

Economic experiences of rural young people in 2018

WIDE Series III Discussion Brief No. 4 of 7¹

Key messages from the WIDE evidence

- Rural Ethiopia is rapidly transforming, which is shaping rural young people's aspirations and experiences. Creating jobs for them is a key priority of the Government, with recent initiatives such as the Youth Revolving Fund (YRF) a testimony to this commitment.
- Rural young people have a wider range of potential economic opportunities than in the past with education and the growing rural nonfarm sector, whilst facing limited access to farmland. This leads to less certain futures. Many are disillusioned seeing growing numbers of jobless graduates, leading to concerns that the education system is not preparing youth with appropriate skills. Young people set out high goals (usually non-manual jobs), to then adjust sometimes drastically when these appear unattainable (poor performance, financial/other constraints). Available TVET options may not be locally relevant or cover skills in demand.
 - Considerations could include strengthening counselling in schools, adapting the messages about what education can provide, and widening TVET options to accommodate young people exiting general education at different levels, especially the large number of rural young people who do not reach grade 10.
- Youth landlessness was both a big concern, and frequent cause for inter-generational tension in all sites, even conflicts in the Amhara site.
- Young people actively engaged in a range of options, with large differences among sites in types of activities, extent of enterprise, and opportunities in the local/nearby market: farming for those with land, farm and non-farm daily labour and wage jobs, self-employment (transport, services, a few manufacturing enterprises), trade of various sizes, and migration. However, the profitability of many activities was affected by high taxation of fledgling non-farm start-ups.
- The government support to youth groups legally established, given land and credit, had clearly been scaled up over the past five years. There were large differences across sites in the financial/human resources devoted to this, the intensity and apparent effectiveness of government action, key modalities (e.g. process of identifying young people, maximum loan size, savings required, interest rate), and the types of options supported (farm-based only in rural kebeles, vs also non-farm in the two sites partly managed as urban areas).
- The recent intensity of government activity was appreciated in the Oromia and Amhara sites. However, in all sites this interacted with mixed perceptions regarding the broader relationship between the government and young people; serious implementation challenges were noted; and there were some allegations of lack of transparency, biases and nepotism in the process of selecting young people for support.
- The lack of support to individual initiatives, and to non-farm enterprises in rural kebeles, was raised as a serious concern.
- The above suggests the need for balancing support to groups and to individuals; and to initiatives in both the farm and non-farm sectors everywhere, depending on local contexts and adapting job creation to the Government's goal of rural urbanization. Ideas for consideration:
 - Greatly expanding support to individual initiatives (capital, work premises, business

- development advice), paying attention to the small-scale agribusiness sector;
- Broadening the range of types of enterprise supported (e.g. manufacturing MSEs) even in communities still formally considered as 'rural';
 - Reviewing taxation strategies to allow start-ups to consolidate first, in transitioning to the formal economy;
 - Two years in the life of the YRF, reviewing achievements and constraints with a view to consolidating the gains, looking at how to strengthen coherence in modalities and how to improve processes of identifying local economic potentials, supporting proposal preparation and approval, and prioritizing among young people.
- Various site-, gender- and wealth-patterned forms of mobility for work were important in all sites. In some cases (e.g. Aze Debo male migrants to South Africa) this clearly contributed to local development; in other cases much less so, which was strongly influenced by macro-level decisions (e.g. ban on employment abroad in 2013) or indecision (e.g. in handling rural-urban migration, important in all sites). Supporting young people's labour mobility would enhance its potential to support local development. Ideas for consideration include:
 - Monitoring how employment overseas opportunities, formally available again, fit with rural migrants' profiles, and devising measures such as pre-grade 10 skill training, to help the large number of rural youth not reaching grade 10 to fit the required profiles.
 - Developing a policy framework around urban/ industrial migration in support of the Government's structural economic transformation goal, as well as measures aimed to better match rural migrant labour supply and formal sector demand; and opening up 'urban youth' support schemes for rural migrants, including in smaller urban centres.
 - Access to capital made a major difference in what young people could actually do. The lack of support to individual initiatives meant that only those with access to an alternative source of capital (parents, migration money in three sites) could start activities aimed beyond survival whilst for most poorer young people, social mobility remains a dream. This may lead to increased inequality, as richer youth are better able to 'move ahead':
 - Measures to enhance prospects of intergenerational mobility could include: additional support for poor young people in education; and considering poverty in prioritizing young people for support in both group-based and especially individual initiatives.
 - There is evidence that overall, rural young women 'do better' than in the past. However, social norms continue to 'de facto' discriminate between young women and men in many ways, constraining options for many young women, including their being underrepresented in lists of jobless youth and in youth groups. Actions to positively reinforce the two-way dynamic between young women's economic participation and shifting gender norms might include:
 - Further tailoring support for young women (in youth groups and especially as individuals).
 - Investigating the role of different types of social norms (work-related and broader social norms e.g. on respectability, ownership of assets, domestic work and time use) in influencing young women's access to economic opportunities, to support fine-grained work on norms and behaviour change in different contexts in rural Ethiopia.
 - Adapting gender equity messages, e.g. addressing male attitudes and concerns with regard to evolving female and male household roles.
 - Broadening the influence of female role models (across a range of rural/urban occupations, using the range of communication media now found in rural Ethiopia).

Introduction

Rural Ethiopia is rapidly transforming; key trends framing rural young people's economic aspirations and experiences include rapid economic growth, rising educational outcomes, the blurring of rural and urban 'worlds', and the strong influence of 'global ideas of a good life', made more accessible through a much densified network of connections to the outside world. In this context, 'creating jobs' for the two million young people entering the labour force every year has become a prominent challenge (Kelly and Carbajo Martinez 2018), as is common in economic trajectories in which the pace of employment transformation lags behind the pace of change in the structure of the economy (Fox and Kaul 2017). International experience suggests that there is no 'magic bullet', and experts disagree on the effectiveness of different 'solutions'. The Government of Ethiopia has undertaken to vigorously address this challenge, and initiatives such as the Youth Revolving Fund are testimony to this commitment.

This discussion brief, following on a previous one on young people's transitions (DBII:04 Youth transitions) and based on empirical data from early 2018, offers a glimpse into the economic experiences of young women and men of different age groups (18-19, early/mid-20s and late 20s) and wealth, in four different 'rural' communities in Ethiopia. Three of the sites did well over the past five-seven years: Sirba/Ude in East Shewa, Oromia, rapidly urbanizing and densely connected²; Yetmen in East Gojjam, Amhara, urbanizing too but comparatively farther from a major city³; and Aze Debo in Kambata, SNNP, close to the steadily expanding zonal capital Durame⁴. In contrast, the remote Harresaw, bordering Afar in Eastern Tigray⁵, was struggling with recurrent poor rains.

Aspirations: 'high' then adjusted and gendered; not all about 'moving away'

Aspirations markedly differed depending on age and education achievement/status. Younger youth still at school or with recently acquired higher education levels aspired 'higher': further education and professional jobs (engineer, nurse, pilot, civil servant) for some; migration to acquire economic independence as 'plan B'. This was mediated by wealth, as poorer young people were less likely to be able to progress far enough in the 'education/ professional job' avenue; some poorer young people were nonetheless dreaming 'high' (e.g. poor young woman in Yetmen aspiring to university, becoming a doctor and living in a big city).

