she has small land which she use for residence and work place.

The main problem she has is a shortage of clean water. Some four years back, there was a water source that was working with the solar system and she was paying only three birr/month. Now it is not functioning and the kebele administration couldn’t maintain it. Although the community requested the administration for the maintenance of the water service, there has been no response from the kebele. Thus, she buys one jerican (20 litres) for 0.25 cents from the tap water constructed by an NGO called Passion connection where there is a long queue every day. When she buys water from private sellers, she has to pay 0.30cents for the same amount.

The other problem is that there is an increasing cost of the inputs to make the local drinks. She doesn’t want to increase the price of the drinks when the price of inputs increases because she fears that she might lose the customers. So, she limits the profits she takes. She buys areke and teji from Debre Zeit. She buys one Jerican of Areke for 300 birr and sells it for 400 birr. She buys inputs to prepare tella from the local community/farmers. She buys grain (maize, wheat), *gesho and biqil*.

Almost all customers are men living in the community and those who pass by the road. There are also customers that come from other villages during the market day. There are very few women who buy Areke to use at home. There are more customers in the rain season because they want to warm up their body with the drink.

Her older daughter helps her in all the domestic work as well as the customer service. She has no employed person involved in the business.

She has membership in the Bussa Guneffa microfinance in Debre Zeit. Recently, she borrowed 4000 birr to expand her business. She was not asked for a licence and has no licence fee.

She pays land tax (0.25 hectare) 50 birr/year.

Her profit has decreased as many other similar businesses are opened at her neighbourhood and pulled her customers. During the last two years, five new *tej* houses and 10 drink houses have been opened. She shares some information about the price to buy inputs and to sale the outputs with the local businesswomen.

She thinks that her business can be improved when the village grows and when many men start to work in the kebele.

## Knowledgeable people

### Best local economist – NA

### Opinion leader with urban links

 It is mentioned that there is Emanuel Orthodox Church in Ude village to which the community used to go rarely, but when Christians from Debre Zeit and Mojo and other towns come to celebrate here at this church, it motivated the community to go more frequently. Previously during wedding ceremonies, and other occasions hhs used to slaughter more than a bull/ox, and there was too much expense. Recently some people began to invite a cook for their ceremony from Debre Zeit town and they advised them to slaughter only one bull and mix other food items like vegetables in the buffet which is new itself. This has reduced the cost. Trade and social interaction with urban people caused contact between hhs from our villages and the urban centres at Denkaka/Udea, Debre Zeit and Mojo. This contact has created more of urban thinking among rural hhs, therefore the common customary beliefs in Aba Ayana/wekabi (sorcerer), is getting less and less. There are, however, a few in the neighbouring kebeles to which still some of our villagers still go. The trade link, and communication with people in urban areas has gone beyond the business and now they are having other relation/socialisation by being godparents to each other’s children which created more contact and exchange of ideas.

In regard to farming there are urbanites that rent land and tractors, plant in lines, use fertiliser, use pesticides and weed killer. They also plant Teff earlier in July unlike the community calendar for it which is end of July. This has given lessons to the community about how to carefully plant crops and manage them in a modern way of farming. People understood the importance of early plantation of Teff, which is now being adopted by many farmers.

The community previously always went to the tailor for themselves and for their children because if you didn’t wear clothes made by a tailor, or if you wore second hand clothes you could be said to be a DURYEA/vagabond, which is not the case now. These days there is frequent contact with town dwellers. Before, however, they used to believe that urban people didn’t respect us/*YENEKUNAL*. The attitude to the town people from villagers was that town dwellers are kings; this has led villagers to develop less self-esteem. When there is a wedding, there are two different tents, one meant for invited urbanites and the other for rural people. The informant said that he was the one selected to host and care for the urban guests/participants of a wedding and the owner of the ceremony advised him to wash his clothes and be neat and appear nice, so that the urbanites did not complain to the owner. But now there is only one tent for all and we are mixed, no one gives them another better space.

When they advise villagers, urbanites say that even urban women who are working as maids send their children to school, why don’t you send your children because you have land, livestock and a better economy? This idea of urban link and also the government effort on enrolment of children to school helped more children to attend school. Most children of school age are at school now.

