

**LONG TERM PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS  
IN RURAL ETHIOPIA**

**YOUTH ON THE PATH TO ADULthood  
IN  
CHANGING RURAL ETHIOPIA**

**SHORT SUMMARY**

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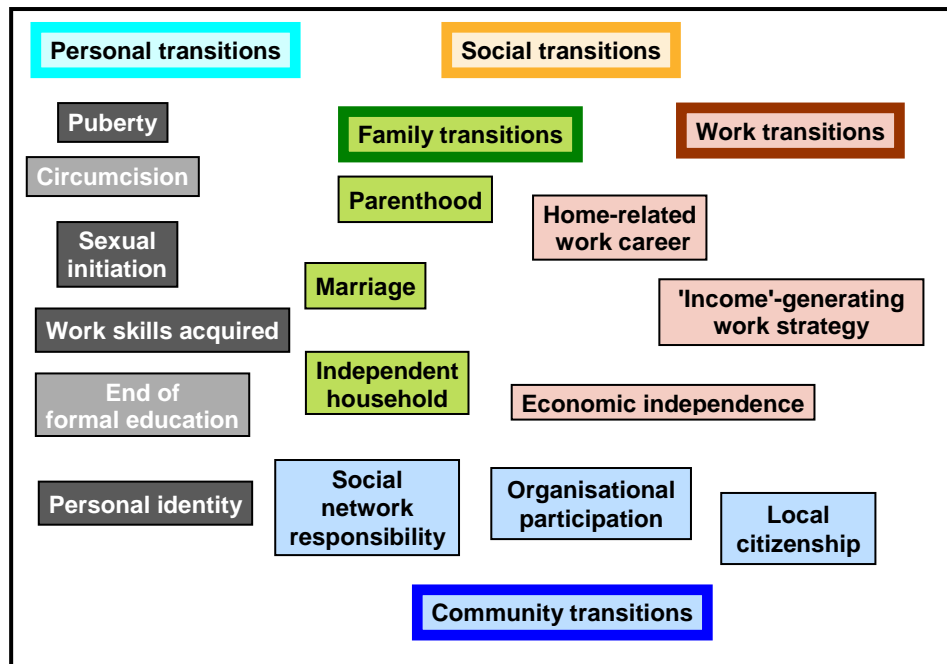
## Part 1: Key messages

### **Context: challenges facing young people in rural Ethiopia**

In 2007 there were over 25 million young people aged 10-29 living in rural Ethiopia, amounting to 41% of the rural population.

As boys and girls set out on their journeys to adulthood in rural Ethiopia they are faced with fifteen transitions or boundary crossings, all or most of which a successful adulthood requires (see Fig 1).

**Figure 1: Gendered youth passages to adulthood in rural Ethiopia: 13-15 boundary-crossings**



Six of these are **personal** and embodied although the final two are optional in some contexts. They are *puberty*, *sexual initiation*, *identity-formation*, and the acquiring of relevant *work skills*, and in many contexts *circumcision*, and the *ending of formal education*. There are three **work-related transitions**: the establishment of *income-generating* and *home-related working careers* and *economic independence*. The three **family-related transitions** are *marriage*, *parenthood* and the setting up of an *independent household*. **Community-related transitions** are *accepting responsibilities in adult social networks*, *participating in community-initiated organisations*, and *acting as a local citizen*. For most young men the most important transition in the passage is becoming economically independent and getting a long-term work strategy in place on the basis of which he can get and stay married. For most young women it is getting married followed by having a child; this depends on finding a husband who is economically independent with a long-term work role in place.

All these transitions are surrounded by (contested) local beliefs and norms indicating when and how they ought to take place. Through our long-term research we have identified two ideal-type cultural repertoires in each community each of which combines a set of compatible beliefs and norms. **Local customary repertoires** have long roots and change very slowly while **local modern repertoires** can quite rapidly incorporate incoming ideas and rules that are seen to bring advantage to some community members and are not too undermining of customary ideas and norms.

Many of the transitions have become the object of Government concern with one of the aims being to eliminate harmful traditional practices which are valued in local customary repertoires. Over the

last five years or so rural young people in their teens and twenties have been growing up in a context of accelerated government-led community change which itself is part of larger longer-term modernisation processes. In many respects they have found themselves 'between the devil and the deep blue sea' as government employees and communities have been involved in long-running overt and covert disagreements over some fundamental issues which have affected the passages of youth to adulthood which are the topic of this paper. Recent issues with consequences for **female transitions** have concerned **circumcision, age of sexual initiation** and **marriage**. The Government has been less pro-active in relation to **male passages to adulthood** which are being increasingly delayed by **lack of access to land or secure employment**.

