

**LONG TERM PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS
IN RURAL ETHIOPIA: STAGE 1**

**COMMUNITY SITUATION END 2011
HARRESAW, TIGRAY REGION**

STAGE 2 FINAL REPORT EVIDENCE BASE 1 – VOLUME 6

Catherine Dom

Researched by Kiros Berhanu and Solomon G/Selassie



February 2013

This report is one of the eight Community Situations 2012 reports representing a part of the Evidence Base used in the Final Report for the Stage 2 of the ‘*Long Term Perspectives on Development Impacts in Rural Ethiopia*’ research project (WIDE3). It describes the situation of the community of Harresaw in eastern Tigray at the end of 2011 using a number of different perspectives. The fieldwork which produced the database from which the report was written was undertaken in late 2011 and early 2012. The Research Officers were guided by Protocols which are described in Stage 2 Final Report Methodology Annex. Our methodology ensures that all statements in the Report are connected to interviews in the database so that in case of queries we can go back to the sources of the statements. These sources are a multitude of interviews with *wereda* officials, *tabia* officials, other community leaders and notables, rich-to-poor farmers and their wives, young-to-old dependent adults, and young people between the ages of 11 and 29. Random initials have been used to refer to information related to individual respondents wherever the case occurs. The Community Situation reports are also informed by earlier research in the sites in 1995 when village studies were produced (WIDE 1), and during the Wellbeing in Developing Countries research in 2003 (WIDE 2). Comparisons of the trajectories of change are addressed in separate parts of the Stage Two Final Report documentation. Further information on this and other sites in this research can be found on www.ethiopiawide.net.

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Community as a whole

Community parts making the whole in 2012

Harresaw is one of sixteen rural *tabias* in Atsbi Womberta, a *wereda* known to be one of two food insecure hotspots in Eastern Tigray, although with potential in honey production and irrigation.

Terrain and environment

Harresaw *tabia* is highland (2,700-3,000 masl)¹. The community is settled on relatively flat areas, except in one of the *kushet*, also named Harresaw, which has escarpments, deep gullies, and rocky hills. Government protected forest are found in Harresaw *kushet* and Ekunta *got*. There is one river starting from the *tabia* and flowing down to Afar, and one river starting from G/Kidan *tabia* and flowing through Harresaw towards Wukro.

Climate and weather

With regard to climate, in Harresaw the areas adjacent to the Afar region are highly affected by recurrent drought, and frost makes life inconvenient during the cold season. Winters can be very cold, with frost and snowstorms damaging crops and causing people's suffering from colds and skin sores. At other times hot wind blowing from Afar is also inconvenient.

Food aid

Harresaw is considered as highly prone to crop failure and has been in the Productive Safety Net Programme since the beginning in 1997 EC. In early 2012 all households had access to some government assistance to help close the food gap, either under the PSNP (the first graduates still received transfers for one year after their graduation) or under the emergency aid quota. Emergency aid seemed to be available every year although the number of beneficiaries was varying from one year to the next, unlike with the PSNP. The number of months of support also varied including under the PSNP when additional budget was available.

Some people recognised that in good years, thanks to various strategies (selling irrigated crops and eucalyptus, livestock and livestock products; daily labour; migration and remittances or ability to repay credit etc.) they and other better-off households would not need the assistance. But they were unwilling to see it stop because they would still need it in bad years, like in 2001 EC.

The PSNP has helped the community to survive in times of drought and help itself. Many people have started to own livestock. However, the 2001 EC drought affected the life of people to draw back. So, this has created fear, so that even those who have a better number of livestock do not dare for graduation. The community understands that the government's wheat support has no sustainability but the drought scares it every time (middle wealth man, 46, four children).

Spatial patterns

Harresaw comprises three villages (*kushets*) themselves divided into five hamlets (*gots*) (which used to be considered as *kushets* until 1990 EC). Boundaries did not change but the administration which used to be in Endamariam Wu'o *got* in Lim'at *kushet* was transferred to Endagebriel *got* in Ma'ekel *kushet*. Community members consider that *got* Endegabriel and *got* Endemariam Wu'o are desirable places to live mainly because there is irrigated land. *Gots* Ekunta in Ma'ekel *kushet*, and *kushet* Harresaw which is on the border with the Afar Region, are less desirable places to live (more remote, water scarcity).

¹ In Tigrinya, *tabia* is the equivalent to *kebele* in Amharic. The smaller geographical subdivisions of a *tabia* are the *kushet* (or village) and *got* (or hamlet).

Map 1: The tabia of Harresaw and its parts



Internal roads, paths and bridges

There are small dry-weather roads built with FFW and linking the *kushets* with each other and with neighbouring *tabias*. In the flat areas some roads are temporarily impassable when it rains heavily.

Community land use

In *got* Endagebriel residential land was allocated to landless youth and a small urban area is emerging, around the administrative buildings, and forms the *tabia* centre. By early 2012 there had been a number of other changes in land use. Landless people (mainly youth, with priority given to vulnerable groups including women and PLWHA) had been allocated residential land. Farming land taken from various groups of people (deceased people without heirs, owners leading a successful life somewhere else, government employees) and from 'wet' communal land had also been reallocated in small plots of 0.25 ha/person. In 2003 EC the policy of pooling and re-allocating land was applied by *got* whereas it previously was by *kushet*. This and various other land use issues had prompted conflict between two *gots* which were outstanding when the researchers left the community.

The communal grazing land had been reallocated or had become 'communal forest' (planted with trees and left to be rehabilitated). The zero-grazing policy was applied so that people fed their animals with grass that they would grow on their private landholding or buy.

Public buildings

The *tabia* office and meeting hall, FTC, health post, *tabia* wireless phone and cooperative shop are found in the *tabia* centre. The two schools are located respectively in *Endamariam Wu'o* near Dera at one extremity of the *tabia* (this is the main school, established since Haile Selassie's time) and in *Harresaw kushet* (this is a Grade 1-4 newer school). Many children from Harresaw go to Agewo primary school in *Ruba Feleg tabia* (where there is school feeding). Even so, some children from *Harresaw kushet* have to walk 7 kilometres to go to school and there are many dropouts. There are

nine churches in the *tabia*.

Modern infrastructure

In Endegabriel there also is electricity. Endamariam Wu'o is near the small town of Dera, itself in *tabia* G/Kidan and on the main road to Atsbi town. Grain mills are also found there, and there is better access to water.

A lake was created when a dam was built, in 1986 EC, and a gravity-fed irrigation scheme was developed. This has had a big influence on people's livelihoods for those who have access to land irrigable from the dam (180 households or 16% of the total number of households in the *tabia*). Moreover, when the lake is full after the rains water is percolating in the surrounding areas, which brings a lot of other benefits. The government has also encouraged people to engage in irrigated agriculture using water from hand-dug ponds and, since 1997 EC, digging communal wells. The use of modern technologies like motor pumps, treadle pumps and drip irrigation, is slowly expanding.

There is water potential in some parts of Harresaw, from underground and streams. From three communal drinking water sources in 2005 the number had increased to nine in early 2012 (hand-dug and borehole wells) although only five were functional. But there continued to be great difficulty in getting water in *got* Equnta and *kushet* Harresaw. There was an ongoing dispute between Ekunta and Endagebriel *gots* in *Ma'ekel kushet*, as Ekunta *got* had refused to give compensating land against access to a water well built in Endagebriel, which had been taken to court. The community is investing a lot of labour in watershed management because rehabilitating eroded land should lead to increased underground water and springs, but this is a long term plan. People want the regional water resource office to install pipes to take water from the places with plenty of water.

There is water in the two schools, but in the smaller school it is obtained from a roof catchment and tanker system and is not drinkable (it is not entirely clear that the system was functional as some people said that there was no water in that school). It is the same for the health post and the health centre. The other school benefits from a water pump since five years ago. The main school, health centre and health post have electricity. Generally in the area drinking water is a scarce resource. For instance, in Atsbi some people report that there is shortage of clean water for the community because water is taken by the recently started Dera Spring Water Bottling factory.

Population

The population of the *tabia* is 5,857 (*wereda* officials have a slightly higher figure of 6,003), with 2,882 (49.2%) males and 2,975 (50.8%) females. There are 1,124 households of which more than half (573) are female-headed households. All people are Tigreans and Orthodox Christians (a few people from the community married in Afar and are Muslim converts, but they live in Afar).

Community whole in context in 2012

The *wereda*

Atsbi Womberta is one of the *weredas* in the eastern zone of Tigray. The eastern zone is divided into 9 administrative *weredas* of which 2 are towns and 7 are rural *weredas*.

Atsbi Womberta *wereda* has comparatively a better status in the zone in terms of natural resources. There are large forest areas including a well-known forest called Des-a. The *wereda* is also comparatively better-off in terms of water resources. It has a high number of livestock, and in some *tabias* of the *wereda* the economy depends on livestock. The meat from the *wereda* is very popular in Mekelle (the capital of the Region). Kelisha and Era are the *tabias* famous for livestock rearing. The *wereda* shows good achievements in terms of using rehabilitated land and honey production. The climate is suitable to grow olive trees so an American investor has engaged in this. There is also a plan to grow flowers in the *wereda*.

However, Atsbi Womberta is also one of the *weredas* of the zone, with Kiltawlalo, known to be spot areas with recurrent drought. When drought occurs, both people and livestock may not have anything to eat. In the *wereda* the food gap lasts for more than 6 months and there is need for extended PSNP support year on year. This is because of the recurrent drought and many people in the *wereda* depend on farming and are therefore easily affected by drought. In 2003 EC there were 69,933 PSNP beneficiaries, and there were also 31,340 people who received emergency food aid. The number of beneficiaries of the emergency support varies annually based on an annual assessment. The emergency support comes whenever there is drought.

The *wereda* shows good development achievements. Previously the *wereda* was ranked first but recurrent drought somewhat made it lag behind and it now is second in the zone. The main achievements of the *wereda* are in terms of rehabilitation of natural resources, irrigation and coverage of potable water. In the past the *wereda* was also a model in health interventions. At this time it is only average in terms of accomplishment of health interventions. The *wereda* is also performing well in terms of livestock rearing. And there are *tabias* in the *wereda* which have achieved 100% implementation of the zero grazing land policy.

The main development potentials are the forests that are suitable for honey production; potential for irrigation; and potential for livestock rearing.

However, the *wereda* faces additional challenge compared to others in the zone because of persistent conflict with the Afar, about grazing land and forests found on the border. The Afar destroys the forests that are protected while Tigreans are told not to cut them. This is a challenge because of the conflict and because the conflict diverts attention from development.

The *wereda* is in worse position with regard to development partners like NGOs and donor programmes. There are very few NGOs operating in the *wereda* when compared with other *weredas* in the eastern zone. World Vision was operating in the *wereda* in many areas (health including the construction of health posts, education, roads, livelihoods, support to vulnerable people etc.) but it phased out in 2003 EC. World Vision left two cars and its office to the *wereda*.

External roads and bridges

The road from Atsbi to Dera which crosses the *tabia* was upgraded some five years ago and is now passable throughout the year. It takes about an hour to walk to Dera from the *tabia* centre, a little longer from the *kushet* Harresaw, and 20 minutes' walk from the *tabia* centre to the road. There is public transport on the main road on Tuesdays and Saturdays when there is market in Atsbi. Transport is also available on contract basis and towards the end of the fieldwork there was transport almost every day. Walking to Atsbi takes 2 to 3 hours and community members still do this regularly.

Comparison with other *tabias* in *wereda*

When compared to other *tabias* Harresaw is average in terms of distance to the *wereda* centre and accessibility. It is one of the eleven rural *tabias* with electricity (out of 16 *tabias* in the *wereda*) though this is only at the centre of the *tabia*, like in the others. Some *tabias* have full access to mobile network but in Harresaw some parts are not covered, and there are interruptions of the service in the areas that are covered.

People in Harresaw *tabia* have good access to basic services. In the *tabia* there is one health post and one health centre (near Dera so at one extremity of the *tabia*). There are two schools, and a third school in a neighbouring *tabia* is also used by many children from Harresaw. However, the *tabia* performance in education is poor: it is affected by the increasing number of students dropping out to migrate to Saudi. With regard to access to water (for drinking and farming) the picture is mixed as there are *kushets* with plenty of water, and a dam for irrigation, but also places with critical shortage of any kind of water.

The community is average in terms of wealth and food (in-) security (in a highly food insecure *wereda*). On the one hand it is one of the communities worst affected by drought and frost, which hinder its development. On the other hand, it has some potential linked to irrigation and honey production. The community produces grains, livestock, honey and vegetables using irrigation. Moreover, in some households remittance from Arab countries is a source of wealth. Landlessness in Harresaw is similar with other highland *tabias*. In general in the *wereda* shortage of land is more common in highland areas than in the lowlands.

With regard to development partners, *tabia* Harresaw is average too. There are few NGOs in the *wereda* as a whole. Until recently World Vision and Adonay had projects operating in Harresaw but they phased out. There are some other donors though operating through some of the government sector offices, without having their offices in the *tabia*.

There are fewer female household heads in *tabia* Harresaw when compared with other *tabias* in the *wereda*, although even in Harresaw this number is high, and increasing due to the increasing number of men migrating abroad.

Harresaw stands out for its good level of cooperation with the *wereda* and in implementing government activities. Another *tabia*, Barka Adisebha, is the best in many aspects and notably in relation to implementing the zero grazing land policy. But Harresaw has a strong *tabia* administration and council, because there are youth in leadership positions. They have strong political commitment.

Public services outside the *tabia*

Community members go to Atsbi for meetings at *wereda* level, training, to finalise cases that have to be seen at *wereda* level, for medical services as well as for schooling (preparatory education). People from Harresaw also use public services outside of the *tabia*. The community goes to the *wereda* for court services, to get legal documents, services from police and administration and to get medical services. Prisoners are detained in Adigrat, Wukro or Mekelle, which makes it difficult for their families to visit and supply them food. Patients who are referred to hospital go to Wukro or Mekelle. The new Ayder Hospital in Mekelle is good and patients referred there have been well treated, but it is costly and time-consuming to go there. The other way round, at the health centre in Harresaw there are patients from Afar and from G/kidan, Ruba Feleg and Hadinet *tabias*.

A number of grade 1-8 students from Harresaw go to Agewo School in Ruba Feleg *tabia*. And there are grade 1-8 students who come to Dera School from Hadinet *tabia*. Grade 9-10 students from Harresaw go to the Dera general secondary school. As there is no TVET in the *wereda* students go to Wukro or Mekelle (but this is quite rare). Students who pass the Gr 10 exam go to Atsbi for preparatory secondary education. Students who join university are assigned by the government to all universities in the country including Mekelle University.

Cultural linkages including marriage links

The community has marriage, religious and cultural linkages with all the neighbours except the Afar. However, in Harresaw *kushet* a number of people can understand and speak Afarigna and there are trade/market links as well as links through conflict over resources (grazing land, forest). The trade links also facilitated migration to Saudi Arabia, because people from Harresaw heard about it through people from Afar who were already doing it. There is some cultural influence as well: small girls and women wear Afar jewellery. For these reasons the people of Harresaw *kushet* are considered as a bit different by the other community members, and most international migration takes place from this *kushet*.