During funerals, after burial on the third day the death/loss and mourning continues with more emphasis as if it was a new incident, rather than moving on to normal functioning of the family and many people spend time there. We also used to fire about 60 shots when older people and the respected people died. There was one time when about 180 bullets were fired when one old rich man who was highly respected died nine years ago. This bullet firing was common during weddings as well, however this culture is not there anymore, this is because the community discussed and changed this culture, because one time 8 people died in a funeral, killed by the bullets fired for the ceremony. At this time some urban-linked knowledgeable people from the church said if any bullet is fired, monks should not give a prayer for the dead. In this way it has been stopped. Now one bullet is 70 birr whereas it was only 5 birr before. So even for someone having a wedding ceremony it is found to be an additional cost. Victims of the dead never been expected to switch on a radio and listen to it for a year, but now urbanites say at least you have to listen to news and now people became flexible, is changed now. If one opens a radio before a year, the hh used to be criticised for being cruel.

The trousers men wore were skinny at the ankle down, but now only three old men stick with these, saying that I feel stripped off when I wear some other type of trousers. Everyone has to wear GABI when going anywhere, including for a wedding, but now suits are becoming common.

When people get money, the aspiration was to add more money and buy many cattle/oxen, getting land etc, but now the aspiration is also to build a house in towns at Denkaka, Debre Zeit etc. Mostly the young men get ID from the town kebele/Denkaka, in order to get land to build a house. The wish is also to buy a Bajaj, open a shop and engage in trade etc, unlike expansion of farm activities only.

For some hhs Spaghetti, rice and macaroni are becoming common which was not the case 10 years ago. Bread with tea is now a common breakfast, whereas enjera all day was the normal diet. Enjera is now given by cutting it into pieces, so as not to waste much beyond one’s appetite.

Women were not allowed to enter a bar, but now a husband and wife go in together and drink whatever they want. Young people go to Denkaka and Debre Zeit to watch the Europeans cup of nations. This is because there is contact with young men in town.

The government tried a lot to bring gender equality by giving more rights to women and now the relationship is based on equality. Previously a man wouldn’t be expected to go to fetch water, but now even this is becoming men’s domain of work. It used to be shameful for a man to take a loaded donkey to the mill but now they do it and there is no reaction about it. When spouses go to a house of another family to stay the night there, they used to have to sleep with same sex: wife with wife and husband with the husband of the host. But now it has become common to sleep with the wife even though you are a guest. There is respect between generations though some changes are happening. Previously young people couldn’t go into the TELA house where old people were sitting and drinking, but now mixing of different ages as customers at the same time is very common and there is open talk with the old, though not disrespectful talk and behaviour. Family structures are the same, because an extended form of family has been replaced by nuclear family structure. But those who have children passing grade ten should send their children to Debre Zeit which is the nearest high school. This causes children to leave the family earlier, before they go to college.

Some youth migrate to Nazret, AA, Debre Zeit etc in search of jobs. This has been a long trend of the community and still there is such migration. After they worked for a while they come back and try to rent farmland and try to succeed. If they don’t succeed, they go back to the place they migrated to earlier. For those who get family support, they have more chance to succeed.

In general the relations with the urban areas has positive impact as mentioned above; there are not many negative things to be listed as a result of the linkage.

### Irrigation expert

Irrigation started four years ago by the initiative from Passion Connection, an NGO that came and consulted the community, and selected 40 farmers to whom it promised to provide water to irrigate 15 hectares of land. Six people were selected for training/training of trainers and trained in Debre Zeit. The training was for 6 days about irrigation, and vegetable growing techniques. Those who took TOT trained the remaining 34 people. The water was drilled by the NGO and a drip irrigation system was put in place from the water container that is put up in the middle of the farm, from which cattle also drink and to which drip lines are connected. At the beginning vegetable seeds were given for first round groups. The problem was that only three people had land around the irrigation spot, and only 18 people were able to get land in replacement by giving out their dry land. The rest of the 40 people targeted by the NGO couldn’t get access. *Passion Connection* provided water that can only cover 3 hectare shared among 18 people; the area is less than 1% of the total land area of the kebele.

We produce onions, cabbages, tomato, etc, but some of the types of cabbages were found to be infected by pests easily and we dropped them now despite the fact that they had high market value. We produce twice a year. The water is extracted by electric power and it goes to the field by drip irrigation method. There is an irrigation users’ association in which the 18 people are members. The association is kept sustainable by contributions of members from our sale of vegetables. Normally everyone knows his own share of product, but the association helps by finding a market for the products. The contribution is 100-150 birr a year, depending on the amount of income obtained. The water is there throughout the year.