However, reflecting country-wide trends (in 2016, 79% rural youth did not complete primary education (FDRE 2017)), many young people in the four sites left schooling early, facing failure at exam or financial or other constraints, and had to adjust their aspirations 'down' (from education/ professional job). The factors most influencing aspirations for this group of youth were quite strongly gendered-differentiated. Options for young women were perceived to be narrower. In all sites, once out of school and if not aiming to migrate, the plans of many young women became shaped by marriage; then once married, by their domestic responsibility, often aspiring to open shops or engage in petty or bigger trade, depending on access to capital. Exceptions were the married women migrating and leaving children behind with husband and/or parents in Aze Debo, Harresaw and Sirba/Ude, which was said to increase. Whereas young men's aspirations appeared to reflect more the differences in local economic contexts (e.g. higher aspirations in Aze Debo than in Harresaw⁶; older young men interested by trade in Yetmen).

Wealth/access to capital also mattered in young people's plans. All young people highlighted the big difference between poorer youth and richer ones, who could pursue education longer (including in private institutions), had more chance to get land, could work in their rich family's business, or could get their parents' support to establish their own activity. In Yetmen for instance, many of the 'younger' young men aspired to become a driver; the young man from a wealthier family planned to have his own minibus, whereas others planned to work for others first.

Not all young people aspired to move away. Most saw education, getting a professional job and living elsewhere/in a city as linked. Hence, the younger ones were also more likely to express a desire to live elsewhere, though this was mediated by how realistic this was. For some young women this also was linked to a desire to escape community gender norms⁷. Whilst many young men might say that most of their peers wanted to go away, they also said that for themselves, if there were local options (land in Harresaw, a good job in Yetmen) they would consider or prefer to stay, possibly moving to a nearby urban area to expand their activity. In Aze Debo, whilst five of nine young men wanted to migrate, it was with clear plans to return and invest locally and/or in Durame.

Education: for what?

Whilst as just noted, many young people still left school before reaching grade 10, in all four sites there were educated young people employed as professionals: a few locally (teachers, kebele managers in Harresaw and Aze Debo), most elsewhere. These were many more in Yetmen ('hundreds'), and in Aze Debo where Protestant missions inculcated a sense of the value of education decades ago, than in Harresaw. The number of young professionals was also said to be small in Sirba/Ude. There was recognition that access was easier than in the past (noted especially for girls/ young women in Harresaw and Yetmen).

However, alongside this and in continuation of a trend emerging in 2013 (DBII:05 Education), young people's interest in education was said to be on the decline as they saw the growing number of jobless graduates. In their words:

"those who spent their life on education are losers now, they cannot even get jobs after more than 15 years at school" (Aze Debo); "even college graduates do not do anything different than uneducated youth" (Harresaw) so "it is better to find work rather than killing time in school" (Yetmen).

Some talked about young people's interest in *"making money at an early age"* (Yetmen, Sirba/Ude); many others noted the *"negative feedback effect of those who finished and sit idle"* (Sirba/Ude, Harresaw), with unemployment generating 'hopelessness' (Yetmen). Parents reportedly were also losing interest in investing in their children's education, especially in Yetmen and Sirba/Ude. Parents and youth seemed to be more concerned by joblessness after studying than by the quality of education⁸, although in Sirba/Ude, Yetmen and Aze Debo, some wealthier parents sent children to private schools for better quality.

There were also more nuanced positions. In Aze Debo, some adults worried about the emergence of a *"large generation of non-farmers, non-professionals, and non-traders"*. And as just seen, some of the young people still at school aspired to continue; local young women seen as effective in civil servant jobs were cited as role models by others (e.g. Aze Debo). But young people were aware that professional jobs required going beyond grade 10, hence education was useful only for those able to do so and who could afford it. For others, some education was seen as better to migrate to towns anyway (in Yetmen and Harresaw). At the same time, failing at grade 10 or 12 exams was a prompt to migrate (to towns/cities or abroad, see below) in all sites; yet this might turn to be a 'dead end' too, as recent statistics show that urban unemployment is highest among secondary school certificate holders (CSA 2015).

In Yetmen, Aze Debo and Sirba/Ude where the transport sector was booming, young men were said to attend school only because reaching grade 8 or 10 was needed to get a driving license. In Harresaw, skills training was seen as not helpful because there was no demand for what one got trained for (e.g. hair dressing) whereas in Aze Debo young people wanted training in woodworking and construction, which was not available.

Cases of education-to-work transitions included examples of high aspirations that had to be strongly adjusted⁹; of educated young people who did not find a job after years of trying¹⁰; of educated young people who quit for a more promising life (including farming), or because the returns did not

match their expectations¹¹; and of young people with skills training who were not using them¹².

Access to land: a challenge

In all sites a number of youth groups were given communal or urban land to establish cooperatives (see below). In addition, in Harresaw there was reallocation of farmland without heirs and of kebele land for housing plots. Apart from these measures reaching relatively few, young people accessed farmland through inheritance, or if parents shared some, or through sharecropping or renting-in. The latter was said to be prohibitively expensive for young people, in Yetmen and Sirba/Ude (e.g. 4,000 birr for ¼ ha for one season); only richer youth could consider this (e.g. a successful young man with non-farm businesses in Harresaw). Sharing land was a challenge as landholdings were already small. A young man in his late 20s in Yetmen, who received ¼ ha land when he married, said:

“if I was to give some land to my children, I would need to give it all to one and ignore the others, or if I equally divided between all they would get such a small plot that it could be used for nothing”.

So, “fathers may refuse” (Aze Debo), and some parents were not giving even small housing plots (e.g. young woman returnee with savings to open a shop in Sirba/Ude).

A number of youth seemed to consider farming as “a last resort option and often not an option at all” (Getnet Tadele and Asrat Ayalew 2012). However, all young people highlighted the challenges they faced in accessing farmland (also see DBIII:01 Land and urbanisation). This, presumably, had an influence on their views on the desirability to be a farmer, as suggested in recent studies showing the importance of lack of or lesser access to land in dictating young people's decision with regard to occupation and migration (Kosec et al. 2017). E.g. in Sirba/Ude, the younger men said that farming could not be considered as an option as there was no means to get land and if parents shared land, it was small, and one still needed a supplementary income; however, young men from richer households had a better chance, like two of the older, richer young men in Aze Debo. But young men also considered other factors, e.g. that even if they were to get land from their parents, in most cases it would be “too small to feed a family”, or there was no guarantee that the sale of products would even cover the costs of inputs (Aze Debo).

So, young people often said that most of them did not want to be a farmer or a farmer's wife. Yet, getting farmland continued to be a preoccupation (e.g. young men blaming government for giving large plots of land for coffee plants to investors who failed to develop it fully in Aze Debo, and linking urban expansion to evictions and parents selling their land leaving “nothing for us” in Sirba/Ude); and accessing farmland was an important consideration in marriage strategies in Yetmen (highly productive land) and even Harresaw (even though recurrent drought strongly affected farming)¹³. Inheritance by young women seemed to be common in Harresaw. In Sirba/Ude and Aze Debo young women said they can in principle access land through inheritance but in practice this is rare and usually they get access to land if they marry a landed man.