Migration linkages

The community has strong international linkages with an increasing number of people migration to Saudi Arabia while some live in America. The first people to migrate to both destinations did so in 1977 EC, due to the famine. On average, 400-500 people go to Saudi Arabia every year, including

those who are deported and go back within the same year. Most of the migrants to Saudi are landless youth and school dropouts, though some are adult farmers. They send remittances to their families. There also is migration to Afar, usually for a few months – including children going to herd animals during the school break. Seasonal migration for farming activities in Adigrat, Humera and Wukro has decreased as there are local daily labour opportunities that pay well. A few people go for temporary contracts (2-15 days) on construction sites in Atsbi or Dera. There are a few families with members living in the US but this is insignificant at the community level.

Markets and market linkages

The community has linkages for market with Dera and Atsbi mainly, and also with Afar. There are markets in Atsbi on the Saturday and in Dera on the Tuesday. In Dera the community sells livestock, dairy products, honey and wood and buys factory products, consumable items, shoes and clothes. People often walk and do not use transportation. Community members also go to Atsbi for market (selling and buying). All consumable items and household utensils in Harresaw are bought from the markets in Atsbi and Dera. From the town called Kuneba in Afar, such items as salt and livestock are bought. And factory products and shop items are taken to Afar. Markets in both Dera and Atsbi are expanding. In Dera a livestock market started two years ago.

Conflicts with neighbours

There has been conflict with neighbouring *tabias* due to land use issues (except with Hadinet). There was a time when people killed each other in such conflicts. Conflict still occurs although not as bad as in the past. There has been recurrent conflict between *kushet* Harresaw and the Afar who come annually to the grazing areas near the border and cut trees in Harresaw and trespass the boundaries for grazing their livestock too. Similarly there has been conflict between *kushet* Harresaw and *tabia* G/Kidan, also for grazing land. In all these conflicts the *tabia* administration, *wereda* administration and elders *got* involved, but there was no long term solution.

Important events/changes affecting the community in the last 4-10 years

Crises since 2005

The most significant event that affected the community in the past few years was the 2001 EC drought. Rain should have come by mid-June 2000 EC but there was none until February 2001 EC. This resulted in massive death of cattle, goats and sheep. A significant number of people were also affected by famine, and about thirty people, more vulnerable because of being old or suffering from some illness, died due to hunger. In the community 1,500 cattle and 2,000 sheep and goats died and many people who had taken them on credit through the government livestock packages, some of them under pressure, fell into debt. There was mass migration of youth aged 18-30 to Afar and Saudi Arabia; some younger orphans migrated to the nearest towns like Atsbi and ended up in the streets, and female children *got* employed as servants in tea rooms and mill houses found in these towns.

The government took some measures. It used different channels to get food handouts to people (PSNP FFW and direct support and emergency food aid) and brought husk and straw for livestock. However, the government support came in February, which was very late. And there was no waiving of loan repayment.

In 2001 EC there was a pest invasion in caulis and onions, linked to lack of water, and which prevented the vegetables from growing and destroyed them. There was delay in treating the pest as people were expected to get organised in groups to get the treatment from the *wereda* rural development office. Some people say that the treatment was not available at the office at the time when it would have been possible to do something.

In 2003 EC there was an instance of continuous rain for four hours which led to flood. It did not harm people and animals but destroyed crops and terraces made by PSNP public works. It affected

all three *kushets* although *kushet* Harresaw was most severely affected.

In 2002 EC an epidemic killed about 20 people in Harresaw *kushet*. People were bedridden for 3-7 days with vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and loss of appetite, and died eventually. Personnel from the *wereda* health office came to assess the situation. They said that the epidemic was caused by poor hygiene and sanitation and advised the community members to improve on it. But they did not give details and so the cause of the epidemic remains unknown to the community.

Other important events and changes since 2005

Cultural change and events

People are said to have changed from the traditional to the urban way of thinking and this is said to increase over time. People have better hygiene than before. More people use 'modern' household goods like beds, movable or improved fuel-saving ovens, plastic or metal utensils instead of utensils made from clay, and glasses. People have also started using bednets. Bednets and improved ovens are distributed by the government. People use torches as lamps, which youth from the community equip with an on/off button.

While most of the houses are still traditional a few metal roof houses are found mainly in the centre of the *tabia* (they are very rare elsewhere). In 2002 EC a few houses were painted in coloured paint, also in the *tabia* centre.

People started using bicycles in 2002 EC, with some people training others against payment. In early 2012 there were eight bicycles, most of them found at the centre of the *tabia*.

There were changes in the type of clothing. Since 2000 EC girls started to wear trousers; adult women do so too under their dresses. Also men and women, including older people, started using factory made clothes (locally named *nayferengi kidan* or white man's clothes) on working days. They prefer these because they are easier to work with and to wash, while they use the traditional cloth made from cotton spun at home on religious holidays.

There is more communication between community members and with people living outside thanks to the use of mobile phones. Since 2003 EC mobile phones brought by people who migrated to Saudi Arabia are also used to listen to radio and music.

New leisure activities came to the *tabia* with the introduction of TVs, DVD players and satellite dishes. There are five TVs including one given to the *tabia* administration by the *wereda* as reward, which is in the *tabia* hall and used for teaching people on various technologies. Other TVs are found in tea rooms. Most people watching TV for entertainment are male youth. Most people in the community prefer wrestling shows and dramas. People also use TVs as a source of information by watching the news. In 2002 EC one corombulla was brought to the *tabia* and is used by male youth. (Corombulla is like billiard but the scoring system is different and there is no stick).

There is no change about local jobs but people are becoming interested in producing marketable products, and there are more opportunities for well-paid local daily labour on irrigated farms and the land of migrants. Some people get government job opportunities. People also go outside of the *tabia* to search for jobs.

Since 2000 EC the youth went to get higher education. They want to be involved in jobs other than agriculture, or work in cooperatives or migrate to Arab countries. Migration of male and female youth to Saudi Arabia has become very common. The youth expect a big change with the completion of Hidase dam. There is also a hope that there could be gasoline in Dalol (in Afar, quite near), although there was no further news after it was reported in 2000 EC.

Priests who used to serve for free nowadays also want to work outside and get an income. Many deacons went to Saudi Arabia since 2002 EC and there is a fear that churches may be closed if this trend continues.

People have begun not to respect the fixed holidays when they need to cut grass for their livestock, as they can no longer send them for free grazing.

Economic change and events

Land use changed as more people with irrigable land started using it and became productive and with the zero-grazing policy. The land reallocation policy started in 2000 EC.

New technologies introduced to the community are treadle pump (*stina*), drip irrigation and modern beehives, as well as wet-keeping technologies like BBM. The use of fertiliser, improved seeds and pesticides increased as some community members started to produce in the winter season using irrigation. Compost used as fertiliser started in 2000 EC. Apple trees were introduced in 1997 EC but started to give fruit in the last two years. The service to cross-breed animals has started in 2000 EC and the community has thus started getting and selling hybrid cows, sheep, goats and chicken.

There was limited new employment opportunity than the PSNP public works. Just outside of the *tabia* a water bottling factory established by investors from Mekelle started in Atsbi in 2001 EC, which created job opportunities for 98 Grade 10 and diploma holders in the *wereda*. (The factory is in Atsbi but the water is called Dera). The investors also participate in the local development activities; for example, they provide spring water during meetings for free. Their employees pay tax, which is an additional source of income to the *wereda*.

There was no new commercial investment except the factory in Dera. In addition to the Dedebit microfinance, a new saving and credit scheme started in 2003 EC in the *tabia*, but it has not started to give credit so far. Mass migration to Saudi Arabia, to pay debt as people had been strongly encouraged to take credit from Dedebit, and due to famine caused by drought in 2001 EC, brought change both positive and negative – as some people are successful but there are also many challenges and people dying on the way.

Since 2000 EC public transport to Atsbi is available.

Political change and events

There were elections in 1997 EC and 2002 EC. In 1999 EC three land judges were appointed to deal with land cases instead of the social court, at the same time as the land administration was established. A *tabia* manager was appointed and the *tabia* chairperson stopped being paid in 2000 EC. A policeman was permanently posted in the *tabia* in 2001 EC. In 2003 EC the government started development groups of men and women in order to implement various government interventions.

Social change and events

In 2003 EC the *tabia* hall was inaugurated in the presence of the community members, the *tabia* administration and *wereda* officials. Three oxen were slaughtered for this. The hall was constructed with the community contributing grain from PSNP and emergency support (1kg of grain by person and by month), and the *wereda* gift of 2000 *birr* and 20 bags of cement.

Some white visitors came to visit rock hewn churches in the *tabia*, called Mariam Megdeline and Mariam Wa-ayti, and took pictures of the churches.

Development progress

According to *wereda* officials the current livelihood potentials in *tabia* Harresaw are rainfed farming, livestock rearing, irrigation and honey production. These potentials are not equally distributed across the *tabia*. For irrigation the main potential comes from a dam which serves only one group in the community. Other strategies to develop irrigation are to rehabilitate areas which can generate water once rehabilitated.

The main challenges hampering progress in livelihood development in Harresaw are: the recurrent drought, which negatively affects both farming and livestock rearing; frost, which discourages

farmers from planting tomatoes and leads them to continue to plant grain including on irrigated land; and land scarcity. For interventions to work better the agriculture office should give further training on improved seeds and use of fertiliser and compost, continue to distribute improved beehives, further expand hybrid animals, and continue with afforestation and rehabilitation activities so as to raise underground and surface water levels. These will bring food security in the area.

There are not many employment opportunities in *tabia* Harresaw. People work on PSNP and on their own land; a few people work on others' land. Due to lack of employment opportunities many youth illegally migrate to Arab countries. Better employment opportunities should be created: what is needed is to get youth involved in income-generating activities and micro and small enterprises, to mitigate this migration.

The *tabia* has good potential for health services as there is a health post and a health centre nearby. The establishment of development teams has created good potential for health interventions at the grassroots level. Current challenges include low awareness in ensuring that pregnant women deliver at the health centre; budget constraint for getting enough drugs; some resistance from the community to environmental hygiene and sanitation interventions as '*verbally people accept the different teachings but there is a big problem in practicing what they know*'. To solve the shortage of drug supply health centres should establish a board and the budget problems should be solved. The solution to increase the number of pregnant women who deliver at the health centre is to work closely with women's development teams. There also needs to be close follow up and supervision of the HEWs and health volunteers.

Tabia Harresaw has two schools, although one of them is nearer to the adjacent *tabia* called G/Kidan. Many students from the *tabia* also go to a school in a nearby *tabia*. The main problem in education is that many students still have to travel a long way to go to school, up to 7 kilometres for some of them. This is worst in *kushet* Harresaw. There are children who drop out of school because of the long distance. For the future the current schools should be expanded and new schools should be constructed and better success will be registered.

The community has access to credit services from Dedebit microfinance and credit from the agriculture office through the cooperative. The current challenge is that people take credit and migrate to Arab countries. There is a problem in paying debts on time. Exhaustive awareness-raising activities in using money appropriately should be done to address this.

The roads found in *tabia* Harresaw are not good and not all *gots* are easily accessible. For instance, the forests in *kushet* Harresaw are not accessible by car, which is problematic as experts should take machines to extract the honey from modern beehives that farmers are encouraged to put there. For the future the community should pave more roads through community labour.

There is electricity in Ma-ekel *kushet*, and a phone at the *tabia* administration. The mobile network is accessible in some parts of the Harresaw. For the future the electricity and mobile network coverage should be expanded to all *kushets* – but later on *wereda* officials explained that there is no specific plan for this (see below).

There is water potential, with underground water, streams and dams, and roof catchment though the latter is very rarely used. Water scarcity in some parts of the *tabia* is the biggest challenge. The most affected places are *got* Ekunta and *kushet* Harresaw, the places adjacent to Afar region, where there is great difficulty in getting underground water. Rehabilitating eroded land can lead to increased underground water and springs. However, for the future the regional water resource bureau should intervene and find ways of getting water in these places, for instance taking water through pipes from those places with plenty of water resources.

The status of governance in the *tabia* is good. People freely discuss their interests and make appeals on complaints and get justice. Apart from occasional conflicts with Afar there is peace and security in the area. The militias and the policeman in the *tabia* work hard to maintain it.

Wereda plans for the future

Wereda officials explained that the *wereda* has no infrastructure development plan for the *tabia*.

There is also no plan to construct a TVET in the *wereda* – as there is a government policy of TVET facilities being in cluster and the nearby cluster is Wukro.

In relation to NRM the *wereda* plan for the *tabia* is to reach full implementation of the zero-grazing policy (as is already the case in some other *tabias*) and to further work on watershed management. In particular, the rehabilitated area in the Zereroha watershed should be developed. It should be used to support more intensive livestock rearing activities, like in Era, Kelisha and Hayelom *tabias*, and land should be allocated to youth in groups and individually. Tree planting is planned to continue as well. For these NRM activities, the *wereda* will contribute some budget as in the past (e.g. for the nursery) and the community will contribute in the form of labour.

The *wereda* has also plans to further develop irrigation and honey production in the area. For the future there is a plan to employ an irrigation DA at least on a contract basis for those areas with potential irrigation, including *tabia* Harresaw. If they show good performance they could become permanently employed. Officials also think that engaging youth in income-generating activities and SME is important but there did not seem to be special new plans for this.

Community opinions about plans for the future

For *tabia* officials, roads which connect the *kushets* to each other and to the main road are very important. At the moment there are not enough roads and they should be better paved to facilitate access (for the PSNP grain, ambulance, cars to bring people and goods and take products etc.). The community also appreciates the environmental works (planting trees, terracing and soil and water conservation activities) done through PSNP public works and free labour, because it understands well the benefits of these in preventing soil erosion and rehabilitating small gorges. People appreciate the introduction of hybrid breeds, which has raised the income of those who use it. PSNP and emergency support are a very popular government intervention in the *tabia*.

One big issue is that there is no satisfactory coverage of potable water. In places where there is serious shortage (Ekunta *got* and Harresaw *kushet*) there are cases of diarrhoea among women and children. There are also conflicts related to land and water in the community. A hand-pump water well was dug and built in Endagebriel *got* in Ma'ekel *kushet* to be used by the people from Ekunta *got* but the people from Endagebriel asked for replacement land in exchange of the land on which the well is located and on which people walk to fetch water. People from Ekunta refused to give compensation land and so, they are denied the right of using the water point planned for them. The case was taken to the *wereda* court but there still was no decision at the end of the fieldwork.

There is good progress in preventive health services: interventions are effective because there is good acceptance by the community. People are having better access to curative services at the health centre and health post found in the *tabia*. There is also good education service.

Community people highlighted the benefits of roads and access to transport, and the mobile phone coverage. They pointed at the progress in access to health services and education. The more successful female-headed household stressed that justice was improving. Several household heads and wives noted that more people were involved in trade and retail of goods and this was a good opportunity. Several also mentioned the development of irrigation as something very important for the community; others added honey production.