Rural communities in Ethiopia have customarily been organised around patriarchal and gerontological structures. While land-owning, and therefore tax-paying, women and young males who head households at least theoretically have the same duties, rights and opportunities as older adult male heads, these constitute a small proportion of male and female youth in communities. The large and growing category of youth dependents who live in households headed and wived by others are excluded from meaningful political participation; though the government has tried to change this through the establishment of Women and Youth Associations as voices and mobilisers of the two status groups.

The programme in support of women has been in place longer and has been much more rigorously planned and implemented than the programme for youth. Since the turn of the millennium a mix of legislation and service provision has brought real changes for women in rural communities, though it has not yet given them a collective voice in local politics. However, there is some ambiguity as to whether female youth are Women or Youth with the consequence that in many places they have turned out to be neither. Rural Youth Associations are dominated by males but they have had little success in mobilising young people due to lack of leadership ability on their part in a context where many 'youth' lack land, resources, skills, and organising capacity and have not decided what they want to be 'when they grow up'. Also community elites and elders are not usually willing to transfer productive resources to young people, while local government commitment to pro-youth action appears to be weak.

The paper documents considerable changes to the rural contexts and cultural contents of youth transitions since the mid-2000s and predicts even more changes over the next five years. Some features are found commonly across rural communities while others are linked with particular livelihood or cultural contexts.

### ***Youth and development since the mid-2000s***

In relation to **personal efficacy** for many young people living in rural areas there have been increases in **competence** via health improvements, the reduction of female circumcision, access to education and the chance to pick up new agricultural and domestic work techniques through observation and labour. Younger youth have benefited more. There have also been increases in **autonomy** for young people of both sexes associated with education, while their ability to **relate** to different kinds of people and experience has also improved as communities have opened up to external influences and urban linkages have thickened. A major concern is the effect that government-community differences over fundamental issues found in many communities may be having on the **meaning** young people are making of their lives.

**Work-related transitions** have become increasingly problematic for young men as pressure on land has reduced smallholder farming opportunities and many have been forced to seek out local irregular casual agricultural and non-farm work or migrate to seek their fortune. Many young unmarried women needing work find the greatest opportunities are in towns as maidservants or in teahouses and bars, which may be associated with sex work. With little local government action and resources

focused on the rural informal sector there are no personnel (employers, trainers, mentors) to help young men and women establish themselves in non-farming work.

While in many respects young women are increasingly benefitting from changes affecting **family-related transitions** including the rising age of marriage and access to contraception there is also a downside as these are likely accompanied by rising rates of pre-marital pregnancy and HIV infection. Young men who are not on the smallholder farming route are finding it increasingly difficult to marry and set up an independent household due to problems in accessing work secure enough to support a family and lack of housing. Full **community-related transitions** in rural areas are usually only possible for those who are married. As described above the increasing number of 'dependent' young men and unmarried young women have little community voice.

Young people have contributed to economic development in recent years through their labour; the evidence suggests that many younger youth have exchanged some leisure for cash-earning work such as daily labour on irrigation farms. However, given their lack of resources and opportunities and encouragement to experiment and be creative there is much scope for greater contributions to production and productivity. Most young people living in richer and middle income rural households and some in poorer ones have benefited in terms of better living conditions and more access to cash for education, clothes, and urban leisure activities. However there are considerable inequalities in the distribution of these benefits. Investments in education and health services have increased youth competence although there is a concern about a disconnect between what is taught in schools and the competences needed for the next stage in Ethiopia's development which is bound to involve a big expansion in the informal sector.

One international concern about youth is their potential alienation from the larger society and possible consequences for social cohesion. This can be seen as having five dimensions.

- **Material conditions:** the main concerns here are un(der)employment and lack of housing.
- **Passive social relations:** security in rural communities has increased in recent years; there is concern that fear plays too large a role in the local governance and that the religious tolerance that has marked rural communities for many years may be under threat as a result of religious entrepreneurial activities by Muslim and Protestant sects. Young disaffected people may be attracted to extreme religious activity.
- **Active social relations:** inter-generational relations have generally become more conflictual; communities vary as to the extent of positive interactions and mutual support across different social groups.
- **Social inclusion:** most young people are not well-integrated into local community institutions apart from schools.
- **Social equality:** opportunities for young people are quite restricted and to seize the big ones, such as college education, it is much easier if the family is well-off. Lower-level opportunities often demand a lot of hard work and poor young people can be upwardly mobile as a result. However, in the communities we studied there was evidence of increasing inequality mainly as a result of the rich becoming richer.

### ***Community, government and donor models relating to youth transitions***

In Government's approach youth figure as policy targets in relation to education, youth circumcision and early marriage, mobilisation for employment and democratic participation through Youth Associations and youth co-operatives, and the provision of Youth sports centres. Some young women's concerns, such as childbirth, are addressed through policies for women. Donors interest in youth has been more restricted and their interests have mostly not been seen as very different from the rest of the population though the model is in accordance with that of the government on education and Harmful Traditional Practices affecting young females.