The adults' perspective on access to farmland by young people was also somewhat mixed. Youth landlessness was stated as a serious concern everywhere. In Yetmen some adults wanted the government to redistribute farmland which was in the hands of too few people; in Harresaw some parents wanted the communal grazing land to be reallocated as farmland for young households. At the same time, access to and use of land prompted intergenerational tension in all sites¹⁴, and reportedly even conflicts in Yetmen. In Harresaw, most adults seemed to implicitly have put their hope in government creating other opportunities, with many talking about industrialisation and factories. In Aze Debo, where land scarcity is acute like in Kambata zone as a whole, there was a gossip that parents were happy that the second level certificates, unlike the first level ones, did not include the children's names.

Young people's self-drive: critically important but facing constraints

In this section we review what young people were found doing; as well as their views on unemployment, and opportunities and challenges to establishing oneself independently.

Youth groups (discussed below) were rarely mentioned, if not prompted. Some young men, usually among the older ones and with their own household, were farming; some young women were farmers' wives, or even farmers (in Harresaw). However, as a livelihood this only concerned the few who one way or another had accessed farmland. Moreover, many of them were also engaged in other activities, the wealthier ones to increase their income, and others to cover their household's needs (also see DBIII:03 Nonfarm livelihoods, on the wealth-related diversification pattern). Farm daily labour opportunities were few or temporary and, in more urbanized sites Yetmen and Sirba/Ude, taken up mostly by in-migrants as local youth were reluctant to take them (see below).

In the non-farm sector, opportunities for young people included non-farm daily labour, wage jobs, self-employment (in transport, small service businesses of different types, a few manufacturing businesses), and trade of various sizes (DBIII:03 Nonfarm livelihoods). There were large differences between sites in the types and numbers of opportunities and the extent of enterprise by young people, with generally many more opportunities in Sirba/Ude, followed by Yetmen, less so in Aze Debo, and comparatively much fewer in remotest and struggling Harresaw¹⁵.

Whilst some occupations were important for both young women and young men (e.g. shops, various types/sizes of trade), others were clearly gendered, including: domestic work, local drinks production/sale and hair dressing exclusively taken up by young women; transport, shoe shining, barber shop undertaken exclusively, and non-farm daily labour mostly, by young men.

Moreover, one major gender difference was visible in relation to marriage. For young men, it was important to be economically independent before marrying; some said it was harder than before to do so; others differed, as young men did not need to wait for land and could engage in non-farm activities. It was also seen as desirable for young women to have an income even if they were still living with their parents. However, it was socially undesirable for a young unmarried woman to establish herself independently; the only way to do so was to move away from the community. In all communities, marriage to a man with an independent livelihood was still seen by most as the first option for a young woman to 'establish an independent livelihood'. In Harresaw and Yetmen, young women establishing a household without being or having been married were seen as prostitutes; they jeopardised their chance of a 'good marriage' ("*she cannot get a good marriage, everyone will be keen to spend good time with her but will not want to marry her*", Yetmen).

Some jobs, seen as 'lowly' by local young people and/or more broadly in their community, were not taken, or only reluctantly or by the poorest ones. In Aze Debo some grade 10 completers would not do farm jobs out of pride: "*people might say somebody's son completed his education and now he became a farm labourer*". In Sirba/Ude and Yetmen it was seen as preferable to "*struggle with one own's business, no matter how small, rather than working for others*" (Yetmen); daily labour, temporary occupations, farm work (for young men), domestic work (for young women), even wage jobs were turned down by locals and taken by outsiders¹⁶. In contrast, being a driver was seen as a well-paid job in Aze Debo, Sirba/Ude and Yetmen, and in Yetmen even being an assistant-drivers was good. Selling *tella/areke* was associated with poverty everywhere, and with prostitution in Harresaw and an unstable life in Yetmen; it was hidden in Aze Debo as banned by Protestant churches.

Institutional support for individual initiatives was lacking or very limited everywhere, so that access to capital and work premises came mainly from parents when they could afford¹⁷, hence leading to poorer youth being unable to go beyond hand-to-mouth, survival activities. Migration remittances or savings were important sources of capital in Aze Debo, and to some extent in Sirba/Ude and Harresaw. In Sirba/Ude a rich young man thought that the non-farming sector was the best option for young people, but all the bigger businesses (hotels, shops, trade etc.) were owned by adults, as

youngsters were limited by the lack of access to capital.

Besides, young people often mentioned very high taxation affecting start-up businesses as a serious issue, whilst tax officials in all sites reportedly closed or threatened to close businesses, even small, without a license; for many young people this was a disincentive to start or expand their business. Low demand and/or competition including by bigger businesses in nearby urban areas was also raised as an issue, in Harresaw, Aze Debo and Sirba/Ude. Also see DBIII:07 Local government for further discussion on 'taxation and businesses'.

As the above suggests, many young people were trying to establish themselves – from very different starting points in terms of local context, wealth, gender and education level. But in all sites most young men (more vocal than young women on this issue) stressed that this was very challenging: many faced unemployment (in Harresaw a young man said seven out of eight), idleness, hopelessness and getting addicted to beer or *chat*, “*spending the whole day talking*” (Aze Debo) or “*wandering, sitting idle all day by the asphalt road*” (Yetmen). Only a few were able to establish an independent livelihood, as there was little access to land and “*no other life changing options*”.

This link that many made between 'unemployment' and inability of 'establishing oneself' resonates with perceptions documented in a number of other recent empirical micro-level research. Fantini et al (2017), for instance, note that “*(i)n rural areas a young man is considered unemployed if he cannot be independent and create his own household because he does not work, or he does not earn enough, or he does not have enough land*”. Lefort (2018) concurs with this 'definition': in the Amhara rural kebele he has tracked for decades, young people's joblessness means that “*their income (is) too meager, too occasional, or too unpredictable to allow them to marry and establish a family.*”

Wereda and kebele data clearly supported these perceptions, with hundreds of young people identified as jobless/dependent in all sites (even more than a thousand in Harresaw). In Sirba/Ude, Yetmen and Aze Debo officials acknowledged that the data under-estimated the real extent of unemployment, especially among young women, which in Sirba/Ude they explained by the fact that young women tended to have less interaction with kebele structures¹⁸.

Young people's mobility for work could be key to local development

As was already found in 2010/13 (DBII:08 Moving for work), outward mobility for work was an important component of the range of options considered and adopted by some young people in the four communities, although with very different patterns across them. They had in common the fact that (different types of) migration had increased and were concerning mostly the young generations; young women were increasingly involved; and there was a sense that at least some of the young people had to move away. In-country migration of young women and men to urban areas and for industrial jobs seemed to be more important in Yetmen (where it was the only important flow) and Aze Debo than in Sirba/Ude and Harresaw. Migration abroad, irregular since the 2013 ban on overseas employment, was most important in Aze Debo (young men to South Africa, young women and some young men to Sudan and Gulf), followed by Harresaw (young men and a growing number of young women to Saudi) and Sirba/Ude (young women to the Gulf)¹⁹.