The head of the poor household, who is also the prosecutor of the *tabia*, said that there was good progress in infrastructure development but drinkable water coverage was not sufficient. The successful female-headed household head explained that the community was appealing to the government for more water points in the areas where there is no water. Several people agreed that this was a major problem for which there was no satisfactory government intervention.

Several people from among the household heads and wives interviewed expressed unhappiness with the government method of enforcing people to do things (taking credit, taking inputs), or regretted that contributions were not decided individually but at the community level (like when they are taken in the form of deductions from PSNP transfers) and that 'free' community labour was not free at all, but compulsory. Many also explained that long and frequent meetings were a bad thing and contradicting what the government was teaching to people about hard work.

Almost all of the household heads and wives expressed concern about the young generation. They said that the government should make sure that young people could continue more easily to higher grades, and should do more to create job opportunities (build factories, give them even small plots of land, get them organised to sell sand, wood and stone...).

Key sub-system: households in 2012

Household structures

Households are key social systems, embedded in the community as a wider social system, and with three economic functions: produce livelihoods, reproduce household members on a daily basis and, at certain stages in the household development cycle, produce and raise children to work in the future. In the mid-1990s one could identify an 'ideal-type' household development cycle in Tigray (new household, young/small nuclear family, mature nuclear family, emptying nest, dependent old household). Real households' cycles followed this ideal-type to varying extents.

In Harresaw in 2012 a number of often combined factors were making many households diverge starkly from the ideal-type. These factors, illustrated in the examples of households' lives described in the next section and in the rest of the data as well, include

- The later age at which male and female young adults marry and establish independent households, linked to longer studies, the government-led ban on underage marriage (which prevents marriages for young women before they are 18 years old), and the difficulty of developing a sustainable livelihood basis
- The increasingly frequent aspirations, among young men in particular but not exclusively, to pursue further education and get employed; the large number of those failing, facing landlessness in the community, and migrating in Saudi Arabia as a response
- The expanding set of choice for young women with regard to their marriage partner and when they want to marry, family planning and children's spacing etc.
- The large and reportedly still rising number of female-headed households, no longer due to deaths of husbands in armed conflicts but to long term migration
- The reportedly increasing practice of concubinage, and unmarried women having children with one or several men without expecting that they would ever marry them
- The expanded set of links that many 'emptying nest' households have with sons or daughters who live abroad or in urban areas
- The numbers of men and even women migrating and leaving children behind with grand-parents or other relatives; and of married young women continuing to live with their parents while their husband is abroad
- Older children studying and living somewhere outside of the household, with various arrangements in terms of maintaining links with the household
- Young unmarried women returning from migration abroad with some capital and establishing themselves independently
- Increasing engagement of women and girls in livelihood activities previously seen as 'men's work'

including farming and non-farming work (trade, retailing) and daily and contract labour

- The change that children's schooling, migration and households' diversification strategies (including greater engagement in trading, and access to FFW employment) bring in the way household labour is available and used, with an increase in the use of hired labour (whereas in earlier days labour might have come from a young relative staying with the household).

Over the years it is likely that these trends, combined with other community-wide and broader socioeconomic and cultural trends, would lead to a redefined ideal-type. This may not yet be the case as for many households the mainstream cycle remains relevant.

Stories of individual households show substantial differences in wealth status and ability to withstand and recover from crises (that affect them individually or the community as a whole). Households are organised around the nuclear family but sizes and dependency configurations vary a lot (number of children, assistance to/inclusion of relatives, migration, education of children etc.), and continuously evolve over time as each household travels on the development cycle.

The weather continues to have an enormous influence over the families' well/ill-being: the 2001 EC drought was a big shock and, combined with the push for people to take credit and the policy of not waiving loan repayments in spite of the drought, led to a stark increase in the number of migration abroad – as the only option for many to be able to repay their loans. Where households are settled also matters a lot, given the pronounced differences between areas in terms of availability of water and therefore of economic potential.

Families can also be severely affected by health shocks or unaddressed issues such as mental illness, and death. There does not seem to be a straightforward relationship between poverty and lack of connection to the community management structures and political leadership, at least for the male-headed household. The poor female-headed household is less well connected, which seems to have to do at least in part with the head's workload.

Households in Harresaw: some examples

Important political leader's household

HB is 54 years' old and used to be an army lieutenant. He and his wife LH (45) define their wealth as average. They reckon that the household is better off than five years ago, thanks to their use of irrigation and remittances from one of their sons (8-grade, 19 years) who migrated to Saudi Arabia two years ago. Also, all household members strongly cooperate. HB has started producing cash crops like peas, beans and lentils as their price on the market is good. For instance in 2010 he sold for 8,000 *birr* of peas to repay his debt. Five years ago HB was selling livestock and honey, but the 2001 EC drought made him sell many livestock and shift to cash crops. He still has a number of beehives and both local and hybrid livestock and would like more hybrid ones.

Generally HB finds the advice he gets from government employees helpful for him and those in the community who use it well. Fertiliser and improved seeds double production. The household uses water from a pond they dug as they do not have land irrigated from the dam. LH is working on their irrigated production too. They get new fodder, and advice to focus on fewer livestock of better quality (which is also linked to the zero-grazing policy). Those engaged in fattening do very well in a few months. The vet service is available and very important. She is feeding the animals whereas he is the one taking them for vaccination and treatment.

HB gets FFW but as he is disabled he does not do the public works and instead contributes through mobilising people who took credit from the cooperative to repay. The year before last, LH was working on the PSNP public works. They get assistance for the full family (HB, LH, their three children at home and LH's mother who lives with them). HB says that the FFW programme is helpful but also creates dependency. The public works are useful to rehabilitate the environment, but at times clash with people's own activities. In his view the deduction of grain from people's transfers is not

voluntary because most of the community do not trust that it is fully used for the intended purposes.

HB and LH have six children, all male. Three are still with them. One is in Saudi, another is a teacher elsewhere (which LH is not happy with, but it is better than migrating). Their oldest (26) is married and lives in Humera where he is renting land. Their three youngest (8, 10 and 18) all go to school and help on the farm. Their education has reduced the labour available for farm work but HB believes education is very important. He remembers that he was dismissed from a leadership position because he is not an educated man (he is grade 6). The children go to different schools. LH says that the bigger older school in Dera is better as teachers explain well, do not beat children and do not ask students to bring wood and coal as they do in the other school. But the school in Dera is too far for the younger ones. Schooling is expensive: it can get up to 120 *birr* for the 7th grade child (registration, uniform, note books and pens) and there are various other contributions.

Both HB and LH are concerned because young boys and girls get better educated but many fail to continue beyond 10th grade and there are no job opportunities and no land. HB also explained that youth do no longer concentrate on school as they dream of going to Saudi, and they have lost hope with anything else. His wife thinks that government should make it easier for young people to continue their studies, and create more job opportunities for them.

The family has completed all the health extension packages and has been given a prize. LH thinks that teachings and even threats of punishment if people do not keep their hygiene etc. are good. She was made aware about TB. She heard about malaria on the radio, was given a bednet and is using it, was told to remove stagnant water from the house surroundings – which she does as stagnant water is not good for livestock. Her husband had malaria when he was working in Afar. Apart from this they have had no reason to call on health services (although LH explains that one of their school age sons is regularly affected by ill-health).

Access to safe water is a very big issue. The closest water point ran dry after two years so they take water from the Zereroha stream. The stream is gradually rehabilitated with the community's work on the watershed so that now washing and drinking water points are separated and the drinking water point is protected. The household lives in a place where there is no electricity but they use a torch as lamp at home because kerosene has become expensive; and their children at times go in houses with electricity to study. They use a mobile phone (belonging to HB) to communicate with their children and with LH's relatives in Mekelle, and to ask the price of grain. Access to public transport and ambulance services thanks to the road is very beneficial. The wife explained that her daughter had complications during delivery but she could be taken to Atsbi and delivered safely. (She may have referred to a close relative).

LH explains that generally families take much better care of babies, toddlers and children of all ages and without discriminating between male and female children (better hygiene, clothing, food; education and less work; vaccination). The ability of young adults to act independently has increased over the past ten years, and parents even ask information from their children as they go to school and to towns. The community cooperates well with the ban on early marriage according to LH, but not with the teachings to avoid violence against wives. However, her husband does not beat her because he is an educated man.

LH has started using vegetables for the family's diet since two years, and also corn when there is enough water. They also eat more meat and eggs as it is good for people's health. But they consume less milk and butter as she says animals kept at home do not produce as much. LH believes that there is no change with husbands in relation to domestic work. Wives have more workload as their daughters go to schools. Women and girls get increasingly involved in farm work (harvesting and weeding), trade, daily labour and contract work, and migration (even women with three or four children). But according to LH, many people still believe that 'women are weak'.

The household cooperates with poorer households living nearby (sharing their ploughing oxen against labour) and friends and relatives living elsewhere (for instance sending them their livestock

when there are better grass and water resources there). They participate to community celebrations and *mehaber*. They go to church, where development messages are regularly passed onto people.

HB is deputy chairman of the cooperative and chairman of the disabled fighters' association, member of the militia, *tabia* council and farmers' association and member of the party. He is chairman of one development group but he has asked to resign from this position as it is too much workload with the rest. He believes that party membership and contribution are important because it helps to have strong regional leaders. But there is less discussion among party members. He participates in the evaluation (*gimgema*) of officials. He used the suggestion box to make observations about problems he had observed at the health centre, which were raised at a meeting and the concerned people were told to solve the problems. In contrast, LH does not have any special role in the community. She thinks that the party membership fee is paid for nothing and believes that the various fees that people pay should be used to buy grinding mills for the community.

HB does not have much to say on justice bodies, except for good things about the social court. HB believes that many of the new ideas (brought by *wereda* officials and radio and TV programmes) are good, but the influence of people who successfully return from migration has a negative impact in pushing more young people to migrate.

Economically successful man's household

GA (66) and MH (54) have seven sons. The last born, who is 18, is the only one living with them today. He is working on the farm, after he dropped from school permanently five years ago because there was no one else to assist GA in farming. Neither GA nor MH has had formal education. A 14-year old grand-daughter is living with them. She is pursuing her education (she is grade 7) although she tried once to run away to Adigrat with a friend of hers.

Three of their sons live in Dera: two are married and have their own shops and the third one is helping. The other three are in Saudi Arabia. One is divorced; two are married with their wife living in Harresaw and in Wukro, respectively. GA explains that their household's livelihood has improved mainly thanks to the support he gets from his children. However, MH thinks their living status is decreasing because they have to sell animals and do not produce enough. Their sons' support has increased – and was important during the 2001 EC drought (one of them sent 4,000 *birr* to buy animal fodder), but they send most of the money to their own families.

GA has started producing vegetables and onions, which he was not doing five years ago. He is producing peas and beans as cash crops as they sell for a good price. For his farm he uses water from a pond that he built with credit which he found beneficial. Fertiliser is expensive; compost and improved seeds are important. He has a good number of livestock although he had to sell some and lost others during the 2001 EC drought. At that time he lost 50 out of his 80 traditional beehives. But recently he sold an ox after fattening, for 5,000 *birr*. He has also planted eucalyptus trees and is getting some income from selling them. The household gets emergency aid.

MH reports the same change as LH (the wife in the politically important man's household) with regard to raising children. MH highlights that only adolescent boys are given pocket money and young women do not usually go for recreation, unlike young men. She also talks about the changes in women's and girls' livelihood activities which she links to the fact that many husbands migrate to Saudi Arabia. She thinks that generally there is greater recognition that women are not weak. Both GA and MH think that youth unemployment is a big issue and that the government should create employment opportunities for them. But they seem not too concerned about migration, and GA has supported his brother to migrate by giving him 2,000 *birr*.

MH uses drinking water from her own well though it does not have water throughout the year, and from the Zereroha water point, 15 minute walk away. The household has implemented all the health extension packages. They had little to do with health services as no one was seriously ill. They have started eating bread and injera as well as vegetables thanks to the government advice. They also

consume more pulses, and oil, but less meat because they have fewer sheep.

They do not have electricity but use a torch as light because kerosene is expensive. Since two years they have a mobile phone that they use to communicate with their children, which is much easier than using the *tabia* wireless phone. The road and access to transport is very good for seeking health treatment in Atsbi and Wukro where the services are better, and also MH can easily visit her daughter-in-law and grand-children living in Wukro, and buy anything she wants to bring back home.

They cooperate with other households but GA explains that the community has learned to sell labour for money. The government is mobilising the community not to spend too much on ceremonies. In his case he reduced the expenses for his son's wedding in 2000 EC (though this still amounted to 5,000 *birr* and one ox; while he *got* 450 *birr* in contributions). GA and MH are members of the service cooperative but they do not think much of it and say that leaders are corrupt. They saved 400 *birr* at the newly established *tabia* savings and credit cooperative; they also have an account at Dedebit with about 20,000 *birr*. They are members of *mehaber*.

GA is a model farmer and a member of the farmers' association and the *tabia* council and party member. He wants to remain a party member as long as the party recognises his services. Party members used to be respected in the past but nowadays people become members without thinking about it. Members just contribute money and are called only when there is a problem and '*kill their time in meetings for nothing*'. His views on government interventions are mixed. What they do to get the community working on rehabilitating the environment and producing more is good. But they should create income generating activities for the youth. MH explains that hard workers can get improvement in their life, but the government should not make people to take improved seeds and fertiliser and pay for them when there is no harvest.

Household of farmer of middle wealth

GG (50) and MD (49) have four daughters and three sons. The three youngest daughters (16, 14 and 8) live with them and go to school. The two oldest sons (30 and 26, no formal education) are married. One lives in Atsbi. The other and their married daughter (20) live in Harresaw and are neighbours. The third son (18, grade 10) left recently to migrate in Saudi Arabia, where he joined his uncles. GG said he was able to save 30,000 *birr* on his son's bank account and has used 9,000 *birr* that his son sent for him, to pay his debt (2,000 *birr*) and buy farm inputs and an ox (7,000 *birr*).

GG believes his livelihood status was better five years ago because he lost many livestock to the drought in 2001 EC. But his irrigation activities supported by fertiliser and improved seeds and professional advice from the DAs brought considerable change in his production. He produces twice a year including wheat, beans, peas and vegetables as cash crops. He has planted 1,000 eucalyptus trees though they are still too small to be sold. He used credit for a livestock package, which helped him, and the vet service is always available and helpful. MD says that they lost a lot in 2001 EC but generally the household's status is improving, as they get support from her two brothers who are in Saudi. In return she supports her brothers' families with giving them grain. The household *got* a prize twice for having changed their life with irrigation, first in 1990 EC and then more recently. They second time they were given a gold medal, 100 kgs of grain and two modern beehives.

The household benefits from the FFW programme. Only GG worked and he *got* for the five family members currently in the household. The work was sometimes untimely, but it was possible to work on other days. The soil and water conservation activities have brought significant change, such as places now covered with trees and ground streams flowing throughout the year. This is beneficial for the community and his household.