The main differences between donor and government models come in the employment area with donors emphasising the importance of expanding markets and the private sector and government focusing more on youth co-operatives. Neither emphasises the importance of the rural informal sector, though it also does not figure in rural community repertoires. The main difference between top-down and community models relates to the roles of girls and women, with the government emphasis being on their contribution to economic development while the donors' language is of gender equality. Local repertoires prioritise marriage, children and home-related work for most women.

The main problems with government and donor mental models relating to youth is that they are thin, patchy and disconnected in a number of ways.

### ***Aid strategies for youth in rural Ethiopia***

In the current policy landscape, which includes the Government's Growth and Transformation Plan and various ongoing donor programmes, various decisions have already been made and there may not be much space for new initiatives. The first question to be considered is whether there is a need for a more integrated youth focus. One input to this could be a gendered-youth audit of all policies and programmes which traces linkages across programmes and the resultant impacts on young people's lives and choices in relation to personal transitions, and those that are work, family and community related and the likely consequences for their wellbeing, participation in economic development, and community and country social cohesion. Were it to be decided that there is a need for a more integrated youth focus the next step would be to consider which if any of the strategies described below could be inserted in or added to what is already planned.

**Dealing with youth issues through existing development interventions:** do what is being done better; focus on laggards; focus on a hard-to-reach problem; identify an area of priority for the government; work with new partners, for example religious leaders.

**Make all development interventions more youth-friendly:** youth is a cross-cutter in the same way that gender is; youth audits of all interventions

**Introduce new youth-focused programmes:** e.g. help youth entrepreneurs; finance small exploratory innovative interventions.

**Institutionalise successful approaches: deepen, widen, warp:** e.g. trial-and-error pilots to find things that seem to work in particular contexts; trial-and-error pilots to find the best ways to spread things which work; monitor how the multiplying interventions are changing the larger system and identify meso or macro level interventions which would accelerate the change.

**Cross-cutting strategy:** regular consultations with young people of different ages and sexes in different rural contexts.

## **Part 2: Selective summary of main research findings**

### ***Conclusions relating to gendered youth transitions in the mid-2000s in the six Stage 1 sites***

#### **Different livelihood and cultural contexts**

- Livelihood systems
  - three remote drought-prone aid-dependent communities
  - three integrated and self-sufficient
- Ethnicities
  - three ethnically homogenous

- two with two ethnicities
- one with more than five
- Three with clan structures
- Religions
  - two with one religion
  - one with two religions
  - two with three religions
  - one with four religions

### **Competing mental models and institutions**

- Two ideal-type local cultural repertoires:
  - local customary
  - local modern
- Six potential incoming ideologies
  - government
  - political/ethnic opposition
  - religious
  - donor/NGO
  - diasporic
  - global
- Balance of local repertoires / government ideology
  - remoter sites – local customary repertoires predominant
  - integrated sites – hybrids of customary and modern

### **Government structures to implement policies**

- Weredas – de-centralisation process continuing
- Kebeles structures
  - Kebele Councils in place
  - leaders and Cabinet elected from within the community
  - sub-kebele structures being put in place
- Go-betweens – teachers, DAs visiting

### **Inequalities among youth**

- Inequalities among the communities affected youth transitions
  - on average youth in the remoter sites achieved independent adulthood earlier than those in the integrated sites
- There were signs of incipient class formation
  - landholders and landless / taxpayers and nontaxpayers
  - community elites
  - rich elites – merchants, those with formal jobs
  - agricultural and domestic servants were prone to exploitation and abuse
- Youth heading households were poorer than other age groups: less land and fewer livestock
- There were intra-household inequalities among youth
- The relative status of poor people was low; teenagers in poor families were said to be more likely to be treated unfairly
- Achieved education was a status discriminator
  - those who had experienced no education
  - those who had experienced some education but not enough that it was useful for work
  - those whose education was being used in their work
- Status distinctions based on local important social identities created potential fault lines in communities including

- ethnicity
- religion
- clan
- length of residence (natives and immigrants)
- gender
- youth-adult (decline in respect of older adults by young people)
- Women, most young men and poor men had little say in community affairs
- There were differences in access to education and health services among the communities access in the integrated sites was considerably better
- Health inequalities affecting the transitions of young people included different risks and different access to services. Disabled, chronically and mentally ill young people were often confined in their homes.
- Youth were differentially affected by household shocks; 5-9% of surveyed households experienced a death in the previous year.