The socio-economic effects of migration were also very different across the sites. In Aze Debo, most migrants kept strong links with home, sent remittances, brought back savings to invest locally/nearby and also farther afield for the most successful. Young people 'going for work' was a crucial contribution to local development and was strongly appreciated, including for young women. Whilst the sums remitted/saved by successful female migrants to Sudan, the Gulf or within Ethiopia were nowhere near the millions of birr raised by the most successful male migrants to South Africa, the new ability of these young women to support their family and themselves was admired. This had a further emancipatory effect, although there were also some male concerns about these young women's “*different behaviour. They may even try to act as if they are the household head...*”. Some

respondents also noted an emerging divide between returnees and those who had never gone away, and there were cases of anger at wealth from migration not being shared with relatives in Aze Debo.

In stark contrast in Harresaw, going to Afar was mostly a coping strategy, with only a few people bringing back some capital. Migration to Saudi, an emerging investment strategy in 2012, had drastically changed: success was far less frequent and risks much higher since the government decision of banning employment abroad in 2013 which led to a 'hardening' of smuggling networks exploiting migrants' greater vulnerability, compounded by the war-driven lawlessness in Yemen and the Saudi authorities' new 'crackdown' policy. Despite all odds and awareness of the negatives, pushed by the lack of local options many young people continued to (want to) go. And most adults saw migration to Saudi as an unavoidable evil which still *"knocked at all doors in the community"*, even though it resulted in indebtedness for most, hundreds of deaths over the years, and 'success' in max. 20-30% of the cases (with success counted in tens of thousands of birr).

Socially migration to Saudi resulted in growing numbers of single-headed households and children left with grand-parents struggling to raise them, parents worrying about youngsters, and only a few positive experiences for young women. A group of late teens/early 20s young men seemed trapped in repeat migration/deportation cycles and in between, spending the little money they occasionally had on return on 'useless things' like 'modern' clothes or hairstyles and engaging in confrontational behavior, e.g. getting drunk and

"when they are asked to pay, they say, 'please ask Hailemariam Desalegn (then prime minister) to pay for our drink because he is responsible for our unemployment".

Some of the adults blamed these *"lazy youth"* who influenced their younger peers, most understood their frustration and hopelessness.

In Aze Debo and Harresaw, financing migration abroad (especially to South Africa for Aze Debo) pushed some of the poorer households into risky strategies (e.g. land rentals of indefinite duration against a loan in Harresaw, selling eucalyptus or livestock in Aze Debo). However, in Aze Debo it was common for new migrants' journeys to be financed by migrants already in South Africa, whereas in Harresaw, financing journeys to Saudi was a direct drain on already scarce local resources.

In Sirba/Ude young women's migration to the Gulf had visible positive economic effects for their families and themselves seemingly in many cases. There was no sign of social reintegration issues on their return. Migration provided some of them with opportunities they might not have reached otherwise (e.g. starting own small business); yet for others, it seemed to be a more exploitative experience (e.g. young woman supporting her own, her parents' and her in-laws' households).

In all sites, challenges facing migrants to urban areas or for industrial jobs were highlighted, including inability to find work or to afford high living costs with small incomes, and insecurity, said to have increased in the past few years and linked to national political developments. To a large extent in all sites the primary benefit of this type of migration was to reduce pressure on local resources and especially, on land.

Government support to youth livelihood development

In all four communities, government focus on youth livelihood support was much more noticeable in early 2018 than in 2010-2013 (date of previous WIDE fieldwork). There were differences among sites in terms of a) the kebele and wereda structures in place to address this issue, b) what was being done and how far plans were implemented and c) perceptions of the government actions.

Structures and activities on the ground

Government direct support to youth livelihood development revolved around youth groups, to be legally established as cooperatives, given land and supported by loans at 'special conditions' when deemed necessary for their activity.

In all sites multi-sectoral committees were formed and involved a range of wereda offices, with variations among sites in those appearing to be most important²⁰. Their role was to raise awareness, identify and 'organise' jobless youth, provide training, screen group proposals, approve loans when required, and follow-up. In addition, there were new dedicated youth job creation positions in three sites (Sirba/Ude and Yetmen partly under urban administration and Aze Debo in SNNP)²¹, but no such position in Harresaw, where moreover, the kebele administration was said to be inactive and disorganised. The kebele experts, where they existed, were key in awareness-raising, identification and preparatory steps (technical assistance, training); kebele administrations were involved in land allocation for the groups, and in the identification process.

The Youth Revolving Fund was not active in Harresaw and it was underspent in the wereda as a whole: the youth reportedly got "bored" in trying to meet the cumbersome access criteria (one of which was that young people needed a court paper proving unemployment), so that the only source of credit seemed to be the older 'youth package' funding. In contrast, since 2017 the YRF had boosted activities around youth group creation in the other three sites. It was even over-subscribed in Sirba/Ude, where delays in the second release expected from the federal government was said to hinder further progress. In Aze Debo and Sirba/Ude the start of the YRF led to changes in conditions for group formation and access to credit that officials saw as positive (groups allowed to have several members from same household, lower interest rate, bigger loans).

Some key modalities seemed to differ between sites (e.g. size of maximum loan; savings required; interest rate, highest in struggling Harresaw)²². In Sirba/Ude and Yetmen parents had to guarantee their children's loans. In Harresaw and Yetmen some young people had heard that the land was given only for a few years, after which it had to be 'passed onto' other groups. Moreover, youth groups, started quite recently in all sites except Aze Debo, focused exclusively on mining and farm-related activities²³ in the rural kebeles (Aze Debo and Harresaw) whilst in the two sites partly under urban administration non-farm groups were also supported (e.g. grocery, fodder trade, bajaj, loading/unloading, metal/wood work)²⁴. There were youth irrigation cooperatives in all sites, although only in Yetmen was this done 'at scale' (approximately 200 young people involved), some groups had to produce rainfed *teff* due to water shortage, and in most groups young people had decided to share and manage the land individually²⁵.

Differences were also notable in processes of identification of jobless youth. For instance as mentioned earlier, in Harresaw youth had to obtain a court paper certifying their joblessness in order to be eligible for support by the YRF; whereas in Ude they were identified by the kebele and sub-kebele structures, and following complaints about nepotism, the process also involved a step in which those identified by the kebele were approved in a public meeting. In Aze Debo priority was given to more educated youth first. In Sirba/Ude, graduates were encouraged to form groups and develop proposals aligned with their professional background. In Harresaw migrant returnees were not eligible for six months after their return.

Perceptions of government support: 'social contract', broken or on the mend?

In Sirba/Ude and Yetmen there was some sense of a recent breakthrough. However, in all four sites government action was perceived as insufficient in terms of coverage and range of options, and there were strong criticisms related to the governance of the interventions.