Their daughters who are at school like it and regularly attend. The one in 9th grade benefits from tutorial classes for girls. The household was given a certificate for implementing all the health extension packages. They know about HIV/AIDS transmission means and where to get services, and about TB and how to avoid getting it. MD went once to the health centre for an injury and was well

treated. Her husband, who *got* seriously ill, went to Wukro where he was diagnosed with asthma and treated. There is good improvement though at times his illness relapses. She is cultivating vegetables in the backyard, for sale and the household's consumption. She was not doing this five years ago. They also consume more eggs and pulses, as well as oranges and bananas that she buys on the market. They also eat macaroni and pasta which they did not do five years ago.

MG gets water from three different water points. The nearest one is 5 min walk away but it does not have water throughout the year so in the dry season she has to go farther. The household does not have electricity. They use a torch to go outside, and a kerosene lamp and sometimes candles for light inside, though this is expensive. The road and public transport are very good. Importantly, it cuts the costs of bringing home the food aid they get as they do no longer have to stay with relatives in Atsbi and give them a part of it, when they go to fetch it.

GG has a mobile phone and they could stop using the *tabia* wireless phone. They communicate with their relatives in Saudi. They also can ask market prices and this helps them to sell their products at a better price. The girls also use it to listen to music, watch clips and send messages to their friends. But GG explains that mobile phones can also have negative sides: in a court case he has, his opponent phoned the judges to bribe them and they gave a biased decision.

MD highlights various good changes with regard to raising children and for women, who are more involved in all sorts of activities. Also, husbands who are not educated continue to have profoundly conservative views, but those who are educated have a better attitude and help their wife. Her husband stopped beating her ten years ago after he went to war and was educated. She can also see some change in sons, who fetch water and bring grain to the mill, and a few cook stew. There is not much change in women's involvement in local politics, but there is greater recognition that women are not weak.

The household cooperates with neighbours and friends in times of ceremonies and for work. Work-related interactions have increased with the introduction of the development groups in which they are advised to work together on weeding, harvesting etc.

The household is member of the service cooperative but they do not sell their products there as they get a better price on the market. They also are members of the new savings and credit cooperative and saved about 500 *birr* (20 *birr*/month). GG is reserve deputy chairman and a member of the irrigation committee which oversees water distribution and canal maintenance. He is a militia (he was a fighter during the Derg and re-joined the army for the Ethio-Eritrean conflict).

GG is a party member but dislikes the many and long meetings: they are mainly about how to improve livelihoods yet they clash with people's activities. GG thinks there is an '*overload of programmes*' and this causes community resistance. GG used the suggestion box but as his suggestions (for stricter management of the *tabia* assets and budget) were not considered he will not do this again. GG trusts the social court but not the land judges who he says are corrupt. They also had a case about a house they bought in Atsbi and lost because the previous owner who had reclaimed it bribed the *wereda* court – which GG finds "*very shameful for the government*".

MD is not involved in any official role in the community and does not want to. She and her husband are members of *mehaber*. She is a member of the women's association but does not know what is done by the association.

In GG's view development groups are not good in relaying information from the *tabia* leadership. In contrast, it is effective to pass development messages at the church because many people who do not go to meetings are found there. Both GG and his wife think that there is much good in the better education opportunities, health services, infrastructure development, new ideas about work etc. but are equally concerned by the failure of many youth to pursue further education and lack of job opportunities for them.

Household of poor farmer

DG (57) and LA (47) have seven children. Their two older sons (27 and 24) left for Saudi Arabia, where they do casual work. Two other sons (21 and 17) live with them as well as their three daughters. The youngest one (11) has a mental illness, as well as the oldest one (30) who was married but *got* divorced, and whose daughter (11) lives with the household too.

DG thinks that his household's economic status has somewhat improved over the past few years, because his sons have started sending remittances and he has been able to repay his debt. LA does not agree: she says they cannot improve as they have children at school, her mentally-ill older daughter cannot stay alone, and her husband is distracted by his responsibility as the law prosecutor of the *tabia*. But she recognises that their sons help. The household gets food aid though she is exempted from work because of her daughter and him because he is disabled.

DG had taken 1,650 *birr* on credit to buy chicken, bees and beehives but he used the money for other things. So as he could not repay it reached 4,000 *birr*. He repaid by sending his son to Saudi Arabia. He thinks that the credit policy has negatively affected the community. Many people who are forced to take credit fall into debt. If they refuse to take credit they are told they have to sign a paper stating that they do not need any other support and do not need to be on the FFW programme. In the same way, people who do not take fertiliser for their irrigated land are denied water from the dam.

He produces for consumption only, though he sometimes sells some of what he produces. He was able to buy some livestock, including a hybrid calve and an ox for fattening, after the drought so they do well. He also received three sheep from World Vision and they reproduce well. The family still is in debt because their daughter took 4,000 *birr* credit in 1996 EC to engage in trade. She should have repaid in 1999 EC and did not so it has now reached 8,000 *birr*. She tried to migrate but *got* sick and came back. DG was accused and asked to pay for her but he argued that as a disabled man this was not fair. And as she is not benefiting from any package she cannot be punished for not repaying.

LA explains that all her children like to go to school. She does not have much information about the school and the quality of education they get there. One of her sons completed Grade 12. He studied in Atsbi since grade 9. She sold a cow to cover the expenses. He was clever and had scored enough to continue to university. But it was too expensive to continue and he lost hope because many educated youth are left jobless, so he migrated to Saudi Arabia. She is unhappy about this. DG explains that his son lost hope because many educated young people are jobless. Yet on the way to Saudi they can cross diseases and even die on the way.

Their household is a model for the health extension packages. LA is also aware of HIV/AIDS and TB, and had an HIV test. In the past year no one from the household *got* seriously ill or suffered an accident so they did not have to call on health services. One of her daughter who was found malnourished was given supplement, which she did not share with anyone else in the family. LA also sees good change in the way children are being raised, thanks to government teachings, and also better communication between parents and their children when they become young adults. Women and girls get more engaged in all sorts of activities but they still do the domestic work. There is not much change in husbands' and sons' involvement as they are busy with their work outside. Some women spend less time fetching water and going to the grain mill, but this is not true for all.

She is using water from a spring, quite far (30 minute walk) and not very clean. There was a water pump with a committee, but as there was no fence some parts of the pump were stolen. They were told that if they fenced it the *wereda* would fix the pump and they did this, but the promise was not fulfilled. The household does not have electricity, but she is using a torch as lamp because of the high cost of kerosene. The mobile phone service is very useful to communicate with their children in Saudi and elsewhere. Their son sent it from Saudi. LA says that transportation is expensive and so she and her husband sometimes use it, other times they walk to Atsbi.

The household now consumes wheat and barley including in the form of injera. She buys vegetables and when she does not have enough she gives them to her husband and children. They do not eat milk, butter and eggs, and no meat because they have no animal to slaughter.

They cooperate with other households though there is less mutual help for weeding and harvesting, and the government is trying to revive this practice through the development groups and networks. There is no one in the household who is a member of a *mehaber*. DG got involved in an *iddir* started with the development group but it failed.

DG is a member of the farmers' association and of the party but he does not see any benefit from this. The party focuses on the number of members, not their quality. Party members these days are no longer strong to keep the secrets of the party. Meetings are too frequent and this causes poverty. People should not be forced to contribute from the food aid grain: it is forced because it is decided by the majority. They should not be forced to take credit and fertiliser as it makes them fall into debt. Many people have to migrate to Saudi because of this and many die on the way. Like GG, DG has good things to say about the social court, but he blames the wereda court for nepotism and giving unfair judgments. He would like land cases to be seen by the social court rather than the land judges.

LA does not know what the party or indeed the women's association have brought to the community as a whole or to her household.

Most of the new things and ideas coming to the community are important, but '*some ideas have frightening messages*'. For instance people who went to Saudi lose their religious norms and values. LA notes that some change, like keeping girls at school rather than marrying them and women's increasing participation in local politics, happens because of government policies. Other change like women's growing involvement in trading and labour work is unrelated to government. She and her husband think that getting good jobs is very difficult for the educated youth, and so many migrate.

Household of successful woman head

AA is 62. She lives with two of her sons (26 and 16), one daughter (23) and three grand-daughters (18, 13 and 4). Her daughter is married but her husband is in Saudi Arabia; they build a house to live in Atsbi when he will be back; she recently gave birth to a baby boy. One other daughter (21) is married and lives in Atsbi where she has a house. The oldest daughter (27) is divorced and migrated to Saudi Arabia. She has been caught several times and last time she spent 5 months in prison in Riyadh before being deported but she has gone back and is again in Saudi. AA is worried about her and does not have news very often. She also has a step-son who has grown up with them. He is 25 and lives in Wukro where he is married and has his own shop.

She thinks the household's economic status is deteriorating since the death of her husband because he was the one to take care of the livestock, including taking them to Afar from January to May. He had many cattle. The 2001 EC drought caused fifty sheep to die and she also lost three cows and two oxen. Also, five years ago she was stronger and producing more. Last year she did not produce anything beyond the household's consumption. She does not have irrigated land but can water her vegetables (that she used for the household's diet) and give water to animals because she has a pond, made with cement. It was done in 1995 EC with credit (3,000 *birr*, with which she also bought a cow). She repaid the credit by selling animals. She also borrowed from the cooperative to buy hybrid chicken (1,000 *birr*) but they died due to an epidemic. There is a vet service but right now there is an epidemic among cattle, said to come from Afar, and there is no solution.

She uses improved seeds, fertiliser and compost, which is useful. But it is not good that government workers forced her to take fertiliser (otherwise she would have lost the emergency support). She does not have debt to a bank, though has small debts with a shop (150 *birr*) and with someone (100 *birr*). She will pay with the next harvest or by selling an animal. Her daughter who is in Saudi took credit and her debt has reached 1,500 *birr*. She has not repaid as she has not been successful so far. AA is now asked to pay for her daughter. She will do this by selling an animal.

In addition to helping with farming, the oldest son living with her gets some income from trading new and old shoes taken from Atsbi to Kuneba in Afar and vice-versa and some other business. She told him to do so because he had to support himself (he is 26, he is married but his wife lives with her parents and they do not have children). He buys his own clothes and shoes and buys sugar and coffee for her. He also tried to do some labour work (he was paid 50 *birr/day*), and some masonry work for one month (he was paid 60 *birr/day*), but he stopped for various reasons. He has a plan to migrate to Saudi Arabia. The younger one (16) also *got* some income from covering note books for students and fixing people's mobile phones, and he buys his shoes with this income.

At the time of the 2001 EC drought she *got* government assistance as food for the household, which was sufficient, and fodder for the livestock, but this did not prevent many from dying. They regularly get emergency aid for three family members out of the six. *Tabia* leaders asked that her son should work but he refused because he is a trader. He said he was willing to pay for a license. One of her grandchildren was found malnourished and given food supplement. She gave her most of it but shared a little with her sister and also used the oil to cook for the whole family. The girl improved.

She is happy with the work done on soil and water conservation as it has stopped some of her farm land to be washed away by floods. It has big benefits for the community. The community also plants trees and there is much better tree coverage than ten years ago. She planted eucalyptus, acacias and fodder. She is selling some of the eucalyptus and gets an income from this, and also saving what she was spending in buying it from other people. The zero-grazing policy is also beneficial for protecting and rehabilitating the land, and because children do not have to herd. Many adults in the community including herself did not go to school because they were herding. This is now resolved.

She has one child at the Agewo school in G/Kidan, which is good as students are given porridge. The other is in Dera which is good but far. Her 16-year old son stopped going to school because he was beaten by a teacher. She wants to send him back as he is a clever student, and might send him to the Agewo school next year if they open grade 9. She says there is generally better care and less beating of children, and more openness and closeness between parents and children. Some parents make sure they fulfil all their children's needs because they do not want them to migrate. But others tell their children to migrate and pay their credit.

She is making use of everything the health workers taught her, and the household is a model for the health extension packages. She is aware of and teaches her grandchildren about HIV AIDS and TB. She took a HIV test as she was asked when she went to the health centre for another illness. Last year she fell ill and had to be taken to the health centre. She *got* very effective treatment, though she also went to the holy water. Her daughter had TB two years ago. She *got* treatment for eight months and she is fine now. There is no teaching about malaria though her house was sprayed. Her son *got* malaria and was given pills at the health centre. When her daughter was pregnant she used ANC service though she delivered at home as they did not have the time to organise transport to the health centre. The infant was vaccinated. Her daughter was advised to take contraceptives but refused as her husband is in Saudi Arabia. Her grand-daughters get education about reproductive health and HIV AIDS at school.

Compared with five years ago, now they have started to eat injera as they produce and also receive wheat as food aid. She produces and buys vegetables that they consume too, and she gives oranges to her children. They consume more milk, butter, eggs and pulses than before, because AA knows this makes people healthy and strong. She uses more spices (ginger, cumin and black pepper) and also fabricated food (pasta and rice, and biscuits and candies for her grandchildren).

There is no clean water in the household's surroundings. Sometimes her son brings water from the hand pump water point at the *tabia* centre, on donkey back. AA appreciates the road and transport availability as it saves time. The mobile phone is very important for communication with family members who are far. It came from Saudi and allows listening to music and watching videos, so family members use it for entertainment and to watch information on Saudi.

Women and girls are engaged in all sorts of activities. When they do daily labour young girls can be paid 30 *birr*/day and women 50 *birr*/day. AA believes this is good and linked to government teaching. Husbands and sons have started doing some domestic work. Husbands take grain to the mill and buy vegetables on the market, but they do not cook. Some sons do cook, including her 16 year old son. Women's participation in local politics has increased, and they are no longer considered as 'weak' as they do all these activities. However, she had a complicated land case with a militia man and she lost it. She believes that this is because as a woman she did not have the means to pursue it through the formal system and the elders advised her to let things go quiet.

She reduced expenses on her children's marriages as government teach them to do. For food and drink she spent 2,000 *birr* for her daughter's wedding in 2000 EC and 3,000 *birr* for her son's in 2003 EC (living costs had increased). To her daughter's husband she also gave 3,000 *birr* as gift. Her son spent 5,000 *birr* in clothes and gold, and received 8,000 *birr* from his parents-in-law. She also reduced expenses for her husband's funeral and *teskar*. For instance, she slaughtered only two cows (for 3,500 *birr*) whereas in the past, 3 to 4 would have been slaughtered.

The household cooperates with others and also they help each other with relatives. For instance during the drought her brother in Agewo gave her 1,000 *birr* and her son-in-law 2,000 *birr*. When her sister *got* very sick, her sister's son-in-law paid her credit (7,000 *birr*). AA is a member of a newly established *equb*, linked to the development team. She also takes small loans from the *mehaber*. Several family members are members of different *mehaber*. She is very active participant in the church. In the past she favoured her economic activities but '*now she has realised that she had to pray for her children's safety and success and for peaceful relationships with neighbours*'.

She is a member of the women's association and her son of the youth association but there is nothing visible from this. No one in the household is party member. They contribute what they have to, like grain from the food aid and free labour work that two family members did. The work is important for the community. Anyway these contributions are mandatory, not voluntary.