There has been no expansion and development of the irrigation scheme since its establishment. The association covers costs if any maintenance is needed. If that is beyond the association’s capacity, it is reported to Passion Connection/the NGO, and they help, for example they came and maintained it two months ago.

There is a specific time allotted to a member to access water once a day for 40 minutes. However some members are late to open their own drip and also they may be absent and unable to do so. So they want to use the water during others’ turn/time. On these occasions conflict arises. In such instances the offender is warned in a meeting with members, but there was no fine yet, and the problem is not as such common.

Community members wish to have the same chance as those with irrigation, and they say ‘you have got this chance but we don’t’, and we reply to them to ask to the organisation that assisted us to have it also. The government tried to provide water wells for irrigation 4 years ago, and again 2 years ago but the water wells they dug are sealed, they are not open to serve the community yet. They promised to begin functioning soon but this has not started yet.

DAs supported the irrigation association, teaching about how to make compost, and when to plant what and what item would be marketable at what season. The NGO also assigned one professional to visit the farm frequently and give us advice.

Seeds for different vegetables are bought from Debre Zeit via the association after some amount of money is contributed

### Experienced migrants

No seasonal migrants

Female urban migrant

The respondent was born in Sirba and went to Mojo when her parents moved there. She lived in Mojo for five years and returned to Sirba after she married a driver of a large truck. She completed grade six. She has one son and she keeps a shop in her house. She also rents two rooms (150-200birr). She believes that the life cost in Sirba is much cheaper than that of Mojo. She had lived in Addis Ababa with her family-in-law for two years before she came back to Sirba. But her first migration was to Mojo. She went there by minibus together with her four siblings. She said that she had no problem to reach Mojo. But she remembered that the schools there had delayed her and her siblings’ enrolment in school for some months. So, they had to work hard to be in line with the other students. She knew relatives of her mother (some three people) in Mojo who had lived a long time before she migrated there. She said that she enjoyed life in Mojo because it was a good town and accessible for many things compared to Sirba.

She thinks that life in towns and big cities is very expensive and suggested that people shouldn’t migrate to towns just to have extra expenses for house rent, purchasing food items, transport, etc. These expenses are not required to live at home like in Sirba. Besides, the villages along the roadsides have good opportunities to make business with low cost. In the past, the kebele (Sirba) had no electricity; but now there is good access of electricity which has helped people to live a modern life. Services such as education, health and clean water are also improved in Sirba. Although there can be better health and education services in other places too, she thinks that the village is now comfortable to settle peacefully. As the life in the towns and cities is very expensive, she preferred to live in the village which is now growing into a town and business centre. She wants to be among the people who are rich in the community and have access to everything she and her family need to live. It becomes impossible to buy a house and to get a good source of income in the towns because of the life expense and because of the high population with high competition for all vacancies. In Sirba, however, she has been able to buy a house with its compound and she has an additional source of income to her household by keeping the shop.

Female international migrant

She was living in Dubai. She went in 2001EC. She came back in 2004EC. She was working as housemaid and she came back because her contract expired and she wants to renew her visa. She is processing her visa to go back to Bahrain because she has heard that there is better salary there than in Dubai.

Her friends influenced her to go to abroad. One of her friends gave her information about the process and the life in Dubai. She went there alone; but she had a friend who was already there. She travelled by plane and it was a legal process. She paid the cost to finalise this process. Her older brother supported her by giving her money and paying the necessary cost to travel there. She spent about 10,000 birr to finish her process in Addis Ababa.

An agent in Dubai received her and gave her and many other Ethiopians a room to stay until her employer came and took her. Her employer showed her what to do and how to do the work daily. She knew five girls who went to Arab countries before she went there.

At first, she had a language problem; but she learnt Arabic after three months. As she could also understand some English, she didn’t face great problems. She was paid 500 Dubai dollars per month; but she thinks it was too little to go back to Dubai. She didn’t change job. Her main work was to clean the house, wash clothes and ironing. She enjoyed her work because her employer treated her well. She decided to come back home because her visa expired and because she missed her family members.

She was sending money to her parents every 4-5months through western union. She was calling by her own mobile phone and sometimes by the phone of her employer. She has deposited some money in her name at the Bank in Addis Ababa.

She thinks that there are a lot of women who are harassed by their employers, some get sick and others just disappear. It is a matter of chance that most migrants cannot be sure what will happen to them. However, it also happens to be a good opportunity for many young girls who have no job here to get a job and earn a good amount of money. It is better to migrate and work than to stay without doing anything.