More generally, whereas "before there was a big gap" and "officials were hostile to youth", some noted the beginning of a change in the broader relationship between young people and the government in Yetmen (the government started acting, young people attended meetings). In Sirba/Ude, with the 'deep renewal', "government started responding to youth questions step by step", although there were also people saying that the YRF came too late, "as a painkiller" to calm down political unrest when the issue of youth unemployment had already become huge. There was no sign of improvement in Aze Debo, where young people said officials threatened their parents (through

iddirs' threat of exclusion) or lied to the zonal government when they asked "difficult questions". In Harresaw there was a sense of hopelessness ("we are the future of this country, but we do not know what our future will be").

In both Aze Debo and Harresaw, young people linked migration to this state of affairs:

"Everyone wants us to migrate, even the administration, because we are a burden to them" (Aze Debo). "If the government does not pay attention to rural youth, if they have nothing to bring hope, they will continue to migrate" (Harresaw).

In all four sites youth structures were perceived, and seemed, to do little ('nominal existence', Sirba/Ude; "sleeping in their home" but membership a prerequisite to get support, Aze Debo, Harresaw).

Against a background of perceived overall decline of local government (DBIII:07 Local government), perceptions of government support to young people's livelihoods were mixed. In Yetmen and Sirba/Ude the intensified government action was appreciated; some young people involved in a group or parents were quite positive, although recognising various limitations. In contrast, in Harresaw where little had effectively happened, group members were at best hopeful, and the majority outlined various challenges, doubts and worries. In Aze Debo and Harresaw some wanted to see urgent concerted action from the federal and regional governments. In all sites, two types of criticisms related to: a) weaknesses in implementing existing actions; b) not enough being done.

Implementation weaknesses/issues were noted in relation to:

- Selection, with allegations of bias, nepotism, fund diversion in Harresaw, and selection of ineligible but well-connected people in Aze Debo and Sirba/Ude, with apparently 'dubious' cases²⁶; so, "the youth were not the 'exact' beneficiaries" (Aze Debo). Moreover, in Aze Debo young men found unfair the focus on most educated youth, at the detriment of the poorest of the poor.
- Lengthy process of approval (6 months to a year for the groups to be approved in Harresaw, Sirba/Ude, Yetmen, and in Harresaw this did not yet include getting the loan).
- Issues around access to land (unrealistic to expect young people to be able to use parents' land in Aze Debo; tension around use of communal land in all sites (DBIII:01 Land and urbanisation)).
- Delay in loans in all four sites; other issues including loan 'tranches' system undermining groups' plans, and savings depending on parents' support, reluctant because of the delay in getting the loans (Aze Debo); interest rate too high "for a place like Harresaw".
- Group lending disliked or said to be not working in all four sites; parents' reluctance to guarantee loans because of the group lending modality in Yetmen.
- Lack of equipment for the quarrying groups (supposed not to need capital); cases of inadequate equipment (e.g. crusher unable to crush the very hard local stone in Sirba/Ude).
- Insufficient funding, quotas. In Sirba/Ude in addition, the delay in release of further YRF funding eroded the initial big hope.
- Missing support: market links (Sirba/Ude, Aze Debo for quarrying groups), business management training (Sirba/Ude, Harresaw), follow-up (Aze Debo, Sirba/Ude).
- Young women 'missing out': many missed in selection (Sirba/Ude, Yetmen); wereda insistence on female membership not addressing young women's time constraints (Harresaw); limited 'adapted' options (poultry only, Aze Debo; no alternative to hard quarrying work, Harresaw); need for separate groups because young men could not be trusted (Harresaw).
- Challenge with or doubt on sustainability/profitability (too short duration of access to land; worries around land renewal once quarrying potential exhausted; income too small to be independent, let alone saving to become self-entrepreneur as per the government's plan).

- Weak implementation performance (*policies and programmes are hanging in the sky*), Harresaw; lower government structures *"not committed to serve people"*, Sirba/Ude).

Many also noted the lack of support to individual initiatives; very high taxation, problematic for start-up businesses; and in rural Aze Debo and Harresaw, the narrow focus on the farming sector:

"It is not good to think that young people will change their life by bull fattening. It has to be something that brings new things, new knowledge and skills to the young people, to transform them" (Aze Debo).

Several respondents stressed the need for support to micro/small enterprises (MSEs), and for opening factories in the area (*"rather than insisting on farming interventions that are not successful because of repeated drought"*, Harresaw). Whereas on the contrary, in the Tigray site wereda officials insisted that support to urban and rural youth was strictly demarcated (focus on MSEs, and on farming activities respectively):

"Rural youth should only access support through the rural interventions, and urban youth should also access only youth livelihood support provided for urban youth".

Supporting youth livelihoods: balancing focus and building on what's existing

The above suggests that on one hand, young people have a wider range of potential economic opportunities than in the past, being generally more educated than their elders, and especially with the growth (although uneven) of the rural non-farm sector. On the other, they face a number of challenges. In this section we make a few suggestions for possible consideration in government policy and practice, that might contribute to addressing these challenges.

The wider range of potential options, alongside limited access to farmland and the continued difficulties associated to farming livelihoods especially in some communities, today leads to less certain futures for large number of young people. Disillusion with education is rising, as they and their parents see growing numbers of jobless graduates. Moreover, the education system, including the curriculum and the messages it conveys, does not seem to help many young people to develop 'effective' aspirations (that is, aspirations *"that provide a challenge but can be achieved"* with the resources and time that an individual can invest, Seiwaa Boateng and Löwe 2018). Young people often initially set out very high goals (most of them aiming at non-manual jobs) that prove to be unattainable for many, who then adjust to goals that do not make use of the education level they have reached.

Considerations to address this might include: a) strengthening counselling in schools; b) adapting the messages about what education can lead to; and c) widening technical and vocational education with options that accommodate young people exiting the general education system at different levels, including the large number of rural young people who do not reach grade 10 or even do not complete primary education. Such options could focus on skills needed to respond to the new demands emerging in 'rural' areas where lifestyles are continuously evolving (electronics repairs, grain mill and water pump installation and repairs etc.), as further discussed in DBIII:03 Nonfarm livelihoods.

With regard to 'job creation', the analysis in this brief suggests the need for balancing support to groups, and individuals; and to initiatives in the farm sector, as well as the non-farm sector, even in areas still considered and administered as 'rural' kebeles.

Young people in the WIDE sites were actively seeking to create and seize opportunities 'by themselves', as individuals and through household-based strategies. Yet, institutional support to self-initiated non-farm activities is almost inexistent; as a result, only those with access to an alternative source of capital can start something going beyond hand-to-mouth survival. International evidence suggests that in the early stages of economic transformation like in Ethiopia today, it makes good sense to help young people to launch 'household firms' that need not be

formal initially (Fox and Kaul 2017). Two areas may be worth considering to this effect, which would build on the 'self-drive' of many rural young people:

- (a) enhancing support to individual firms through access to capital, work premises and business development support – including, especially in areas with good agricultural potential, promoting the small-scale agribusiness sector (trade, value adding such as food processing), which given rising urban demand, is potentially an important job creation driver (Tesfamichael Wossen and Seife Ayele 2018);
- (b) reviewing taxation strategies (especially in view of the light taxation of sometimes large farming incomes) so that fledgling self-employment enterprises can consolidate first in transitioning to the formal economy.