Most of the new things and ideas coming from the government and towns and cities are good. International migrants explain that life is good in Harresaw if there are income opportunities because there are so many challenges on the way to Saudi Arabia and while working there. But there is a big issue with young men and women, failing to pursue further education, or to get land and job opportunities, and becoming hopeless and migrating.

Household of poor woman

BT says she is 38 years old. Her oldest son, 21, dropped out from school after grade 8 and migrated in Saudi Arabia in 2003 EC. With her she has one daughter (14) and two younger sons (12 and 4). Her household's status deteriorated since her husband's death. She *got* some support from her son in Saudi Arabia but does not have any other support. She is supporting her brother who joined university two years ago and is studying engineering in Arba Minch. He is a clever student. He *got* pass marks and so does not pay for food and accommodation. She pays for transportation and school materials and computer costs. She covers a lot of the costs.

She is a beneficiary of PSNP. This together with her children going to school creates problems. Whatever she does she loses income. If she works on the PSNP she reduces what she could harvest because weeds grow in the fields; and if she attends her fields and is absent from the public works this is deducted from her payment. In addition to this she does free labour for 20 days, which she had to otherwise she would be excluded from PSNP. And she contributes grain from her PSNP ration as this is compulsory.

She does not use irrigation. Where she lives there is no underground water, even the government could not find it. She tried water harvesting although the plastic was stolen and it is now not effective. She used it to water vegetables. She produces grains, pulses and vegetables, but not for cash. She gets advice from the DAs to use fertiliser and improved wheat seed, and it helped her. She

uses compost too for the vegetables, as she was shown by the DAs.

She took credit several times. First it was from Dedebit. As it was drought time they used it to buy food and the cow they bought died. She also took 1,500 *birr* credit for three sheep and this was more successful, she could sell two to send her son to Saudi Arabia. She lost twenty sheep during the 2001 EC drought, but she is more successful with sheep now, and also with chicken. She has no cattle. She thinks that the zero-grazing policy is advantageous for female-headed households because she can buy grass in the same way as anyone else.

She sent her son to Saudi Arabia with 4,000 *birr*. She got 2,000 *birr* by selling two sheep and a calf and another 2,000 *birr* that she borrowed from a rich person. Her son went with a friend and sent her 10,000 *birr*. She was able to repay the rich person, her debt to Dedebit (3,730 *birr* that had become 6,000 *birr* with interests, over five years) and her debt to the cooperative (1,500 *birr* plus interests). She did not get anything else from her son so far.

As she is producing wheat they consume it as bread and injera. They consume vegetables but not more than five years ago. They consume less milk and meat because they have far fewer sheep and traditionally a woman does not slaughter animals. She has increased the use of pulses. She has access to a hand pump water point though there are long waiting queues; and to a grain mill.

Like the other women she explains about the change in women's and girls' livelihood activities, in raising children and in parents' relationships with their older children. BT explains that these days, when they are 17-20 years old young men and women start to think and work like adults as they have better education status. But they also start worrying about income and think about migrating. As for women their involvement in various activities enabled them to prove that they are not weak, beyond the theoretical recognition that there was five years ago.

Her 12 and 14 year old children go to school (7th and 8th grade) and like it. She is covering the costs of this. She thinks the quality is good: there is good follow up by the teachers, enough teachers, books that students can borrow from each other, and tutorials for girls. She has graduated and was given a certificate and is a model household for the health extension packages. She is aware of HIV AIDS and got teaching at the PSNP public works and also was tested. She was given education on TB.

She cooperates with her neighbours for weeding, harvesting and threshing as in the past, and also in domestic work when there are ceremonies. She borrows grain and money from relatives but also other people. She very recently spent 150-200 *birr* for a holiday celebration with relatives and friends. She had been introduced to many people and had to invite them so she could not follow government teaching about spending less. She is a member of two *mehaber*, her's and that of her husband. They showed support, exempting her from slaughtering a goat and advising her to buy school materials for her children instead.

She is a member of the women's association, which has no harm and improves the knowledge of women in the community. But she cannot participate much to government meetings even though she gets invited as she is so busy. She participated in the gimgema of officials, criticising the fact that children whose parents die are not supported, taking her children's case as an example. She also voted to replace the land administration judges who were found to be corrupt.

She appreciates the road and transport, and the mobile phone which is very important to communicate with her son in Saudi. Ideas coming from the *wereda* or cities, like the importance of education and health services and improving livelihoods and hygiene are good. People who return from migration raise other people's interest in living in urban areas, which is good to some extent although the community should also think about working and improving their agricultural activities.

Structures of inequality in 2012

Wealth, poverty and class and household composition differences

Overall community wealth

Key community informants explained that there is no one in the *tabia* who is known as a very rich person. There are about ten people who might be considered as rich and about 50 people who might be considered as middle. The rest are poor, very poor and destitute.

However, they added that the number of people who improve their livelihood has been increasing over time in the last ten years. This is because people sell eucalyptus trees, cash crops from irrigation, grass (those who do not have livestock), livestock products, and do fattening; people also have been engaged in daily local as well as international labour, and selling and eating cactus fruits. If the severe drought of 2001 EC had not happened, great improvements would have been achieved.

Although it is hard to ascertain its importance, illegal migration in Saudi seems to have a growing effect with some multiplier effects beyond the households who have migrant members. It also seemed to have played a very important role in mitigating the effects of the drought – by allowing most in the community to pay their debt and also to rebuild some of the lost capital. Good years since the drought have helped too.

Spatial poverty

In Harresaw people living in Ekunta *got* and in Harresaw *kushet* face several disadvantages compared to other places in the *tabia*: distance to the road and transport and to the *tabia* centre and various services, no access to mobile phone and electricity, and above all, acute shortage of any kind of water. Land is also said not to be fertile.

There was no indication that people living in those parts of the *tabia* were systematically poorer. The relatively successful female-headed household whose head was interviewed was from Ekunta *got*. However, irrigation is not possible except on a very small scale on the rehabilitated stream in one of the watersheds and with a few ponds that do not hold water for the whole year. People in Harresaw *kushet* want the government to invest in constructing dams. They explained that in the parts of the *tabia* where youth can engage in irrigation there is less migration. The highest number of youth migrating in Saudi are from Harresaw *kushet* – also because there are more links with Afar.

In Harresaw *kushet* beekeeping and honey production can be successful as this is the part where the old forest is found. The price of honey has increased a lot on the market, and some people are said to be doing very well out of this.

Household wealth/poverty and class and household composition differences

The rich households have 2 oxen, 2 cows, a donkey or a mule, 4-5 beehives, about 15 sheep, some quintals of grain, no debt from the government, they have a house or land in town, tape/radio, iron bed, mat, modern blanket, cupboard for clothes, etc. The source of their wealth is the remittances that their children send from Saudi, they have big and fertile farm land, irrigation, own land where there is water stream for grass and for farming and they do animal fattening business.

Middle wealth households are those who have one ox, one cow, 3-5 sheep, no debt, and have some household items. The source of their wealth is because they work hard and properly use the resources available to them.

Poor and very poor are those who have few sheep and chicken, get little production annually from their farm, own infertile/small plot of land, have debt, sleep in animal skin and if there are household items, they are of poor quality.

Destitute are those who are always dependent on government aid, have no land or cannot plough

their own land due to problems related to age or health, have no livestock, and have old household goods. The destitute survive by participating in the safety net programme and daily paid activities.

Old people can be very poor when they do not have relatives to assist them, even if they have land. One old woman and her equally old husband explained that they have some land (they pay 40 *birr* land tax) but they have to sharecrop it out. They face food shortage and '*at times they only drink coffee*'. Apart from their land and the PSNP direct support, she has 4 chicken that lay eggs and that and their old house represent the sum total of all their assets.

Illegal migration abroad when successful can boost households' livelihoods and wellbeing considerably. Community respondents explained that the impact varies depending on the activities and earnings of the migrants, their financial management, and their initial wealth status. If they are poor they repay their debt first. The respondents described the effects of successful international migration on households' wealth as follows:

Migrants/their families buy houses in the community and outside, in Atsbi and Wukro. They buy cars, assets and livestock. They have capital and start businesses or trading. They have enough and better food (they eat more vegetables, meat, eggs, honey and butter) and clothing; they can afford better medical treatment; they give better school materials to their children; they have good household furniture, clean beds and good cooking utensils. They add rooms to their house or replace the hidmo roof with tin roof.

One successful returned migrant explained that when he was abroad he was sending money for his four children going to school. He bought land (30,000 *birr*) and built a house (40,000 *birr*). Another explained that he sent 10,000 *birr* and constructed a house in Harresaw, paid his own and his son's debt (total 16,000 *birr*), saved about 25,000 *birr* in the bank and came back with 5,500 *birr*. One woman whose husband is still abroad said that she is able to rent the house they built and with this she is sending their three children to school; she was also able to start a small business of brewing and selling *sewa*.

One person explained that there were huge differences between poor and rich people in the community. For instance while children from rich families and families with migrants in Saudi have nice school bags and all the necessary school materials, '*those children from poor families get in trouble if they get their pen lost*'.

Inequality within households

There is not much about inequality within households – which would not be related to gender which is discussed elsewhere.

One trait that appears in several stories is that of older siblings stopping school to help on the farm while younger ones continue. This has been the experience of several of the mid-20s and 30s young men interviewed, and it still seems to happen nowadays as shown by the case of the poor young man in his late teens (see next section). There are a number of other dynamics that may decrease the frequency of such occurrences (e.g. higher aspirations linked to education; availability of people seeking daily labour opportunities – but one needs to be able to pay for this). Also, it seems that this is more likely to happen in poorer households.

Problems poor people face

Poor people cannot build a better house or renovate their house when it falls apart. They cannot afford transport costs and so they walk to go to Atsbi for instance, even when they are sick or old. Due to this they may move less than what they would want to and become more isolated. They cannot afford having a mobile phone.

Poor people cannot afford health care services (and as described below the exemption system offers very limited help). When a member of the family is disabled or mentally ill they cannot try to seek treatment. They have a less diversified diet and eat less. One destitute man said that his wife could

not prepare enough food. Also, they did not have a child because they had no sustainable income to raise children.

Poor people have difficulties in sending their children to school. Youngsters in poor families drop out early, as had been the case for several of the young men and women interviewed. For instance:

The death of her father in a battle in 1990 EC was a big shock for the family because he was the one generating income. She was able to go to school because support used to be given to war victims' families but this is no longer there for poor families now. (Poor young woman in her 20s)

She started school when she was 7. Now she has dropped out of school at the 6th grade. She has interest in going to school but she cannot learn due to financial problems in the household. She liked to go to school. She did not want to leave. (Middle wealth 16-17 year woman)

His father died in 1993 EC and his family was further affected by the drought in 2001 EC. In 2003 EC when he failed the national examination in grade 8 he dropped out of school because he lost hope and wanted to support his mother. He does not intend to go back to school. Rather, he wants to help his younger siblings to go to school. (Poor young man in his late teens)

Poor people cannot buy clothes and shoes to their children going to school like richer households can do. Or they do not have enough clothes for themselves. Their children may feel ashamed or hopeless even when their parents manage to continue to send them to school.

Poor people may also develop a sense of hopelessness because they feel that they are 'lower than others' (destitute woman). Certain groups of vulnerable people who are also often poor seem to be less connected with what is going on in the *tabia*, and to have little relationship with the *tabia* administration. One elderly woman said that she fears to go to the administration to request for health payment exemption.

Social identity

Ethnicity

There is only one ethnic-related identity in Harresaw as everyone is Tigrean. Some families in Harresaw *kushets* have links with Afar, but there was no discussion of this by the community respondents.

Clan / lineage / family

There are no clans in Harresaw. Lineages used to be important and still are to a certain extent, in terms of mutual support and dispute resolution. They used to strongly regulate marriages but this is gradually disappearing. This is discussed in section 4.5. Although lineages are still active and strong lineages have meetings etc. it does not appear to be a strong marker of someone's social identity vis-à-vis other people in the community. The only exceptions are with lineages of metal workers and slaves, who are integrated in the community but do not intermarry with other community people (see below).

Religion

The dominant religious identity is Orthodox Christianity. Very few people in Harresaw are Muslims, but they usually live outside of the community – they married Afar women and live in Afar but have land inherited from their parents in the community. There are some Muslim and Protestant people in Atsbi. Religion is important in many people's life in Harresaw (see section 4.5) but as there virtually is only one religion it is not a strong marker of someone's social identity vis-à-vis others in the community.

Native/immigrant

There are no immigrants in Harresaw. There are people from other places living in the community as

they came by marriage. This does not seem to be associated to a different identity or status. What people from these other communities do in case their spouse dies or if they divorce is likely to depend partly on land issues and also on whether the surviving spouse prefers returning in his or her community of birth to have better access to support from his or her relatives.

Vulnerability and social exclusion

Disabled and chronically ill people

Tabia officials say that there is approximately 5% of the *tabia* population who is mentally ill. Key informants from the community mentioned eight mentally retarded people, two of whom are mentally ill and dangerous for the community. Only one of these 8 people was born in the last ten years. They are protected by their family so that they do not harm anyone and themselves. The *tabia* supports these people or their families by ensuring that they get priority in any programme of the government that reaches the community as a whole, and labour support. But there is nothing else that can be done.

The brother of a 37-year old man who has been mentally ill since he is 7 explained that his brother's illness has been a major cause of the poverty of his household. He cannot let his brother without surveillance as he would not return to their house, and must continuously be around to protect his wife and children from his brother's attack. In 1999 EC he took a 5,000 *birr* credit to buy livestock but it did not work well for him. Now he has a 7,000 *birr* debt and has no means of repaying this as he cannot go elsewhere to find daily labour or migrate. He and his family are in the PSNP public works programme and he gets direct support for his brother. They took him to the health centre but could see no change. They could not afford to take him anywhere else. Because of his brother's illness he also rarely attends the *tabia* meetings.

Key informants said that in Harresaw there are 28 disabled people due to natural causes and 8 with war injuries. There are fewer people with disabilities thanks to vaccination and the absence of war.

The war veterans with disabilities have an association, for which they contribute 6 *birr*/year. There is no detail on what the association is doing for their members. *Wereda* officials suggest that they should get additional support to start engaging in income-generating activities. In Harresaw in general ex-fighters and soldiers are highly considered in the community. War veterans with disabilities and their family members are exempted of payment for health care. One ex-soldier, HIV AIDS positive and disabled (with a problem with one leg) and who goes to Wukro for treatment in addition to taking ART in Atsbi, explained that when he faces difficulties to pay for his transport to Wukro he communicates with the *tabia* administrator and the leader of the association of the war veterans with disabilities and they give him grain that he can sell to finance his transport. He was given 125 kg of grain in this way in 2003 EC.