### Personal transitions

- Two ideal-type local future work **identities** on offer to teenagers in transition
  - farmer or farmer's wife – customary repertoires
  - 'educated' – modern repertoires
- Problems in achieving either due to lack of land, exam failure or inability to find a husband led to some 'emotional instability'
- Personal reputation an important constituent of local social identity.
- Sexual identity – homosexuality taboo and illegal for both sexes leading to great pressure on young gays and lesbians
- Government ideology – youth (15-29) should be citizens with democratic outlook, professional competence, skills and ethics
- *Wehabbi* missionaries were actively promoting an Islamist identity in at least two of the four sites with Muslim populations
- Government ideology banned female **circumcision**; in local customary repertoires it was a pre-requisite for female adulthood
- The Government campaign had made little impact on practice in the research sites except the Tigray site where the TPLF had been campaigning for many years.
- Government ideology and local customary and modern repertoires were also in contradiction over age and mode of **sexual initiation** for females
  - Law – illegal to marry before 18 or to have sex with anyone under 18
  - Community – both customary and modern repertoires - girls not on the education route must marry before they have sex and they are unlikely to reach 18 without having forced or voluntary sex
  - Law – marriage by abduction is illegal
  - Community – customary repertoires – abduction is an established route to marriage for young men whose families do not have resources for an ideal wedding
- National trend – increase in age of sexual initiation and marriage for girls
- Community trend – increase in 'voluntary abduction'
- Nationally around a fifth of rape cases in 2009 involved young boys
- AIDS deaths in 3 of the 4 DEEP sites; 4 HIV positive men reported in the fourth
- **Informal work skill learning**: local repertoires – learning-by-doing and also contributing to the household economy
  - girls to be trained in all female home-related work skills by the age of 12 or so
  - boys to be trained in all farming skills by the age of 14 or so



- Government ideology: no recognition of household apprenticeships as evidenced by promotion of the full primary school day rather than a shift system
- Views on **formal education** were different in the two local repertoires
  - local customary – formal education is not important; Argobba in Dinki – it disrupts local cultures; Korodegaga – religious education is also important
  - local modern – all children should be educated for as long as possible
- In practice for most children education was regarded as an activity to be fitted around other important things in life, especially work the demands for which varied seasonally particularly for males.

### Work-related transitions

- **Smallholder** farming with some diversification if necessary to obtain cash was the ideal way of life in the repertoires of the four DEEP communities and Geblen. In Girar the Gurage men also migrated to towns for shorter or longer periods.
  - local customary repertoires – farm in the old way using household labour and customary arrangements; conform with religious rules on working days and hours
  - local modern repertoires – adopt new crops/livestock, use modern inputs and technologies, employ labour, women to take credit
- Ideas and institutions relating to land access are complex. Customary practices in terms of which children inherited land varied across the six sites - and were sometimes contradictory. In three sites with Muslims populations there was the potential for shari'a laws of inheritance. Legally land belonged to the state; Regional governments could formulate policies in line with Federal law. Farmers had use-rights and rights to pass land on to youth before their deaths. What actually happened was difficult to discern.
- **Land access** for youth was highly problematic in all sites. In the four DEEP sites average holdings ranged from 0.9 hectares to 2.3 (drought-prone site). The land problem was reportedly leading to delays in marriage. In the remote sites more than half men aged 20-29 were 'landless' and in the integrated sites this rose to around three-quarters. Many of those who were not 'landless' did not own the land but rented or share-cropped it.
- **Farming** of any kind was the main activity for 55-60% of all male youth 10-29 in the remote DEEP sites and 27-30% in the integrated sites. Smaller proportions of younger female youth were also involved in farming, mostly herding. **Daily labour** on a casual basis was available in all sites.
- Women and girls performed most **home-related work** though some young boys did domestic work and men built and maintained houses and participated in the raising of children. In the remote sites home-related work had been the main activity for two-thirds of female youth (10-29) while this was true for 37/38% in the integrated sites.
- Main opportunities for informal sector **non-farm own-account activities** included collecting wood/making dungcakes (females), blacksmithing, weaving, spinning, making alcoholic drinks, petty and other trading, selling alcoholic drinks in town often associated with sex work, cash-crop trading to Addis Ababa and other large towns (males) and seasonal brokering between farmers and larger traders (males in Turufe Kecheme, males and females in Yetmen).
- Across the sites non-farm activities were the main one for 3% of males and the second one for 2%. Figures for females were 4% main and 3% secondary.
- The incidence of **non-farm employment** of youth in the informal sector was exceedingly low and most common for males in the integrated sites: 5/6% as a main activity and 3/0.4% as a secondary one. The small number of people from the integrated sites who were employed in the **formal sector** had moved out of the site.
- In the two drought-prone sites young people participated in **food-for-work** on behalf of their households when it was available.

