# Yetmen site-specific topic: Government attempt to use Desh (community iddir)

It has been repeatedly mentioned by development workers and kebele officials about the negative effect of a good governance component, the right to choose to participate on various gatherings and development activities. There is not any kind of punishment for not participating so people choose not to participate.

The kebele and sub kebele leaders decided to give the responsibility to mobilize community members for development activities and in April 2001 the construction of water harvesting pools started through the leadership of *desh*. There are four deshs in Yetmen each constituting of 160-170 people. The desh members were told that they will be fined 5 birr per day if they became absentees and those who did not come were registered to fine them at the end of the work. Spades and materials for digging were bought and digging of the water harvesting pool was started. The water harvesting pool was planned to be used by cattle.

In between the issue of school construction came and disagreements were created. The land planned for secondary school construction was important land for farmers. Farmers refused to give the land and when people come to start construction ignoring the refusal of the community conflict was created and one four years old boy died. The deshes continued the leadership that was given on the water harvesting pool construction and led the opposition of the community .Even the kebele officials of Yetmen sided with the Desh. Community members contributed 10 birr each to facilitate appealing at woreda, zone and region level.

Officials from zone and region came and said to the woreda any kind of force should not have been used while the community were asking their right in a peaceful way. The representatives of the community were to come to Addis Ababa but the construction was stopped. Officials came and asked if the refusal was made with the interest of some deviants or with the interest of the whole community; it was said that it is the interest of the whole community. The area is very important for grazing area , the farmers said that sending children only by selling grains is not enough. They said they have to rear livestock to send students to school and that place is where they keep their cattle. The community pointed a place around the market but the urban community refused again. The land is that of rural Yetmen but the urban community refused. Land of eight people is to be taken there.

According to one of the deshs’ leaders the construction of the water harvesting pool by the deshs is stopped because farmers became busy in their farm activities and they will continue after that. But the kebele official said that the use of deshs for development activities is stopped.