In contrast, a 35-year old girl who lost an arm as she was shot by mistake by Derg soldiers when she was a child does not get this kind of exemption or special support. She explained that she once discussed with the *tabia* officials who give exemption papers and with the association of disabled ex-fighters, but they refused her case saying that she was a civilian and her disability was not related to war. She seemed to be a very vulnerable person. She married a much older man to bear children but divorced after her mother died three years ago as no one could take care of her husband any longer. She has three children; the oldest one is a 13-year old boy. She was forced to take fertiliser in 2002 EC as *tabia* officials replaced her PSNP ration with it, and in 2003 EC for which she had to sell 2 months of her wheat ration. She explained that because of her missing arm she could not fetch wood, needed help to bake injera and could not get involved in retailing goods and getting an income. She felt isolated and neglected. She is not a member of anything (women or youth association or party or development team or 1-5) and she does not attend meetings '*because they do not expect participation and valuable contributions from her*'.

There is only one blind person and three deaf persons in the *tabia*. Their life is difficult because they cannot participate to activities and social events like other community members, and they cannot go to school. The blind man and deaf woman interviewed both expressed feelings of loneliness and isolation. There is no support from the government and 'no meaningful support' from the community, beyond the PSNP – though the deaf woman was given land in 2003 EC in the reallocation process. She explained that she was '*made to be the additional wife of a married man to make her bear children*'. She has two, an 8-year old girl who is at school and a 10-year old boy who does not attend school, but she does not know what will happen as her mother who lived with them and used to do many things for her has just passed away. The blind man said that his disability made him not to marry and have children. He is living with his sister.

Residents in remote parts of the *tabia*

The residents in Ekunta *got* and Harresaw *kushet* are most disadvantaged on several grounds.

First, there is severe scarcity of water. Underground water is very deep and it was assessed that it could not be reached even with a deep bore-hole excavator. Households living in those places have to go far to fetch water. When there is drought water becomes even scarcer and there are conflicts with neighbouring communities. They get services like extension advice on fertiliser but this cannot work on the soil of their place because there is not enough water. They are given advice to use water from different water sources, but this does not work as there is no water. One man said he dug a well but it cannot be used. Harresaw *kushet* was affected by a severe epidemic which killed 20 people in 2002 EC and although the exact cause was not known, *wereda* officials said that it had to do with hygiene and sanitation but this is very difficult to improve as there is so little water.

People also face long distances and more difficult access to the road and transport. In these places there is no mobile network coverage and no electricity. Health facilities are available but farther away. Children go to school in a recently opened school in Harresaw *kushet* where facilities are basic and there is a similar issue with water. Or they go to the neighbouring *tabia* school – which is better and used to have a school feeding programme.

The vet comes to these places or else people take their livestock to Dera.

The only advantages of living in these places is to have access to large tracts of land where livestock can graze – although it is very dry at times – and bees can be kept. Also, fuelwood is easily accessible from the forests.

Immigrants

There are no immigrants in Harresaw.

Landless/non-taxpayers

There are many landless people in Harresaw (see in section 4.2). There is no systematic difference between landless/non-taxpayer people and the others. There are landless people who do relatively well – like one man who is a daily labourer and has an arrangement with a woman whose husband is in Saudi Arabia on migration. Another example is a young man who sharecrops land, but has dug a well, *got* a pump and installed a drip irrigation system; he grows various things including vegetables and seedlings (he distributes some freely to members of his development team once a year). He is a development team leader and leader of the only functioning *iddir* and is well respected by the community as a model for the young generation. He also makes clothes that he sells on the market in Dera. He reported no problem in having access to services.

These people do not pay land tax but they contribute equally to other people in other ways – including community labour, the deductions from the PSNP grain, and association membership fees. The young sharecropper pays a license tax on his sewing machine. There are a few people who pay for a license in Harresaw.

Destitute people

The destitute man interviewed explained that he has nothing because he spent many years moving from place to place to complete his religious education. So now he does not have a house. He and his wife live in a rented house, without children as they have no money to raise children. He is disabled but she is working for two on the PSNP public works. Also, after he came back to the *tabia* he registered as landless and was given land in 2003 EC. He sharecrops the land out but this helped them to get additional food. He does not feel marginalised. He is invited to all the community ceremonies and apart from the fact that he is not a party member, participates to the youth association and other meetings in the *tabia*. His problem is that apart from the small land he has now, he has no income source at all. He has applied for a job at the *tabia* church administration.

The destitute woman interviewed is much older. She became destitute gradually. She lost her husband many years ago and when this happened, she came back from *tabia* Hadnet where she was living with him, leaving land there to others. When she came back *tabia* officials offered her a piece of land in the *tabia* centre but she refused because she had no money to build a house. So she is now living in the big shabby house of her grandfather. She has a small land which relatives plough and they take the straw. She became even poorer with the 2001 EC drought as she lost her livestock.

In the first years after her return she lived with her daughter but she left when she got married 16 years ago and she is living far away in Saesa Tsaeda Emba (another *wereda* of the Eastern zone of Tigray). For some years her grand-daughter lived with her but she is now a grade ten student and she could not afford the costs of her education any longer so the girl has returned to her mother. She explained that while she has access to services like the HEW teachings and she contributes to various things (she does not know well what these are), she does not dare going to the *tabia* administration to ask to be exempted from payment for health care and so, she does not go to the health centre as she cannot afford it. She said she feels 'lower than others' and lonely as she has been living alone for a long time.

Craftworkers

Craftworkers are not despised or marginalised in Harresaw and in Tigray in general. The only ones who do not intermarry with others are the blacksmiths. Apart from this they are involved in all other activities of the community and are not marginalised in any way, socially or politically.

Other craftworkers are well integrated in the community. One man who makes embroidery explained that there are two other individuals who do the same work in the community. There are two tailors and about 3 people who are engaged in construction and woodwork. There is no weaver. He explained that craft workers have adopted their work by tradition and not because they belong to a different group. Thus, they participate fully in the community, in all social as well as political activities and there is no reason why they should be isolated or marginalised. For example, this man is a member of the farmers' association and of the political party.

The woman craft worker interviewed makes *sifet* ('different kinds of things using dry grass') – which is considered as the work of clever women and anyway is done by many women for their own use. She is just like any other woman heading her household.

Both these two people's stories are like the ones of many other community members, with no differences in relation to access to different services, obligations to do certain things, participation to structures like the 1-5s etc.

'Slaves'

There are only two households that are considered as "slaves" by the community. As with the metal workers there is no economic difference between them and others in the community and they have smooth relations with the community. They participate equally to others in all kinds of social activities in the community. However, they do not intermarry with other community members and

have to choose their marriage partners from some other places. There are a few (rare) members of the community who have children with members of these groups without getting married – Usually men from the community with women of these groups.

Servants

There are no people called servants in the community. At the time of the research three young women were employed by other people in the *tabia* centre. The one who was interviewed was not considered and did not consider herself as a servant. She was temporarily making an income by working for others (including cooking for the male researcher during the fieldwork). She is helping her sister to run her tea house. She has plans to establish herself when she will have accumulated enough capital to do this.

Wereda officials mentioned the issue of protection of the rights of domestic servants – but it seemed to be more of an urban issue.

Non-members of the EPRDF

There are only about one fourth of the people of the eligible age who are TPLF members in Harresaw, so there are many non-members. Some of the non-members are people who are old or weaker, who may not be able to participate to communal activities or like the woman who lost one arm, who as she said are not expected to have anything valuable to contribute. There is no special vulnerability associated with not being a member of the TPLF – as is discussed in more detail below.

Unmarried mothers, widows, divorcées, wives abandoned by polygynous husbands

There is no polygyny in Harresaw, and 51% of the households are headed by women. The number of female-headed households due to war has decreased but the number of households whose male heads died while trying to get to Saudi is increasing. Moreover, many households are temporarily female-headed while the husband is in Saudi for often an unknown period of time.

Community respondents explained that there is a recent but increasing trend for men to have ‘concubines’². These may be relatively formal arrangements even though the ‘marriage with signature’ is only with one woman. In some (but not all) cases the arrangements appear to be known and at least tacitly agreed by the women involved. For the ‘second woman’ this means someone is ploughing their land, and sometimes it is also because they do want children.

So an accompanying trend is an increasing number of women who have never been officially married and have children, sometimes from several different men, and who educate the children sometimes with and sometimes without support from the fathers. This does not seem to be frowned upon, and some of these women are relatively successful. Why some of these households may be more vulnerable than the ideal-type household is related to labour availability issues – but this then depends on the type of livelihood options that they have embraced or have been able to adopt. The box below gives a few contrasted examples.

Box 1: Women by themselves in Harresaw

AA, 30, is a mother of two children from two men from whom she divorced. Both men were from other *tabias*. With her second ex-husband she lived in his *tabia* for one year then *got* divorced immediately after having her second child (the first with him). They both wanted to divorce. She suspected that he continued to have an affair with another woman with whom he had had a child earlier on. Moreover, living in Hadnet *tabia* was making it difficult for her to plough her land and keep her job at the Harresaw nursery site. He has now migrated. She has returned and lives with her mother and the two children in Harresaw. She has kept her job at the nursery. She has 8 sheep as they shared their

² Informants said this was a recent trend, but we find it already in 1995.

livestock when they divorced and she brought them back and the other few properties that she got. She is *'peaceful but still wishes to remarry and have a good married life for the future'*.

BB's case is quite different. She is from a neighbouring *tabia* and came to live with her husband in Harresaw. She lost her husband 7 years ago, from an illness which was treated but relapsed. The son of her husband's sister paid for the burial costs, but the livelihood of her household deteriorated steadily since her husband's death. She was sending her three children to school but now one of her daughters dropped out because of their poverty. She had to start buying clothes and shoes less frequently for her children. She does not get any support from her husband's relatives to raise her children, even though one of them is living very near as their landholdings are adjacent. She has given the land to a sharecropper but he is not taking proper care. She gets extension services like anyone else but has little means to implement them. She could not afford fertiliser or improved seeds. She gets PSNP support by working on the PWs and this is a great help; when the payment is in cash she uses this for educational materials and food stuff that she does not get from the farm. She has a few sheep that she was able to buy thanks to the support of an NGO – although one died. In addition to the household's difficult economic situation she feels lonely as she does not have good relationships with her husband's relatives, she cannot easily visit her own relatives, and she does not have close friends in Harresaw – even though she is a member of the WA and of a 1-5 and participates to the *tabia* meetings.

CC is divorced like AA. She was the one to initiate the divorce because her husband was committing adultery and he was giving money to the other woman. He then married that woman and passed away later. She had land and kept her ex-husband land share. But she has to sharecrop it out and her production has decreased. When they divorced he left her the house that they had built so she could live there with the children. She gets emergency food aid for half of her family members. She has a small ox and 4 chickens. The main reason of the household's difficulties is that her husband was bringing additional income from his work as daily labourer on salt mines several months every year. Without this she had to decrease her expenditures on clothes, shoes and food although all her children continue to go to school. However, they have a feeling of inferiority because of their clothes and also not having their father. Her ex-husband's relatives have sympathy for her and sometimes help a little by buying things for her children. She has access to extension services but last year, lost her wheat harvest to rust which was a big issue as she had invested in fertiliser and improved seeds. She also was approached by the DAs to take modern beehives and improved breeds but refused as she does not have the labour required to work well with this. One new thing that she does following advice of the DAs is using water harvesting. She does not say how she managed to get the pond dug.

There are no identified commercial sex workers in Harresaw but five women brewing and selling *sewa* are suspected to have such activity. It is said to have become less common due to fear of HIV/AIDS. These women are susceptible to be beaten and their household items to be broken when their customers get drunk and start fighting.

Key community informants explained that even though female-headed households may own land (and are given priority in land reallocation) as they cannot plough it they have to sharecrop or hire daily labour and often do not get a fair deal. In some cases they may get some labour support during the farming season if they have relatives living nearby. Often they have economic problems hence find it hard to send their children to school. However, this is not a universal pattern. One woman head of household is among the very few people who de facto graduated as she stopped working on the PSNP public works because she was doing better on her irrigated farm.

Another reason why female-headed households are finding it harder is that it used to be more likely for men to be able to bring a much needed complementary income – like in the case of CC above. Another such case was a young woman whose father death had been a big shock for the household among others because he used to get an income from retailing kerosene and that stopped when he passed away. However, in recent years women have started to get engaged in local work opportunities *'equally to men'*. It may remain more difficult for them to migrate for work, but an increasing number of them do so.

Divorced men and widowers

There are no more difficulties from the point of view of social relations for divorced men and widowers than there is for women in similar situations. They tend to be less vulnerable economically except when they are old and without relative to help (see below). One difficulty may arise when they have children to raise.

Among the men interviewed in these situations, one was a young man who had divorced because his wife wanted this. They had a child who is now living with her, so his expenses have decreased and he is fine. She was not from Harresaw and the reason of their divorce is that she wanted them to go and live in her community where she was inheriting her mother's land and he did not want to do this even though he has no land in Harresaw. He suspected that in reality, her father wanted her to migrate as her brothers are already in Saudi. He is living from daily labour and his work on PSNP public works. He has started keeping bees on land that he shares with his uncle. He lives in the rented house where they used to live. He has no problem with the community and participates in various ways although he is not an active member of the 1-5 and rarely attends to public meetings as he spends his time on his work.

The poor widower interviewed lost his wife to an illness for which she was getting care at Dera health centre. He gets on well with his wife's relatives and has access to and uses different extension and other services. As he has become older he is no longer in the PSNP public works but get emergency food aid. He has struggled since his wife's death as he has a large family of seven children, but he is proud of the fact that none of them has dropped out of school.

Outcasts

There are no people considered as outcasts in Harresaw.

PLWHAs

Issues of awareness and prevention, how the people living with HIV/AIDS contracted it and the health services that they receive are addressed in section 4.3. This section focuses on the vulnerability associated with their condition.

First in relation to stigma, *wereda* officials themselves recognised that while it is getting better there still is discrimination, even on the side of people who know very well the modes of transmission. They explained that in Atsbi town there are people who would not rent their house to PLWHAs. There also is still discrimination in Harresaw. One person said that this was problematic because it discourages people from disclosing their status and they continue to infect other people.

The woman living with HIV/AIDS interviewed by the researchers said that she and other people living with HIV/AIDS were not discriminated and they participated equally to other members of the community in social and economic activities. The community is trying to support them e.g. PLWHAs got land without lottery; they get double food ration for themselves and their family by being counted under both PSNP and EFA; the WA members contributed some money for them although this was hardly meaningful (she received 100 *birr* once). In her views the main vulnerability of PLWHAs is that they face frequent illnesses, like herself. She explained that

Her illness brought change in the livelihood and income of the household. They are still sharecropping their land and getting PSNP assistance. But she was also trading grain and had to stop because of her illness. She had to reduce her expenditure on clothes as well as the amount and types of food she used to buy. In the past she was using various vegetables now she eats only red pepper without onions. She made her 7th grade daughter to drop out of school when she became poor and weak. Her daughter had already bought a pen and notebooks but she needed her to fetch water and go to the mill house as she could no longer do this. In the future she has a plan to send her child back to school.

Both she and the man living with HIV/AIDS got divorced once their status was known. She was not married officially and her ex-husband had an official marriage with another woman, but he used to

plough the land of the two women whereas now she has to sharecrop her land. She contracted the virus from her ex-husband and believes that he has also infected his (other) wife.