- Migration for work was rare from Dinki and Korodegaga; it was an established coping strategy in Geblen. There was not much migration from Turufe or Yetmen although in the latter it had increased for both sexes as a result of land shortage.
- Considering the three work transitions in the remote sites and Yetmen the only reliable route to locally-based economic independence and a long-term career for males was smallholder farming. There were some long-term urban-style opportunities in Turufe. In Girar farming could be combined with urban migration
- Female youth in the integrated sites could make long-term careers out of domestic work if married or working as a dependent or servant in another household. Women heading households with land could get some income by share-cropping or renting it out. They could make an income-earning career out of making and selling local drinks, handicrafts, pottery or dungcakes depending on the local economy. Long-term urban migration was also an option. Female youth in the remote sites had fewer choices of income-earning activities.

### Family-related transitions

- DEEP sites - 32% of both males and females aged 10-19 lived in households which were not on the local ideal track. This was true of 38% of males and 30% of females aged 20-29.
- For all youth 10-29 31% of females lived in their own households as wives or heads and 14% headed households.
- Parental relationships with children living in their households changed as they moved through adolescence and very young adulthood into their twenties.
- The ideal customary way for children to leave the parental household was through marriage in their teen years (females earlier than males). The ideal modern way was via education leading to formal employment and migration.
- **Marriage customs** varied to some degree among Orthodox Christian and Muslim cultures as evidenced by comparing the homogenous sites Yetmen (early marriage – before 15; monogamy; divorce acceptable) and Korodegaga (abduction; polygyny; divorce not acceptable). In the dual ethnic/religious communities customs were less different: Christians in Geblen could be polygynous (which was also true in Girar) while the Amhara in Dinki did not practise promissory or child marriage. In all sites marriages were seen to link families and while it seemed acceptable for sons to have some input into the decisions of when and who to marry this was not the case for most daughters.
- Government family code 2001 criminalised early marriage and abduction. The 2005 DHS found considerable Regional differences in median age of marriage of 20-24 year old females – between 15.2 (Amhara Region) and 19.5 (SNNP). Median ages were rising everywhere except Somali and Afar (17.3; 17.4). Male median age of first marriage of men 23.8. Only 2.8% of females 10-14 reported as ever married in the DEEP sites - all in Yetmen, Amhara.
- Parental choice of female marriage applied in many cases in DEEP sites but process of change; female failure to marry a big issue. 25% of females aged 25-29 in Turufe had never married. On average female youth were 8.3 years younger than their husbands and male youth were 4.3 years older.
- Polygyny 'illegal' except under religious or traditional law recognised by the Constitution' (UN Human Rights Committee 2011). Shari'a law allowing polygyny promulgated by Islamist missionaries. 12% married women in Ethiopia in polygynous unions in 2005.
- Both men and women must have **children** within marriage to be accepted as full social adults in the community.
- *Infertility* – regarded as women's problem everywhere but a few in Turufe. No Government action.
- *Fertility* – customary repertoire God gives children – no *contraception*; many are needed as labour source; local modern repertoire – reduce numbers to 4-5 using birth control. No message from Govt to reduce numbers of children though contraception sporadically available.

- *Abortion* – local traditional practices; 2004 Abortion law – including legal for rape victims
- *Pre-marital pregnancy and illegitimate children* – local - pregnancy outside marriage unacceptable; fathers no responsibility; customary – women must be virgins on marriage; Govt – illegitimate children have rights if father recognises them
- *Pregnancy* – local repertoires – work until delivery, no special care. No Government message.
- *Female age at first birth* – customary repertoire to follow marriage when big enough; local modern repertoire – women should choose; Government 18+9 months earliest.
- *Delivery* – customary – home births, Traditional Birth Attendants; modern- serious problems should go to health centres/hospitals
- The **setting up of an independent household** is an important step in the passage to adulthood; shortage of land was making this difficult.
- Over 10% of female youth in their twenties in the DEEP sites were *divorced* and another 1+% *widowed*. Most of the divorced were in Yetmen and Dinki. In the other sites polygyny seemed to be a substitute for divorce in many cases.
- In 2004 only 59% of males in the DEEP sites aged 25-29 had ever been married while 51% were heads of household; there were differences among the communities with the peri-urban site Turufe having only 40% of this age group heading households; the rest lived as dependents in other households.

### Community-related transitions

- In order to become customary social adults in rural communities young people had to participate in **adult social networks** and **community-initiated organisations** and assume the rights and duties of **local 'citizens'**.
- In the mid-2000s full social adulthood was not generally possible unless the male or female youth were, or had been, married, and were landholders and living in independent households. In the DEEP remote sites 66% of young men aged 20-29 were not taxpayers while in the integrated sites the figure was around 80%.
- Wives had different community roles from women heading landowning households.
- Dependent youths were under the authority of the household head. Uncomfortable relations and conflicting norms and ideologies between older people and youth were evident in the four DEEP sites.
- Young males built up their own networks with friends, neighbours and relatives which, if they stayed in the community, they would remain involved with throughout their lives. Most young women moved to new communities when they got married and would have to develop new networks starting from the neighbourhoods they lived in and their husband's kin networks.
- Youth of 18 or over had the right to vote and government was also keen to involve them in community affairs through Youth Associations although before the 2005 election they were not active in the DEEP sites.
- Youth played roles in the 2005 elections in all of which, except the Tigray site, Opposition parties beat the EPRDF. A key role was bringing information and ideas from urban areas.