She has two sisters and two brothers. Her father died when she was young. Her mother is a farmer and her older brother is a government officer in Udie. Her siblings are students who expect her to support them.

She was born and grew up in Udie and learnt up to grade 8. Now, she is married to a farmer who has his own farmland and house in Denkaka which is about 2Km away from the centre. Her husband has completed grade ten and wants to live by doing farming activities.

## Customary leaders

### Customary group - PHOLEA

*‘Pholea’* is a customary group of the Geda system, in which only Arsi and Adea Oromo are allowed to be a member. Here in the kebele there is Chefea Oromo and Selalea Oromos but they are not in the *Pholea* group or the whole gadaa. The leader of this group says ‘*Folea* was there since a man was created’/*sew sifeter jemro.* The group was entirely customary and it has no relation with the government or any NGO. There is a Geda office at Debre Zeit town that assists the Folea groups in Sirba and other places.

There are five Geda groups named; Dolo, Bilba, Birmeji , Robelea, and Mudena. Out of these five groups, three groups (Folea, Debele and Etimeko) are selected from the five groups mentioned above. Folea is the authorised group, Debele is a group containing successors of the Folea after 8 years, and the Etimeko are young people who serve as police for the Folea and are given any order to search, catch and bring any deviator from the custom. Ato UC is the leader of the Folea for the coming 6 years as he already served 2 years.

Among Folea members one person will have a turn to organise a feast by slaughtering, making drinks and hosting Folea, Debele, and Etimeko who eat, drink and sing the whole night.

The relationship between Folea and the successors/Etimeko is a kind of boss and subordinate. The latter group is not allowed to sit at an equal level of chairs or place during festivals. They even know that they are less privileged and sit and eat in and around the livestock’s house. This lower status continues for 8 years until they assume the position of Folea.

Other Foleas also come from neighbouring kebeles to attend the celebration every eight years, and the Folea from SIrba also go to far away kebeles walking four hours or so. But after getting drunk, group fights among Foleas of different Kebeles/weredas tend to arise frequently at every celebration. Due to this, by discussion with the Wereda Geda office; the visit to other Folea’s ceremony is banned. The wereda Geda office also gave training for Folea leaders, mainly about their role and how to carry it out.

This customary group is said to be autonomous and the law can’t intervene at all. There was a group fight between the Folea group of Sirba and others who came from Kola area Lumea wereda. The fight was serious and in between, one man from the Lumea Folea group was killed by the hard hit of a stick from Sirba Folea members. The ones from Lumea took their dead man carrying him and crying. At this time the law didn’t intervene, and no one was accused of the murder. This has happened just 10 years ago.

Folea leaders are highly respected by community members. In general the role of Folea is supposed to be resolving conflict, giving blessing, punishing men who are found to have had an affair with widows informally, and, after customary punishment, they approve their relationship as a husband and wife.

There are community elders among Folea members, and Folea leaders with community elders together pray for peace, prosperity, to get rain, to keep disasters away etc.

The punishment for affairs with widows is usually forcing the man to buy a new GABI/locally made cotton blanket, and tear it into pieces and tie it to the tip of every Folea’s stick and they sing. The songs have the following meanings:

* ‘ we found him when he eat DORO WET,/Chechen and we dumped his food down’
* ‘Yesigaba Kiber Yelewm Kesem bihon’ Meaning ‘there is no respect for informal lover of a widow even if he is a monk ‘

When a member of the Folea is to organise a feast, four elected Folea members, usually elders, are required to check that the man is circumcised. He must show his genital/ penis to these men, and they go and tell the rest of the group that he is circumcised. It is only at this time that the Folea go to his house and start attending the celebration. Otherwise, if the man is found uncircumcised, the selected men bring a circumciser and circumcise him that same day. They tell them as they do so that the food and drink is edible now. After a week, the person’s wound is washed by these four men at river water only, and on this date he must hold another celebration. But this time the one who covers his eyes during the circumcision helps in covering the cost of the celebration, as it is the second feast in a week for this man.

Religious leaders oppose the custom in general and they don’t have contact with the groups. There is no conflict as well. If a monk goes into a widow’s house he will be punished by the Folea, however there was no monk caught with such problem yet/having affair with a widow..

The other interesting story is when the Folea himself is found with a widow, he is not punished. Or if the widow is the Folea leader’s daughter, the man will not be punished.