WIDE provides evidence that labour mobility, and specifically the fact that some rural young people move to seek work both in urban/industrial areas of Ethiopia and abroad, can contribute to local development of their home area, at the same time as alleviating the pressure on scarce local resources such as land and water. As already noted in DBII:08 Moving for work, supporting young people in making the most of their migration experiences would enhance these positive aspects. The government has begun to implement a new policy and regulatory framework concerning overseas employment (FDRE 2015, FDRE 2018). The recently stated intention of opening doors to technical and vocational graduates in fields such as nursing, construction and engineering (Yared Tsegaye 2018) suggests an awareness of the need to continuously adapt the implementation of the new framework. In this context, it would be valuable to monitor how the opportunities that this opens up fit with the profiles of current and would-be migrants from rural Ethiopia, and devise measures that would help the many rural youth not reaching grade 10 to fit the required profiles (e.g. through developing certified, pre-grade 10 TVET options as suggested above). It would also be useful to consolidate the vast knowledge on 'irregular migration abroad' accumulated over the last decade by Ethiopian universities and think tanks, to support further migration policy development.

Consideration might also be given to developing a policy framework around urban/industrial migration, as this is an integral element of the structural economic transformation pursued as a priority goal by the government. In doing so, consideration could be given to developing practical measures (e.g. gap skill training, migrant support centres with employment services) which could help to better match in-migrant labour supply and labour demand in the formal sector (Tesfamichael and Seife 2018). Opening up for in-migrants the schemes supporting 'urban' youth to establish small businesses, including in smaller urban centres, could also be considered.

With regard to support to youth groups, schemes such as the Youth Revolving Fund are quite new. This provides an opportunity for an early review of achievements and constraints, with a view to strengthening their effectiveness. Such a review might include a reflection on the coherence in working modalities (e.g. should there be cross-regional agreed criteria to determine maximum loan size, saving requirements, interest rates etc.), and look at how to strengthen the identification of local economic potentials and the effectiveness of proposal preparation support and approval processes. Criteria and processes of prioritization among young people could also be reviewed, which might include looking into the question of priority to more educated vs poorest youth, as well as the issue of better reaching out to young women, in what way and with what kind of offer.

The question of 'what kind of offer' goes beyond gender. In today's Ethiopia, the 'divide' between urban and rural areas, local economies and lifestyles is increasingly blurred (DBIII:01 Land and urbanisation, DBIII:03 Nonfarm livelihoods, DBIII:05 Modernisation and inequalities). Consideration could be given to how best to adapt job creation for young people accordingly, in line with international evidence stressing the need for a more integrated approach to job creation, which would foster rural to urban linkages (IEG 2017). This includes broadening the range of types of enterprise that young people would be supported to establish, even in areas still considered and administered as 'rural', both in group-based and individual entrepreneur support schemes (e.g.

metal and wood workshops, food transformation and electronic repairs enterprises). This goes along the earlier suggestion, that TVET could focus on providing groups and individuals with technical skills that respond to the new demands arising in rural areas.

The brief suggests that for poorer young people, social mobility through education or the ability of seizing the wider range of options available in growing local economies often remains a dream. This, in turn, may lead to increased inequality, as richer ones 'move ahead' (DBIII:05 Modernisation and inequalities). In line with its commitment to inclusive economic growth, the government could consider measures aimed to enhance prospects of intergenerational social mobility. These could include: a) additional support for poor young people to go further in education (e.g. scholarships on a competitive basis, including in TVET); b) balancing priority to most educated youth with wealth considerations in the government-supported youth groups; and c) paying special attention to how support to individual initiatives can be made to work for poorer young people, unlikely to be able to access credit.

As already noted in earlier WIDE analyses (see DBII:05 Education and DBII:07 Women's economic participation) and confirmed by our 2018 data, much progress has been achieved with regard to young women's prospects. This starts with greater access to and achievements in education. There is also evidence that when young women from rural communities are successful in breaking away from 'traditional' roles, they are admired, including by more progressive adults and men; this makes gender norms evolve, and in turn, also motivates others.

At the same time, this brief also shows that broader gender norms continue to 'de facto' discriminate between young women and men (see above, marriage central for most young women once out-of-school, gendered patterns of occupation, under-representation in 'job creation' schemes), resonating with international evidence that a range of gender discriminatory social norms are a major barrier to women's economic participation. These include both work-related norms (on the acceptability of women's work and 'suitable' work for men and women) and broader social norms (on women's respectability and mobility, care/domestic work and time use, education and early marriage, gender-based violence, and around ownership and control of assets) (Marcus 2018).

The government could consider a number of actions that would reinforce the positive two-way dynamic between enhanced women's economic participation and shifts in broader gender norms. These might include: a) further tailoring support to young women's economic participation in schemes supporting both youth groups and individual initiatives; b) further investigating how, in different contexts in rural Ethiopia, different types of social norms influence young women's actual access to economic occupations, to support more fine-grained work on norms and behaviour change; c) ensuring gender equity messages engage with 'real life' situations and concerns in rural communities (e.g. addressing male concerns with regard to evolving male and female household roles); and d) broadening the influence of existing 'role model' women in communities (across a range of economic occupations and the urban/rural divide, and mobilising all communication media that are now found in rural Ethiopia).

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Note: Discussion Briefs from the Ethiopia WIDE research

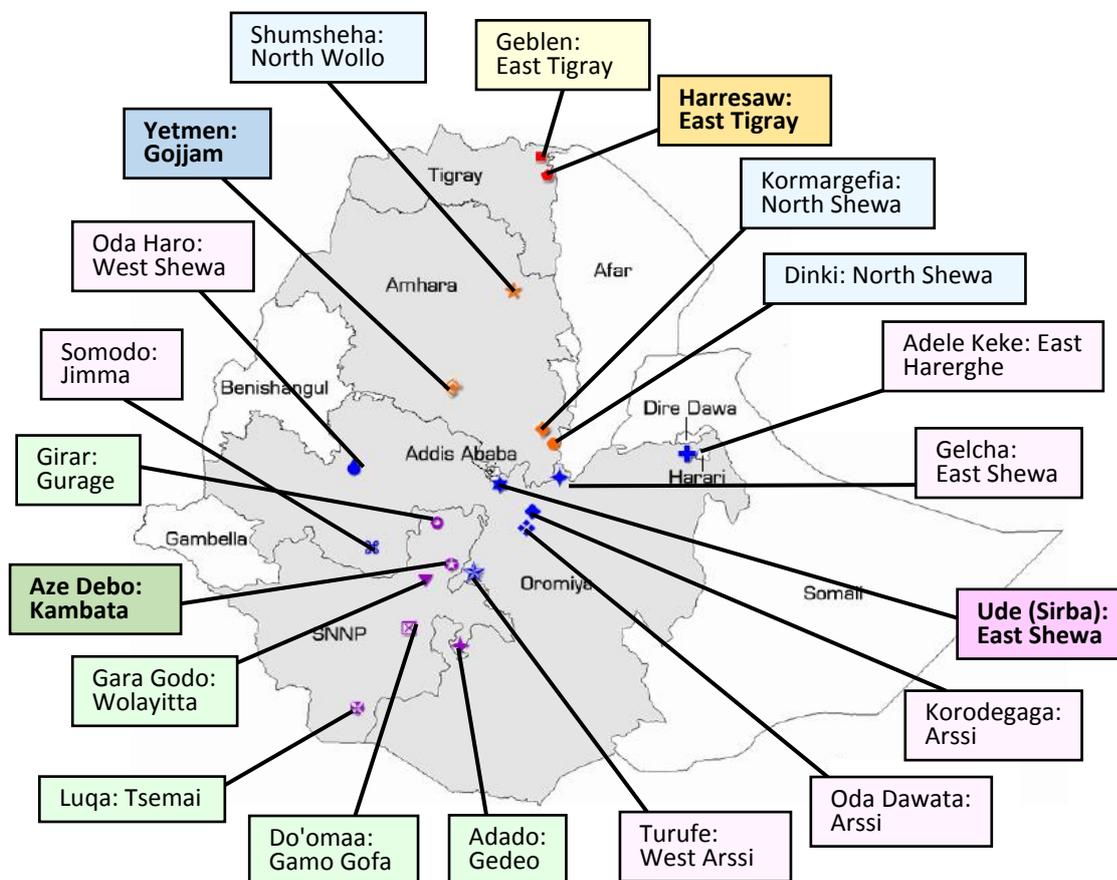
This brief is part of a series of seven produced by the Ethiopia WIDE team on the topics of land, farming systems, non-farming systems, youth economic experiences, social protection, inequalities, and local government, based on research carried out in four communities in the first quarter of 2018.