### ***Conclusions relating to changes affecting gendered youth transitions since the mid-2000s***

#### **Different livelihood and cultural contexts: changes**

- Urbanisation
  - Remote sites – administratively-driven
  - Integrated sites – economically-driven
- Better road access except in Korodegaga

- Mobile phone network except in Dinki
- Electricity in the centres of Turufe, Yetmen, and Geblen
- Agriculture-based growth in five sites – irrigation, green revolution, new technologies, increased market demand; decline in Geblen due to drought
- Missionary activity by *wehabbi* Islamists and Protestants
- Increased community penetration by government and party structures; opposition ideologies gone or underground

### **Changes to competing mental models and institutions**

- Local cultural repertoires
  - customary repertoires little change
  - local modern repertoires incorporated some new ideas and practices
- Six potential incoming ideologies – similar though slightly updated
- Balance of local repertoires / government ideology
  - customary repertoires still strong in some areas
  - more followers of some aspects of local modern repertoires
  - countering of some government ideology by both customary and modern repertoires

### **Changes to Government structures to implement policies**

- Weredas – growing larger – re-constructed
- Kebeles structures
  - Kebele Councils – size increased
  - leaders and some Cabinet elected from within the community; Headteacher, DA and HEW in Cabinet kebele managers
  - sub-kebele structures and party structures in place
- Signs of struggles between wereda and kebele
- Go-betweens – on-site teachers, Development Agents (should be 3), Health Extension Workers (should be 2)

### **Changes to inequalities among youth**

- All sites better-off than in 2005 though still inequalities among them.
- Inequalities among households increased as rich got richer, though no evidence that poor got poorer
- Distinction between landed and landless consolidated – land registration, renting and inheritance laws
- Greater economic activity on the part of females, including youth
- Economic improvements for female-headed households and general improvements in female status
- No apparent changes in other discriminators though some signs of increasing religious differences and tensions
- Adult males including old ones continued to lead communities; women, most young men and poor men still had little say in community affairs
- Inter-generational tensions related to access to land had grown
- Considerable improvements in access to primary education and health services particularly for the remote sites
- Disabled, chronically and mentally ill young people were still often confined in their homes.
- Regular seasonal outbreaks of cholera involving deaths in four sites.

### **Changes to personal transitions**

- Still two ideal-type local future work **identities** on offer to teenagers in transition: farming or education though more examples of older youth constructing livelihoods from agricultural labour and the informal sector or migrating. Increasing number of young people keeping their options open by combining farm work with education many using income from daily labour to cover education costs
- Personal reputation still an important constituent of local social identity although less strictly applied.
- One study found a belief among girls and other members of society that women are 'weak and vulnerable'
- Sexual identity – homosexuality – no change except religious leaders tried to outlaw it in the Constitution
- Government ideology – youth (15-29) should be citizens with democratic outlook, professional competence, skills and ethics
- *Wehabbi* missionaries continued to promote an Islamist identity; a few young men from Korodegaga went to a madrasa in Bale though one left as he did not approve of what he was being taught
- Increased implementation of the government ban of female **circumcision**; more acceptable in most places not to be circumcised although also secret practice.
- Government ideology and both local repertoires were also in contradiction over age and mode of **sexual initiation** for females.
  - Law – illegal to marry before 18 or to have sex with anyone under 18
  - Community – some indication that 16 was seen as the minimum
  - Law – marriage by abduction is illegal
  - Community – reduction in forced abduction, more voluntary abduction and marriage by choice
- More youthful pre-marital pregnancy in Turufe
- Greater enforcement of law against rape and abduction though not for powerless women such as domestic servants and poor women heading households
- More AIDS deaths in 3 of the 4 DEEP sites and probably more people infected but secrecy due to fear of stigma and less visibility due to Anti-Retroviral Therapy.
- **Informal work skill learning**: attempt to introduce full-day schooling fought off in Oromo communities. Young people learn about irrigation farming by working on parental plots or doing daily labour in Korodegaga, Dinki and Yetmen. Young people observing and sometimes participating in the introduction of new technologies and products were absorbing new ideas. Those who migrated learned new skills in other agricultural areas and towns.
- **Formal education**: The power of customary repertoires faded in the face of increased educational opportunities and young people's interest in attending school. For many, particularly in the remoter sites it was still regarded as an activity to be fitted around work. In the peri-urban sites people said that children were attending school 'at the right age'.