The man's views on stigma are quite different. He did not report ill health. But he explained that there is stigma and people's awareness is very low. People tell each other not to eat together with him or wash their clothes where he washed his clothes in the river. He also *got* divorced, which he did not want as he had seven children. But his wife decided after she was counseled to do so by the health professional whom she met when she went to do a VCT – she was found to be negative. He thought this professional had been unethical. But he had not told his wife that he was HIV/AIDS positive, she was actually told by their neighbours who knew that he was taking ART. He added that in addition one of his daughters dropped out of school at some point '*because she lost hope*'. However, she was counseled and has returned to school now.

Orphans/ stepchildren

Different people gave different numbers of orphans in Harresaw. One person said that there were about 10 full orphans and 150 single orphaned children. Another said there were 64 full orphans and 135 half orphans. In any instance this is a significant number. *Wereda* officials said that indeed this was a serious issue in the *wereda* as a whole. Most orphans lost their father to the war with Eritrea or increasingly often their parents have died on unsafe illegal migration to Saudi. Key community informants explained that orphaned children, especially those who lost their mother, are exposed to labour exploitation and are not sent to school at the right age.

Like for the PLWHA there used to be some support to orphans from NGOs but this has phased out. The *tabia* organises some forms of support with the means locally available. Orphans are given priority and full ration under the PSNP and they do not work before being 18 year old. The *tabia* administration also provides some material support in the form of educational materials for them to be able to continue to attend school. This is paid out of the *tabia* budget which itself comes from deduction of grain from the PSNP transfers to the beneficiaries (see section 4.2).

It is known that girls who have lost their father are more likely to be subject to pressure from their mother to get married early, as the widow is seeking protection and assistance in this way. One woman explained that indeed there was a case of attempted underage marriage in Harresaw last year. The woman, who had lost her husband to the war, was telling people that her daughter was 18. But the women association and women affairs' representatives and the *tabia* prosecutor went to the school where she was learning and were told that she was 17 and wanted to continue studying. They stopped the marriage and the girl is now at school.

Boys who are orphans and have to support themselves may drop out and go to herd livestock or do some trade with the Afar, if they do not find enough work in the community. One young man of 20 whose parents died some years ago (his father in the war with Eritrea and his mother as she was sick and had surgery) explained that

*He has no permanent work. When he has work in Harresaw he can earn 20-30 birr a day in collecting crops, ploughing, threshing etc. It is better than going to herd in Afar where he was until 2002 EC and where the pay is not that much and he missed his family. But daily labour is not regular. There are good and bad employers – the latter refuse to pay or pay late and always shout and at times beat their employees and never give anything like food. He is also trying to earn money by selling old shoes that he collects in Afar, in Dera for recycling. This is quite tiring but he also gets 20-30 birr profit in a day. He does this when he has no daily labour. He cannot afford school, even though he believes it is important in life. He and his sister have no land. He is a member of the youth association but not a member of the party. When he returned from Afar he was included in the emergency food aid. He first had to work on the free community labour works before he was registered by *tabia* officials.*

Elderly people without relatives to help them

Tabia officials explained that in the community there are 215 old people who need support. It is not

clear whether this means that they all are without relatives to help them. They added that there was no special support from the government for them. In the *tabia* they give old people priority in the PSNP, and they try to mobilise community labour when they need it. There used to be some support from Adonay and World Vision as part of their support to vulnerable groups but this was not specifically tailored for old people.

Some elderly people without relatives live with other people. One man in this situation explained that he was supporting the people with whom he lives by doing some activities. They are also the people to whom he would talk if he had a problem; he would not tell anyone else. He lives from the direct support of PSNP that he is receiving and what he gets from his small land that he is sharecropping out. He said that he is fine as long as the PSNP support continues, but he is unhappy to be dependent on others. He pays his land tax, but does not longer participate in associations or in the party or in any meeting as he is very old. He gets health services if he can pay. He did not mention the possibility of exemption.

One old woman explained that she is living with her equally old husband. They do not have any support because she was barren. Her only sister died three years ago. She has half-brothers and half-sisters living in the same *got* as they are, but they have distant relationships because she was not brought up with them and also, people do not like barren women. Her step-son was living with them but he has migrated. He used to fetch water and wood and pound grain for her. Now she and her husband just cope with day to day life. He goes to the market and fetches water for her, very slowly. She does the household chores very slowly too. They both have various ailments: one of her eyes is blind; her husband has night blindness and he is disabled with leprosy which has crowded his fingers. She sometimes goes to the health centre as she has a leg which causes her problem when it is cold. She usually pays for the care (15-20 *birr*).

She explained that she gave her land in sharecropping, they get direct support from the PSNP, and she has 4 chickens that lay eggs. They get various advices from the HEWs. They also *got* a plastic from the government, for water harvesting; but when they were asked to pay back she sold it to repay the government. They no longer participate to meetings etc. She never goes to the *tabia* administration. When she needs information on the fasting season she asks her priest.

Genderage

Growing up in Harresaw - boys and girls

Birth and infancy

In the past infants were given butter or water mixed with sugar for a few days. Breast-feeding was not always by the baby's mother. Now mothers are taught to start breastfeeding immediately and exclusively by the mother. They are taught to give supplementary food after 5 to 6 months. Mothers generally cooperate well with the teachings. One woman explained that breastfeeding could last up to 2 or 3 years.

There has also been much improvement in relation to babies' hygiene and clothing. Babies are taken to health facilities if there is a problem. Several young women stressed the benefits of vaccination, for infants, babies and older children. One of them in her mid-30s recalled that when she was a child 80 children from the community died of an epidemic because there was no vaccination at the time.

One woman explained that infants, babies and young children are given better care now because there is spacing between births instead of '*overlap between children*' like in the past.

Growing up – work and play

There is better care for toddlers and young children as well. Parents buy them clothes and teach them to avoid nasty or dangerous things (like playing with waste or sharp or metallic objects or being too close to the fire). Some parents even buy shoes for the toddlers. Children are washed and their

clothes are washed regularly. From the age of 7 the sex differences appear and children start to take care of their hygiene themselves for some things like washing hands. Girls start taking care of themselves earlier than boys of that age.

Children of that age eat with adults. But the diet of households has generally improved, more so for richer households although even poorer households eat more varied food stuff. In richer households children may be given factory food like pasta, rice, macaroni, candy and biscuits, and fruits like oranges and bananas.

In the past children aged 7 were expected to start doing some work for the household. This still seems to be the case: they may start to fetch water, small children may also be sent to keep birds away from ripening crops like in a rich household whose head explained that this was the reason why they had not sent their 6-year old daughter to pre-school. Some of this may have decreased, for instance herding is said to be less common because of the zero-grazing policy. But children may now be asked to go and cut and carry grass back for the household's livestock instead. And as shown in the picture, zero-grazing may not yet be fully applied.

In the past children were regularly beaten by parents when they wanted them to obey. This is said to have decreased a lot.

Completing education

From the age of 7 parents send their children to school, equally for boys and girls. Key community informants talked about a '*tremendous change in attitude*' compared to the past when parents did not value education as much, many children were starting school late, and girls might not go at all (see 'experiences of primary education' in section 4.3). Most parents also try and send their children to secondary school equally for boys and girls. Some parents fear for their daughters when they have to go far from their home, but '*still girls go*'. However, key informants explained that

(Community members) send their children to secondary school although they fear that their children might not continue to higher levels... Despite the willingness and practice of community members in sending their male and female children to high school, people have an increasing sense of hopelessness about continuation to preparatory after tenth grade. This is because people invest in their children's education and teach them but they fail to pass and sit idle at home. This makes female and male children equal with those who do not go to school.

Key informants added that community members have a good attitude towards TVET because of its benefits but few children from the community have a chance to attend TVET. There is good attitude towards university education because they think that it will make their children able to get a job.

Most interviews of parents and younger people confirm this drive for children to complete higher levels of education. However, there are many failures at Grade 8 or Grade 10 (see section 4.3) and no further option when this occurs: generally families cannot afford the costs of children continuing in private institutions. One young woman was nonetheless doing this: she had earned some capital to open a shop, was now running the shop and at the same time studying management through distance education, paying for this through the profits of her shop – her father was helping a little.

More generally the cost of educating children is raised as an issue by poorer households. Even for those that can afford more easily the costs are noticeable, and opportunity costs as well. In most cases parents said that children were not expected to contribute to the costs of their education. But in many instances when children get older they involve in some income-generating activities alongside schooling and part of their income goes for the household. The costs become much higher and more difficult to afford when children have to leave the household to complete their studies. In some families, assets are sold to cover these costs. For instance a poor young woman sold livestock to cover the costs of her brother's studies at university. In other families where this is not possible the child stops where he or she has reached.

Finally, when children succeed there is the prospect of not finding a job. In some families parents

mentioned children who were teachers. But one girl who had graduated in management from Bahr Dar University had not found a job and she was back at her parents' house.

Many people explained that faced with these difficulties and uncertain prospects an increasing number of older children are dropping out and migrating – increasingly so in Saudi Arabia and illegally. It is still mainly a majority of young men who migrate, but young women have started and according to key informants they represent now 5% of the total migration abroad.

Adolescence and youth

Children 12-16 are old enough to mainly take care of themselves. They continue to go to school in many cases. Parents do not command them as used to be the case in the past. Instead, the trend is to reach agreement through discussion, and parents advising their children. At that age and even more so when children get 16-17, for parents it is no longer a matter of taking care day after day, but rather *'fulfilling their children's basic needs'*.

Around 17-18 most youth do not want to remain dependent on their parents; they want to work and support their families. However, this is more visible among young men.

Adolescent boys may be given more food than girls. Their mothers make tea for them. They get pocket money and go out to recreate, which is not the case for adolescent girls.

One common change for both male and female youth is that they marry later than in the past. On average young men marry around 22 instead of 18 as before. Most people explain that this is due to the greater difficulties that young men face to establish an independent household. Young women do not marry before 18 whereas it used to be 15-16 in the past. This is said to be due to the fact that underage marriage is banned, and girls are interested in continuing at school.

Growing up male in Harresaw

Circumcision

Male circumcision is traditionally done on the 8th day after birth and at home. There is an attempt by the government to make people have their male infant circumcised at health facilities. But this is seldom done. What is more successful is that people are aware of the dangers of infection and transmission of HIV/AIDS and they take care of using safe and sterilised tools.

One of the HEWs in Harresaw is of the opinion that male circumcision at home should be banned as strongly as female circumcision. Community members generally said that doing it at health facilities was a good idea because health workers could prevent excessive bleeding and it was safer, but it was costly (available only in Wukro and Mekelle according to some, though others said Atsbi too). Some wanted the service to be offered at the health post level. In the households interviewed there was no circumcision other than at home. As the woman head of a relatively successful household said (talking about the baby boy that her daughter had just had):

... there is government teaching but she is not influenced by the government. She believes that if there is no contamination it is OK, this was what was said by the health extension worker. For circumcising the baby she used a new a razor by boiling it.

However, the wife in the politically important household noted that now that she has information she believes that it is better at a health facility. If she delivered now she would take the baby boy to a health facility because she knows two neighbours whose sons died during circumcision.

Boys' work

Boys mainly help with herding and in farm works. All of the young men interviewed had done this, and continued alongside their education for those who had gone to school. Some of them explained that they had started herding when they were 4 or 5 year-old, in groups of children. Often they were doing this in shift so that their siblings would alternate with them. In households where the father

had died and there was no one else, these boys had to stop their education to take care of the farm – one of them was 13 when this happened (his older brother left for the war in Eritrea).

Nowadays in some households sons help with fetching water and wood, pounding grain, bringing grain to the mill and generally doing some of the 'women's work'. This is particularly the case for educated youth. One woman said that her 16 year old son is cooking stew and *tihilo*³. Women had diverging views about the extent of change, but those who said that there is a change linked this to women's and girls' increasing involvement in economic activities and people's exposure to education.

Completing education

Young men in their 30s and 20s stressed that boys nowadays have better opportunities to attend, but face challenges to complete education. One said that schooling was more costly than before (school materials, transport for those scoring enough to join university). Others highlighted that many students fail. The mid-20s poor man said that compared to when he was a teenager there was an increase in both enrolment and number who failed. They explained that this left many youth disillusioned. The woman head of a relatively successful household said that as many young men fail and are idle *'they become hopeless and this makes other children not to continue schooling'*.

The 33-year richer young man said that boys were not using the better education opportunities they had because *'they want to go to Saudi due to poverty at home or lack of land'* and *'there is lack of jobs even for those who have completed their education.'* Those in their late teens said that boys migrate when they fail as they do not want to remain dependent on their parents. Another explained that teens now prefer to *'get money by short cuts... they think that completing school and becoming a government employee is not a good source of income and can't change life.'*

The politically important household head said that failures were due to the fact that most young men do not concentrate on their education because they dream of going to Saudi. But the poor household head rather lamented the problem of unemployment. His son scored a university grade but he decided to go to Saudi because he lacked money for transport and *'because he lost hope as many educated youth are left jobless'*.

The poor young man in his mid-20s explained that the education system today was better than in their time: it is now a student-centred teaching-learning process. The 16-17 year-old boy from a middle wealth family also explained that young boys fail because they fall in love with girls and this affects their performance at school.

Sexual initiation

Among the young men interviewed, some had had sexual relationships before their marriage and not with their wife-to-be. This was the case of the rich young man now in his early 30s, who had a first sexual experience when he was in Dera with a girl from his *kushet*. He later on married a girl chosen from his parents though he divorced after three years and married his current wife after four years of being single (this was arranged by himself). The other two young men in their early 30s, both of them deacons, had their first sex with their wife.

One of the young men in his mid-20s said he never had a relationship and does not have a girlfriend. Another started when he was 21 and a grade 8 student. He said that *'he did fall in love at that time and it had affected his performance to some extent'* although he passed the exam and went to Atsbi. He is not married now and back in the *tabia* as he has to support his grandparents.

Two of the late teens boys explained that they had never had sexual relationships with girls yet. One of them added that he avoided this as he was concentrating on his studies – although sadly he failed

³ Local meal of small balls of barley dipped into a hot sauce prepared with onions, tomatoes and pepper.

the grade 10 exams and also could not gain access to TVET. The third one explained that he started having interest in girls and had his first sex when he was 17 and he was a grade 10 student. He added that this had affected his performance at school: he scored only 11th in grade 10 while he had scored 4th in grade 9. He still did not have a regular partner now.

Leisure activities and bad habits

Several community respondents noted that adolescent and young men get pocket money and go out to recreate in a way that is not common for adolescent girls and young women. As there is no recreation centre in Harresaw they may go and watch TV in the private drinkhouses. There is one corombulla in the *tabia*, which is also used by male youth. However, as noted by the head of the poor household and several women, these are not found in all *kushet* but just in the *tabia* centre. When they are in Atsbi (for instance as students), male youth also use private drinkhouses and such places to recreate. One woman explained that when her son was in Astbi as a student he was watching TV all the time. The most popular TV shows are drama and wrestling.