Ethiopia WIDE is a rigorous independent longitudinal study of 20 sites in Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, and Tigray regions, selected in 1994 by researchers from Addis Ababa and Oxford Universities, as exemplars of different types of rural communities in Ethiopia. They represent wide variations in a range of key parameters notably livelihoods (including surplus producing, drought prone, cash-crop and agro-pastoralist sites), remoteness or ease of access, cultural institutions, and religious and ethnic composition. The team has recently published a book entitled *Changing Rural Ethiopia: Community Transformations*, as well as a compilation of an earlier series of discussion briefs under the title: *Twenty Rural Communities in Ethiopia: Selected discussion briefs on change and transformation*. Further reports and data are available at www.ethiopiawide.net.

In the current Bridge Phase, 4 sites were selected one from each of the 4 regions for a fourth round of research. (In the map below, the names of these sites are in bold and darker colors were used for

the boxes). Links have been established with 4 universities (Ambo, Bahir Dar, Hawassa, and Mekele), paving the way for these institutions to take on an increasing role in continuing to track change in communities across the country.

Map of the 20 WIDE communities (with Bridge sites shaded)



¹ This brief was prepared by Catherine Dom with support from Alula Pankhurst. We are grateful for comments from other members of the WIDE team (Philippa Bevan, Sarah Vaughan, Agata Frankowska and Mulugeta Gashaw).

² This site was called Sirba in 2013. It is located on the old highway from Addis Ababa to Bishoftu and Mojo, with a rapidly expanding municipality surrounded by Ude rural kebele, flourishing farming and non-farming sectors, and high pressure on land, intensified by 'outsiders' coming to work and/or invest.

³ Yetmen is historically strongly connected to the national *teff* market, and *teff* production continues to drive local economic growth, although farming is also diversifying. It has recently been established as an emerging municipality, albeit with a strong 'divide line' between urban Yetmen (along the main road) and rural Yetmen.

⁴ In Aze Debo the farming sector is gradually shifting from coffee to diversified production for local markets (eucalyptus, irrigated tomatoes, dairy, poultry), a trend incentivised by the steady expansion of Durame, which also opens up new economic opportunities in the non-farm sector; the community has a long-standing history of outmigration, including more recently to South Africa.

⁵ In Harresaw, the struggling farming sector was strongly affected by recurrent poor rains and the disappearance of irrigation due to water scarcity over the past five years. The expansion of the small, slowly growing non-farming sector, is limited by remoteness and the overall local economic decline.

⁶ In Aze Debo a young man said that one could not start anything locally with 180,000 birr - the cost of migrating to South Africa with the 'full flight' option; in contrast, in Harresaw, young men talked about needing 30-45,000 birr to 'start something'.

⁷ In Harresaw, the remotest of the communities, a 17-year old poor out-of-school young man, knowing he might not have much of a chance in towns and not wanting to migrate to Saudi, aspired to live locally and start a shoe-shining business. Whereas a 18-year middle-wealth young woman, who tried to finance her college studies in Mekelle, aspired to try again

then find a job there, because young women like her “*are not considered as good girls*” in Harresaw.

⁸ Among adult respondents only a few (one in Harresaw, Yetmen, Aze Debo; two in Sirba/Ude) raised poor education quality as an issue, unlike officials and teachers who all mentioned it.

⁹ E.g. a poor young woman wanting to be a pilot when she was at school, which she had to leave at grade 5, in Harresaw.

¹⁰ E.g. a poor young woman geography diploma holder in Yetmen, who “*had no important person to help her to find a job*”.

¹¹ E.g. in Aze Debo, a young man geography diploma holder who taught for 6 years and quit to work as farmer, trader and business-man with his rich father; another, with a four-year health college diploma earning 500 birr a month in a private pharmacy, who quit to migrate to South Africa.

¹² E.g. a young man in Sirba/Ude, grade 12, hotel management and electronics training, living hand-to-mouth from daily labour, brokerage, and remittances from his wife in Beirut.

¹³ In Yetmen when it came to marriage, “*the first question (about a young woman) is: does she have land*” (will her parents be able to give land to the new household). In Harresaw some young men were members of the youth association only to be sure to be on the lottery list to get land; young women considered marrying a man with his own land as a ‘*guarantee*’ (although preferably he should not depend only on farming); and young women with prospects of near-future land inheritance were highly sought for.

¹⁴ Reported examples of tension included parents not sharing land with children when they married or wanted to establish themselves, in Aze Debo and Sirba/Ude; young people wanting to grow chat as a highly profitable cash crop, and parents fearing the church ban hence not allowing them, in Aze Debo; conflicts in Harresaw and Yetmen, with reportedly cases of young people taking their own parents to court in Yetmen; a landless household head in his 40s, lamenting that land was left in the hands of old people unable to use it well in Harresaw; tension over the use of communal land in Yetmen and Harresaw, and in Yetmen, youth irrigation cooperatives ‘*losing*’ the land they were given to adult farmers.

¹⁵ **Non-farm daily labour** – More opportunities in Yetmen and Sirba/Ude (e.g. loading/unloading related to trade); much fewer in Aze Debo and Harresaw (some construction in both sites, a few wood workshops in Aze Debo, for those with the skills).

Wage jobs – Opportunities in urban Yetmen (in hospitality, leisure, grain mill and other services, domestic work for young women or as assistant drivers or drivers for young men) and even more in Sirba/Ude town (same as in urban Yetmen plus jobs in local/nearby flower farms, poultry farms, wood/metal workshops, factories, and construction sites farther away with transport options to commute – e.g. 100 young men transported daily to Kaliti by CCC). Almost none in Harresaw; coffee plants a few months in a year in Aze Debo.