### Changes to work-related transitions

- Customary repertoires relating to **smallholder farming** did not change; modern repertoires expanded with appreciation of green revolution and other new technologies, new crops, and new livestock breeds in the rain-secure sites and of irrigation and green-revolution technologies in the drought-prone sites. Not all young men could become successful smallholding farmers; some might achieve formal jobs via education while the remainder would have to seek their fortune through a mix of informal farm/non-farm activities including commuting, and shorter and longer - term migration within Ethiopia and international migration. Individual responsibility in work and for credit was seen as better than being made to join a group. In the drought-prone sites there was some concern about dependency on regular food aid and OFSP packages which required rain.

- ideas and institutions relating **to access to land** grew even more complex. Investors and women's youth co-operatives were added to the list of those with potential rights to land. Women's rights to land as daughters and on divorce/widowhood/addition of a polygynous wife also added a new set of claims. These new claimants did not have much sympathy from kebele officials but could make their claims at wereda level which many were doing successfully.
- Youth **landlessness** was even more problematic in most sites. 40 hectares of land was allocated to long-term landless youth in Korodegaga. Small amounts of communal land were made available for **youth co-operatives** in the Oromia and SNNP sites although not all was successfully exploited. In Korodegaga land allocated to a YC by the kebele was re-allocated to an Australian investor by the wereda. Irrigation expanded in three sites accompanied by increased daily labour opportunities. A growing underclass of agricultural labourers was visible.
- Youth development packages were introduced in all communities. Youth co-operatives were given land in Turufe (3 – but only one forestry co-op active), Girar (the performance of the Youth Association was 'not as expected'), Korodegaga (a number – sand and stone co-ops collapsed due to lack of demand and poor road), Geblen (loans taken for modern hives but no honey produced due to drought), and Dinki (one piece of mountain land successfully re-claimed from the YC by individuals at the wereda).
- There were reports of greater domestic work contributions from adult and young males.
- Informal sector **non-farm own-account activities** described earlier continued except there was less wood-selling in Korodegaga due to increased daily labour and PSNP. In Dinki some young people started charcoal-burning but were stopped for environmental reasons. More young women started petty trade at the roadside in Dinki and Turufe. Theft increased in Yetmen and Turufe.
- **Non-farm employment** of youth in the informal sector increased; in three sites there were opportunities for both sexes in nearby construction work. Youth commuting for work in Kuyera and Shashemene town increased. More young people gained **formal jobs**, mostly from the integrated sites though numbers were still small.
- In the drought-prone sites young people continued to participate in **food-for-work** on behalf of their households when it was available.
- Seasonal rural and seasonal and longer-term urban youth migration for work were reported as increased everywhere but Dinki, although numbers of young men in their twenties in that site were relatively lower than any other site. Legal and illegal female migration to the Gulf from Muslim sites increased; illegal male migration to the Gulf from Geblen increased exponentially in the years leading up to 2010. Illegal migration to the Sudan began in Korodegaga.

### Changes to family-related transitions

- Increasing number of young people were staying longer in parental households and inter-generational relationships were changing under the impact of (1) decreasing chances of getting access to land, (2) increased participation in education in and beyond the community, (3) greater economic independence as a result of daily labour opportunities, (4) increased opportunities to migrate, (5) more mixing with the opposite sex, (6) increased opportunities to 'go off the rails'.
- The idea that the minimum age of marriage should be 16 rather than 18 was probably a feature of local modern repertoires. Attempt to implement the marriage law were most visible in Yetmen although it was proving difficult. Choosing a marriage partner was increasing, especially among educated girls. There did not seem to be much change with regard to polygyny.
- *Fertility* – numbers of youth saying they wanted smaller families than their parents. *Contraceptive* injections and implants increasingly available although not always reliably.
- *Abortion* – local traditional practices still used
- *Pre-marital pregnancy and illegitimate children* – numerous unmarried mothers living at home in the 2010 sample.

- *Pregnancy* – HEWs providing monitoring for some mothers
- *Female age at first birth* – young women having contraceptive injections before marriage in Yetmen
- *Delivery* – a little more access to modern deliveries
- Obstacles to the **setting up of independent households** had increased.

### **Changes to community-related transitions**

- There were no significant changes in young men's chances of becoming social adults and the Youth Associations set up after the 2005 election did not prove successful in mobilising young people for community participation. The Youth League was relatively new and had made no impact in the sites at the time of the research. Huge amounts of interest generated by the promise of development packages for organised youth had dissipated when the promises were not kept. As a result of the process new youth networks were forged.
- While there was much co-operation between the generations on a face-to-face basis young men were growing increasingly frustrated at the lack of opportunities and more young women were choosing marriage partners and migrating for work without telling their parents in advance. Many young people said that if they had the resources they would be much more efficient than those currently owning land.
- There were no opposition candidates in any of the sites in the 2010 election.