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## Religious leaders

### Orthodox Christian leader

 I know that all Sirba members are Orthodox Christians. There is no trend in changing religion. There are three churches *Balewold, Emanuel, and Mariam* in the kebele in General. I work for Emanuel church where most of the community got to, which is near. Most of the youth attend church and some follow Sunday schools. But when we call the youth to Sunday school they are not interested to come, the few who come are those who are from blessed families. These days the young are not obedient and we are not educating them on good behaviour because they are not available in the church. We educate those who are near to the church about marriage and we help them to go through church rules and systems in their marriage.

There are no new missionary ideas, but some monks from the Adea woreda Rufael church, and we also teach the followers.

The role of the church is to conduct religious works that are coming from the mother church from the woreda. The church tells development messages coming from the kebele, but there is no other thing we do on development.

The church mediates among people who are conflicted, we give blessing as well. There is cooperation among the churches here, we work for others and others come and work for us (the preaching and prayer), it is done even during holidays and other occasions.

There is cooperation with the kebele and the community helps the church, the church helps the kebele in mobilising the community.

Note: I interviewed the informant in a local Areke house while drinking Areke, after searching for him everywhere, we found him there, for me it was hard to ask him about what the church is doing to prevent the youth from alcoholism. He was having just a cup of Areke but seemed disappointed by the people in the kebele mainly the youth to neglect church follow up, he was not interested to talk. I paid his Areke bill and we left together, I tried to have informal conversation, but there was not much relevant information I could get here too.

### Muslim leader- none

### Protestant leader - none

##  NGO worker

The respondent works for an NGO called Passion Connects Ethiopia. She has been working in the organisation as a community facilitator for the last three years. Passion Connects Ethiopia focuses on improving the lives of women and empowering the farmers. It has different lines of activities which aim to enhance the capacity of the community in general, but that of women in particular. These activities are: Providing trainings about health related issues, provide agriculture related trainings such as about beekeeping, fattening and use of breed livestock. Besides, it provides trainings on income generating activities to women groups. It tries to help the community by providing credit services to participate in different farming or business activities.

It has supported, before three years, 18 households (as a group) in Sirba to benefit from irrigation activities by providing them a borehole which functions by electricity. It was constructed by the organisation and was given to these households in the form of credit. These households are still paying their debt. It also supplies breed cows and poultry for model farmers in the form of credit. There were 5 model farmers (2 from Sirba and 3 from Udie villages) who received breed cows by credit.

Besides, it had trained 100 women from the kebele in different areas of income generating activities such as fattening, poultry production, petty trade and local drink business. However, this number has reduced to 30 women at this time because the trainees had high dependency syndrome (according to the respondent). Most of them didn’t want to work hard and didn’t want to take the risk of the credit service.

In addition to this, the NGO supports farmers to participate in the functional adult education programme by motivating participants to get credit service for breed cows (the above 5 were selected because they were active participants of the functional adult education).

The NGO also works in sanitation and supply of clean drinking water to the community. It has constructed three standard latrines in Sirba and three in Udie village. These latrines are used commonly by the community. It also has constructed two tap water supplies which function by electric power and one for animals to drink in Sirba.

The NGO is funded by the Netherlands government and gets some funds from a German Donor called DVV. The respondent said that the NGO has a smooth interaction with the Kebele and Wereda Women’s Affairs, Education office and Health office. The NGO gets support from these sectors to mobilise the community, to arrange time and place of meetings and trainings and access to trainers (Experts).

The main problems which the NGO encounters are: low community awareness about the credit system, high community dependency syndrome that they just want aid without putting enough effort, lack of active participation in meetings and trainings especially women and domestic work load of the women that hinders them to participate in the trainings and functional adult education programme actively. The other problem was that there has been a lack of integration among the different programs of the government sectors: health, agriculture and education. This led to have low attendance of trainees as the plans of these sectors overlap.

Overall, the respondent added that there is a management problem for the NGO to coordinate all the different programs as there is shortage of well experienced staff. The activities need day-to-day supervision and follow up. To do this, the organisation needs its own staff and transport facilities.

Finally, she suggested that:

* There can be good participation of the community only if the trainings are provided in relation to the participants’ daily life and link the issues with their practical situations.
* The Programs of the organisation should go in line with the time frame of the different sectors of the other government sectors so that the activities can be done in an integrated manner.
* Other NGOs and government sectors have to help in raising the community awareness about the functional adult education, health and credit packages.