Self-employment – Transport, an important sector for young men, in Aze Debo (bajajs, motor-bikes), Sirba/Ude (horse carts, bajajs), Yetmen (bajajs, minibuses); small businesses – shops, leisure services, teashops/café/restaurants in all four communities (mostly young men with wife’s help in Harresaw; mostly young men and a few young women in Aze Debo), various other services especially in Sirba/Ude town and in urban Yetmen (bakeries, butcheries, mobile phone repairs, music/video loading shops, clothes/shoe shops, laundry); wood and metal workshops (young men) in Aze Debo, Sirba/Ude and Yetmen; in all sites, shoe shining (young men), barber shops and hair dressing salons (struggling in Harresaw and Aze Debo), tailors; local drink production and sale (tella, areke) for young women.

Trade – Petty trade in all sites (mainly young women in Harresaw), itinerant trade (Sirba/Ude, young men), trade (size depending on capital) of crop, coffee (Aze Debo), vegetables (Aze Debo, Sirba/Ude), chicken, eggs, shoats, trade of cattle/oxen for a few richer young men.

¹⁶ E.g. in Sirba/Ude all 24 employees of a big hotel except one were from Bishoftu, and local young women were said to not want to do paid domestic work. In Yetmen, daily labourers were despised as “*fedhalas*” (vagabonds), untrustworthy and instable; and young women would migrate to do domestic work (also much better paid in Addis Ababa or even Debre Markos), which their parents also preferred as they could just say that “*she’s staying with relatives*”.

¹⁷ Parents might provide, for instance, capital to open a small shop (a better-off young man in Harresaw); a bajaj for their son and a room and capital for a shop for his wife (in Sirba/Ude); a room and money for machines to open a wood workshop (young man in Aze Debo).

¹⁸ In Aze Debo, 426 young people with grade 10, TVET and even university education for a few, were known to be dependent on their parents. In Harresaw the kebele had registered 1,424 unemployed (and landless) young people above 18 (725 young women, 699 young men), of whom 121 were grade 10 completers or more. In Yetmen, the kebele experts had a list of 284 unemployed young people; they expected that the real number would be three or four times higher. In all sites except Harresaw, young women were under-represented in these statistics (e.g. in Yetmen and in Aze Debo they represented only a third of those identified as unemployed young people) and also in wereda statistics.

¹⁹ All figures below are estimates given by community respondents:

In Aze Debo, about 150 young men and 100 women went to work in Ethiopian cities/towns in the past five years (various jobs including factories and Industrial Parks). Many young men migrated to access land and farm elsewhere in SNNP. An

estimate 75 households were getting remittances from young men migrants in South Africa and the kebele was known as "South Africa". Young men who did not have the means (money, connections) to migrate to South Africa and an increasing number of young women also migrated to Sudan, and young women to the Gulf.

In Harresaw, hundreds were going seasonally or several times in a year to Afar for daily labour, some longer-term. About 200 were going to Saudi in a year (twice as many were going in 2011), many were deported. Many grade 10 completers migrated to towns in Tigray. All forms of migration concerned young men and an increasing number of young women.

In Sirba/Ude, many young (and some older) women were still migrating to Gulf countries (though possibly fewer than before the ban), mostly from poor and middle-wealth households. Some young men were migrating to cities and towns in Ethiopia.

In Yetmen, an increasing number of grade 10 and above completers, young women and men, were migrating to a range of towns and cities in Ethiopia, generally long term; networks with Addis Ababa, where many wealthy people from Yetmen were said to have settled, were an important factor in the choice of destination. A few young women (approx. ten) had migrated to Gulf countries years ago.

²⁰ The Youth and Sports Office seemed to lead in Aze Debo and Harresaw, and to have more means in Aze Debo; in Sirba/Ude the Labour and Social Affairs office was especially important to provide IDs to those 'officially' identified as unemployed young people, and in Yetmen it was the TVET Enterprise Development Office.

²¹ Kebele 'rural youth job creation' officer paid by the wereda Youth and Sports Office in Aze Debo; MSE officer in Ude town as a municipality; two TVET enterprise development experts in Yetmen as emerging municipality.

²² For instance, wereda officials said the largest loan possible was 135,000 birr in Aze Debo, whilst in Yetmen an oxen fattening group obtained a loan of 700,000 birr and a bajaj group had saved to get a loan of 1 million birr. Savings requirements were brought down from 20% to 10% in Aze Debo, but up from 10% for loans from OCSA to 30% for YRF loans in Sirba/Ude. The interest rate was the highest in Harresaw (12% for the youth package, vs standard Dedebeit 18%), compared to 8% in Aze Debo and Ude under the YRF, and 10% in Yetmen.

²³ Officials and community members often described activities such as fattening, poultry, eucalyptus growing, bee-keeping, as 'non-farm'. In this brief series, these are considered as belonging to farming. The non-farm sector covers activities such as trade, transport and hospitality services, manufacturing enterprises etc.

²⁴ In Aze Debo 36 groups were formed since 2012/13 though not all had continued (poultry, shoaat fattening, dairy and bull fattening), in addition to 6 quarrying groups and one beekeeping group, said to not need loans. In Sirba/Ude 15 cooperatives (92 members) were formed since 2016/17, although only 11 were funded in early 2018, which was linked to delays in releasing further YRF funding. These included non-farm groups such as fodder trading, grocery, metal work and furniture manufacturing); there were also quarrying groups formed eight years ago. In Harresaw 12 groups (poultry, beekeeping, shoaat fattening, eucalyptus plantation) were formed in 2016/17 (123 members); most were given hillside rehabilitated land, but none were funded yet in early 2018, and some groups had incurred significant expenses in the meantime; there were also several quarrying groups. The kebele Land Administration Committee and DAs rejected a shoaat fattening proposal because it would damage the land. In Yetmen there were several irrigation cooperatives, two stone and sand groups, and 7 or 8 other groups, with one that had received a loan (for oxen fattening) by early 2018, and a number of non-farm groups 'ready' (i.e. having managed to save 10%) (dairy processing, bajaj, loading/unloading, grocery).

²⁵ In Harresaw, a group formed around 2012 to produce potatoes had stopped functioning as irrigated farming was no longer possible since 2016/7. In Aze Debo, the cooperative did not have its own land, young people were supposed to use their parents' land; and three of the four water pumps given by World Vision were broken after one year. In Sirba/Ude the cooperative was formed in 2017 when the YRF started, so it was very new. In Yetmen this was a major focus of activity: 204 young people were organised in 19 groups, given communal land along the Muga river, and trained by the Agricultural Growth Programme to produce irrigated vegetables, although some decided to produce rainfed *teff*, with a lower return, because of water shortage.

²⁶ E.g. both spouses in a young couple with a shop and a bajaj were also members of a fodder trade group with a 300,000 birr loan. A woman running the largest hotel of Sirba/Ude, with 24 employees, was reported to have obtained a loan which she used for her business, by organising her school-going children into a group.