### **Looking to the future**

- Smallholder farming opportunities for youth will remain limited and if investors are allocated community land they may decrease
- Agricultural labour on large and small farms is likely to increase
- Continued urbanisation will provide more formal sector professional and business opportunities (not many), formal manual work opportunities (not many) and many informal sector opportunities
- Unless tourism is developed in their localities youth migration from attractive remote sites like Geblen and Dinki will increase
- The 14 unresearched WIDE3 sites should provide insights into what is happening to youth transitions in other livelihood contexts
- Research from the two ELCS urban sites in 2004 suggests that it is even harder for youth in urban areas to complete the transitions involved in the full passage to adulthood before the age of 30.

### **Longer-term impacts on youth passages of government interventions 2003-15**

#### **Top-down perspective – sector policy focus (highlights)**

- **Contraceptive** provision made it less likely that pre-marital **sexual initiation** (which is high among educated girls) leads to pregnancy though increased risks of HIV infection. Allowed married girls to continue education.
- **Mother and Child services** improved the **child** production experience; plans for improvements in the GTP.
- Increased **education** services led to many more young people experiencing at least some formal education and more post-primary experience. Widespread experience of 'failure' had implications for personal identity of some. Higher levels of education among females was associated with lower rates of circumcision, later ages of marriage and childbirth, and higher rates of high-risk sexual activity.
- **Land policy** has become increasingly youth-unfriendly postponing male work-related and family-related transitions and making it more likely that young women will marry older men who have been 'waiting'.

- **Youth-focused employment policies** via **Youth Associations** did not work during the PASDEP period (2005-10). The GTP approach is similar with packages for youth with no or little land combining skill and business management training, credit and access to markets; they will also need small parcels of land. It is not clear if packages will go to individual youth (which from the evidence they would prefer) or youth co-operatives. The role of the Youth League is not spelled out.
- Improvements to **roads** improved access to **education** and **work** in some sites but also brought a greater risk of HIV infection. Access to electricity assisted **education** (homework), **work**, and the development of more cosmopolitan **identities** and improved security
- Mobile phones made it easier to find **work**, for thieves to co-ordinate activities, and to summon ambulances.
- Awareness-creation through (boring) meetings was counter-productive; more effective through radio and TV especially drama.
- Implementation of gender laws and reproductive health services mostly improved women's family-related transitions though for rural communities at contemporary stages of development a minimum **marriage** age of 18 for women is two years too high.
- Government does not seem to respect the considerable amounts of **home-related work** including **child care** and **socialisation** performed by women and girls.
- Participation and **voice** on the part of dependent young men (i.e. not household heads) and women remained **very low** during the PASDEP period.
- **Poor young people** faced particular problems during their passages to adulthood. There were no Government programmes for them except the PSNP (in two sites) which did not include all poor people and did include some rich ones.
- If the 2004 Youth Policy and the subsequent **Youth Development Package** were properly implemented it could make a considerable difference to young people's passages to adulthood. Although it is based on some **unrealistic assumptions** as to (1) the organisational capabilities of young men (in particular) and (2) the incentives that will appeal to them.
- The GTP recognises the need for **inter-sectoral collaboration** in cross-cutting sectors which is appropriate for dealing with linkages between the different kinds of transitions which young people must make.

### **Bottom-up perspective – transitions focus (selected impacts)**

#### Positive

- New opportunities to earn income increase feelings of self-efficacy
- Increased access to education at all levels
- Allocation of communal land to dependent married youth in two sites
- Food-for-Work providing reliable income, preventing malnutrition during the growth spurt
- Rapid urban expansion
- Average age of marriage of girls is rising
- Second chances at education available for girls forced to marry against their will
- Improving Mother and Child services
- Increased Government commitment to youth and children

#### Negative

- Sexual approaches by teachers and sugar daddies outside secondary schools
- Regular attempts to impose full-day primary schooling
- Wereda right to allocate community land to investors for up to 25 years
- Insufficient linkage of education and employment policies

#### Ambiguous



- Labelling of youth (and women) as 'vulnerable' and needing to be 'unleashed'
- Definition of 'early marriage' as under 18; changing the legal age of marriage without addressing the issue of sexuality

#### Missing

- Seems to be no sex education
- Mental health services
- Policies to deal with poverty and exclusion
- The voice of young women on matters such as circumcision and early marriage
- Effective rural anti-AIDS policies
- Water in some schools; electricity in many
- No regulation of employers mistreating servants
- Investment in rural informal sector
- Official concern at Federal and Regional levels re housing problems facing rural youth
- Service to deal with infertility
- Easy access to emergency contraception