

Aze Debo'a in 2011

The 750 households (5,004 people) of Aze Debo'a are almost all Kambata and Protestant (mainly Kalehiwot and Mekaneyesus)¹. The *kebele*, flattish with a part climbing to higher grounds, is among the most densely populated in the zone. Land is acutely scarce; hundreds of mainly young households are landless. The recent establishment of women's rights through laws and certification is likely to further raise the pressure. The *kebele* centre (public buildings and a few 'modern houses') lies alongside the main road linking Durame, *wereda* and zonal capital (at 4 kms) to the outside world. Links with Durame are dense. There is public and private transport. The area got electricity (serving about 20% of the population) and mobile network coverage in 2009/10, which many interpreted as an electoral pledge. The small distant villages are unlikely to be connected any time soon but access to safe water is good everywhere.

Traditionally livelihoods rely on enset-based mixed farming and small-scale livestock rearing with trade and outmigration. Today one third of the population is on the PSNP. While there are recent instructions to start graduating people, drought seems to become more frequent. In 2008 all crops failed; 30 people died as the *wereda* allegedly delayed reporting the emergency. Cash crop production has increased in response to high demand and good market prices (coffee, eucalyptus). A dozen farmers started irrigating (fruits, vegetables). Irrigation is thought to have potential but the *wereda* has been unable to invest in it due to budget constraints. Modern inputs are available. Views on their effectiveness and practices vary. High market prices, availability of hybrid breeds and vet services nearby lead farmers to invest in livestock production. The potential of these activities is limited by high input costs and lack of credit for poor farmers and land scarcity generally. Trade of farm products ranges from small- to fairly large-scale activities. Larger-scale coffee trade is a source of wealth. There are a fair number of people employed (53) or registered as businesspeople or skilled workers (32), about 40 adult men and many young people living as daily labourers, a few people offering transport services, 3-4 month seasonal jobs for about 300 mainly young women on a coffee washing plant established in 2009 on land given to an investor. Outmigration continues to be important, with reduced male seasonal agricultural migration, new and growing female migration in cities, flower farms etc., fast rising mainly illegal migration in South Africa for males and recently in Gulf countries for females. Successful migration in South Africa made a few individuals very wealthy (by local standards). They invest in trade and businesses based in Durame or in the area.

There is a Health Post, a full-cycle and a Gr1-4 primary school in the *kebele*; two health centres (government and NGO) and a hospital, and a good government full secondary school and private education (KG to secondary level) in Durame. But Kambata's longstanding tradition of valuing education is under threat. Many are discouraged by the high rate of exam failure and high and rising un(der)employment (more than a hundred Gr10 and above youth from the *kebele* are unemployed), which makes migration all the more attractive. There is change for women (due to combined action by government, NGOs and protestant churches), with greater freedom (schooling, migration, choice in marriage and contraception), initial success in combating female circumcision and more and better established rights (though denied by the conservative stance of Protestantism on divorce). People dislike the domination of politics in government. Strong farmers think that government and party meetings are too many and irrelevant and feel free not to attend them. Everyone in the community is concerned by the lack of opportunities for youth and highlights the government inaction. Somewhat in contrast, Protestantism exerts a deep influence on the community, including the young generation. Clans remain important too and interact relatively little with government.

¹ Data on population is inconsistent across sources.