Most of the adult community respondents interviewed on this topic said that there is no problem with youth developing bad habits like alcohol and theft in the community. The head of the politically important household said that one issue was youth nagging their parents to get the money to migrate. The wife in the middle wealth household said that sometimes parents were even renting their land to give them the money.

Several people said that there are young men taking ARV drugs (successful female head) or that it is difficult to know because many do not disclose their HIV/AIDS status. The woman head of a poor household thought that there were many young men contracting HIV/AIDS because of those returning from outside where they get infected then it spreads in the *tabia*.

Finding work – economic independence

Almost everyone among those interviewed highlighted the difficulties faced by young people generally and young men in particular to find a way towards economic independence. This clearly is a big concern for the community. Land is very scarce, and the ongoing land reallocation measures which are taken in the *tabia* are not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem (see section 4.2). As just noted, education as a way towards employment works only for a small number.

Non- and off-farm opportunities exist but are not within easy reach apart from daily labour, which is not regular. However, the young women noted that nowadays it is acceptable to do daily labour and also retail goods for young men, whereas in their time it was not. One of them in her early 30s said that nowadays young men can find work 'at home'. However, for options other than daily labour young men need to get some capital. One way of getting it is to migrate illegally to Saudi and this is increasingly common among young men either before they marry to get some income first or even once married; they leave their young wife (who most often then continues to live with her parents) until they are economically stronger.

Young men can have access to credit, in principle – to undertake activities such as fattening, honey production, or trade. But in reality they face difficulties with this. *Wereda* officials explained that *tabia* officials are often reluctant to endorse loans for youth who are not married. In Harresaw *tabia* officials once refused to give credit to a group of youth who had taken training. The Dedit credit officer working in Harresaw said that indeed they did not like to give credit to (male) youth because '*they do not use the money properly and they escape if they are not successful with their business.*' And key informants said that '*most of the people in debt in the tabia are youth because they do not forecast for their future.*'

There are landless young men who manage to reach reasonably well established situations through a mix of farming through sharecropping and other activities (like trade including with Afar or making clothes to sell them on the market). The importance of farming in their livelihood varies but it may be the main thing they do even though it is not on their land (like the mid-30s young man with drip

irrigation on sharecropped land). Presumably they hope that one day they will get land through inheritance or land reallocation. Among the early 30s young men two had some land (0.25 ha) – which one had just received in the land reallocation of 2003 EC. The third one was married and his wife had received 0.25 ha in the same way.

However, the model of how one gets established is changing. Several people noted that young men who have been to school do not want to return and do farming. Those who migrate and return successful also do not want to do this but rather want to engage in trade or business of some kind. Several of the young men in their 20s and late teen had aspirations reflecting this evolution (e.g. plan to open a restaurant) although apart for one, all still had farming ambitions as well.

Getting married

Young men get married later than used to be the case, because of the difficulties in establishing themselves independently and the increasing costs of wedding (see section 4.5 where changes in marriage practices are further described). The young men in their 30s themselves highlight that this has changed a lot since their time. One of them said

In the past, to find a wife and get married was a simple business; now it is difficult because one needs to buy clothes, gold jewellery and other costs at expensive prices. A poor man can't afford this.

The poor men in mid-20s and late teens both highlighted indeed that for those who do not have 'good economic capacity', finding a wife, getting married and having children is difficult.

The average marriage age is now 22 according to key informants. Among the young men interviewed, those in their 30s were married. The richer young man in his mid-20s was married too. The other two, both 25-year old, were not married and were living with their parents or grandparents, as were the three young men in their late teens.

Adult people from the community highlighted that nowadays it becomes rare that parents arrange marriage. The preference of the young people is respected. In particular, young men choose their wife. However, none of the three married young men in their early 30s had chosen their (first) wife; one of them divorced and remarried to a woman he chose but '*his choice had to be approved by his parents*'. The other two are deacons and both said that they married because their parents wanted them to do so. It seems that the change that people explained is only unfolding now - that is, for the generation under 30s.

Some people say that young men's interest in who they marry is changing. The young woman who was interviewed as female opinion leader (herself a mid-30s woman married with four children) said

In marriage aspiration these young men want to marry a lady who is active and smart. They want to marry a lady who can work and improve their life as a spouse. The young men prefer a lady who has attained better educational level. There is a change, in the past the choice of marriage partner was based on counting the number of sheep and other wealth.

She explained another change. She said that

... nowadays young men and young women can have and aspire to have closer relationship with each other in a brotherly and sisterly way. A majority of young men have good relationships with women. In the older generation men and women having a closer relationship were suspected to have some kind of affair but in the young generation this is not necessarily so, it can be a brotherly relationship.

Establishing an independent household

The tradition was that young couples could get married but establish an independent household only after some years. In the meantime they might continue to live apart. Most people say that this has changed but different trends emerge. Young men marry later as noted earlier. Some people say that this is because they marry when they can establish their household independently and they wait until they can do this before marrying. So, they marry later, but establish an independent household

sooner after getting married.

For instance, the young rich man in his early 30s said that establishing one's household is easier than in the past because young couples do not wait to get land from their parents; they go to towns to find jobs and establish themselves in this way. Both the rich and the poor young men in their mid-20s said the same, arguing that now young men can find different sources of income to support their household. However, the poor one also said that getting married and having children was more difficult now and only those with land and from a better-off family could easily afford. The middle wealth teen explained that if youth want to work there are different jobs that they can do, and they can be paid 50-70 *birr*/day.

Other people say that young men may get married but establish their household later – particularly those who migrate. In contrast with the richer 30s young man the poor one said that it was easier to establish one's household in his time – now it was not possible because there was no land where to build one's house except if the government allocated land.

The richer in his early 30s said that he built a house on his older sister's land and separated his household as soon as he *got* married. He was helping his parents on the farm, and started a fattening business when he married and established his household. The deacon from a middle wealth family *got* a house from his parents and moved in it when he married. The deacon from a poor family lived with his parents after his marriage; then he moved in one of the rooms from his parents when he had his first child. He has four children now but has not been able to build his own house because he has no regular income and does not have his own land. The rich young man in his mid-20s bought land and constructed his house in the *tabia* centre when he married. He keeps a shop and is also involved in trading skins and hides which he gets from Afar – after he did this for some time as an employee.

Having children

Most people also said that young men have children later than in the past. It again may be a change which is unfolding only now. Among the young men interviewed the younger age group explained that having children nowadays is '*a bit difficult*' because of the need to have an income – though sometimes the same young men are arguing that there are fairly good job opportunities compared to the past. The young women in their early 30s noted that young men marry later, have children later, and not as many as in the past as there is birth spacing. They said that wives use contraceptives until the household is stronger so that in most cases they have a first child later than in the past.

The two deacons in their early 30s (30 and 33-year old) had respectively three and four children even though they were not established fully independently. The poorer one who lives in a room given by his parents said that he would now use family planning to limit the size of his family so as to be able to raise his children properly. The better established young man who had divorced and remarried did not have children. The rich 26-year old man who has his own house and keeps a shop in the *tabia* centre has a one-year daughter.

Community participation

Wereda officials rated the *tabia* for its good governance notably because '*there are youth in leadership positions*'. Indeed the *tabia* chairman and the vice-chairman are not old (respectively 39 and 30 year-old). The one development team leader interviewed was a successful young man. The middle wealth young man in his early 30s explained that he is a Cabinet member and community mobiliser for the *tabia* (mobilising the community to pay contributions on time and collecting farmers' association contributions); he also attends the *tabia* Council meetings as observer representing the youth association. The *tabia* manager is a young man from the community and seems to be fairly influential as a Council member and the leader of the *tabia* education committee.

However, people from the parents' generation (household heads and wives) did not tell a story of massive participation of the youth in the community's affairs. In one sense their primary concern was the fact that the young generation finds it much harder to get established economically. Three of the

wives said that young men participate in the community affairs – but they did not give any detail. The woman head of a relatively successful household said that young men participate in meetings and have decision-making positions. The woman head of a poorer household noted that their participation had increased in the past five years. They had the youth association and youth league and participated in other administrative issues. But the head of the economically successful household said that *'only a few young men have a voice in the community'*.

In addition to issues around credit outlined above, the voice of the young men seemed to be unheard in relation to land issues. The *wereda* policy that hillside and other communal grazing land should be given to groups of youth for them to undertake income generating activities is not taken up willingly in the community. One young man explained that as long as decisions in the community would be taken by the landed generation exclusively, things could not improve for young men.

In relation to youth participation to developmental activities (such as the PSNP public works and the free community labour), a few community respondents noted that in effect, most of the community's investment is in soil and water conservation activities which benefit landed people but not the young landless generation.

The young men in their early 30s believed that young men had greater participation in the life of the community. The poor young man in his late teens and the middle wealth man in his 30s (a deacon) gave as example of greater participation the fact that the young people who were in Saudi Arabia were sending money for their church. The latter added that this was due to exposure to towns where young people have better participation. The rich young man in his mid-20s also thought that *'the youth now have better community and religious participation'*. The middle wealth and poor men of the same age agreed. The rich teen explained that teens participate in the community festivities and in religious activities.

But the middle wealth teen disagreed and said that *'there are some young men who participate in community and religious activities; but most do not have active participation'*.

The young women talked about young men's participation as well. The early 30s women, who really are considered as adult women, all thought that young men had better participation than in their time in e.g. the youth association, public works, working for elderly people etc. The richer one said that there are youth in important decision-making positions. The younger age groups agreed. One said that young men attend various meetings, work as development team leaders, and do labour work when there is construction or renovation of churches. Several young women mentioned the migrant young men's contributions to churches which as a result were having new roofs and paintings. However, one of them in her mid-20s said that there were not many young men to participate as they are *'continually migrating to Saudi Arabia'*.

Growing up female in Harresaw

Circumcision

All groups of respondents concurred to say that female circumcision has never been practised and therefore it is not an issue in Harresaw. *Wereda* officials said that it is very rare in the *wereda* generally, and is known only in communities that have very close relations with the Afar, and in some Muslim communities in certain *tabias*. In these places there is high resistance against stopping this practice. Surprisingly in light of this, several of the young women interviewed (in all group ages) said that they do not know whether they are circumcised or not.

Girls' work

Girls now go to school like boys. Mothers were divided as to whether this means that they have more work because girls are doing less. Some said this; others said that there is not much change because girls can still do the work outside of the time they spend at school. Indeed some parents complained that in one of the schools students are asked to do work after the teaching hours (watering plants,

cleaning latrines) and so they come back home late which is not convenient.

The young women interviewed explained the type of work that they were doing when they were girls and at what age they started. This is presented in the box below. It includes cleaning the house, cooking, fetching water and wood, washing clothes, taking care of children, herding and (often later on) involving in farming activities. Several of the early 30s and mid-20s age groups noted that girls' workload nowadays is lesser than in their time because there are grain mills and water points are nearer. In their time girls were grinding grain manually and fetching water was taking more time. One of them said that herding is no longer an issue because animals are fed at home. But, she added, some girls in Ekunta *got* and Harresaw *kushet* still have to walk far to get water or to grind the grain (like one of the 16-17 girls said).

Box 2: What work do young girls do in Harresaw

Rich early 30s (never been to school) – She started cleaning house when she was 9 years old then took on gradually more tasks. When she was 15 she was baking *injera*, cooking stew, baking bread and preparing *tihilo*. At 15 she started to work on farming activities like cutting grass and weeding.

Middle wealth early 30s (4th grade, stopped at 14 to take care of children and the household's livestock) - She started cleaning house when she was 7. At 10 she started preparing coffee and stew. At 14 she started baking *injera* and weeding. At 16 she started cutting and harvesting crops. She also was involved in daily labour in the construction of the dam.

Poor early 30s (never been to school) - At 8 she started cleaning the house, cooking stew and fetching water. At 12 she started baking *injera*. At 15 she started washing clothes and cutting crops.

Rich mid-20s (one semester at school) - She started to work when she was 5 years old by cleaning the house. When she was 7 years old she was preparing porridge and *tihilo*. She started baking *injera* when she was 10 years old. She started making *sifet* when she was 15 years old.

Middle wealth mid-20s (stopped in Gr3) - At the age of 8 she started herding sheep and cattle. At 10 she started fetching water and cleaning the house. At 15 she started baking *injera*, cooking stew and preparing coffee. At 16 she started washing clothes. At 17 she started brewing *siwa*. At 18 she started weeding and harvesting.

Poor mid-20s (completed Gr10 in Atsbi) - At the age of 7 she started cleaning the house. At 12 she started cooking stew. At 14 years she started baking *injera*, washing clothes, weeding, and fetching wood and water. At 17 she was retailing goods after school.

Rich 16-17 (is in Gr7 and wants to reach Gr12) - She started to fetch water with a small container when she was 6 years old. At the age of 10 she started cooking stew and preparing coffee. At 12 she started baking *injera*. At the age of 14 she started roasting barley.

Middle wealth 16-17 (stopped in Gr6 due to financial problems in household) – She started herding at the age of 10. She started baking *injera* at 13. She started weeding and cutting at 15. At that age she also started retailing goods at in the *tabia* centre.

Poor 16-17 (never been to school) - She started to work at the age of 7 by cleaning the house, preparing coffee and fetching water. At 10 she started cooking *wat* and washing clothes. At 14 she started baking *injera*, and making craft work called *sifet*. At 16 she started retailing goods from her home. At 17 she started weeding.

Completing education

The young women all highlighted that girls nowadays have much better opportunities to attend school because of the proximity. In particular, one of them in her mid-20s and who had completed Gr 10 in Atsbi noted that it was a big advantage for girls to have the new secondary school in Dera. Also, underage marriage is now banned and parents and the girls themselves are more aware of the importance of education.

One of the early 30s women, who was made to drop out in Gr4 by her parents, also stressed that in her time there was no follow up when children were absent whereas nowadays there is close follow up by the government. She also mentioned the disappearance of herding as a facilitating factor. But the poor woman in her early 30s said that many girls were failing in Gr 10; she thinks that the majority of students failing are girls. She and one of the 16-17 year old girls added that many girls do not easily get educational materials. The poor mid-20 woman said that girls may continue even once they are married, by using contraceptives.

The mid-20s women and the 16-17 year old girls expressed concern because of the high number of failures among girls (and boys) and decreasing prospects of employment for the educated ones. The middle wealth mid-20s woman explained that

The big problem that is related to education is having no job after learning for ten years. This problem also existed in her time but the problem is getting worse nowadays. The number of adolescent girls and boys who are not getting a job after completing tenth grade is increasing. At her age girls and boys who completed tenth grade were going to agriculture and other offices. The government was placing them.

The early 30s and mid-20s young women had little education except for the poorer mid-20s woman who completed Grade 10. The others either never went or stopped early. For two of them, stopping early was prompted by an illness in the household which made them being absent and the school dismissed them, but as one of them added, she also was not serious about education. One of the women who never went to school explained that her father had died and so it was down to her mother who never sent her. The young woman who stopped in Gr 4 explained that her parents wanted her to take care of children and the household's livestock.

The mid-20s young woman who completed Grade 10 rented a room in Atsbi for two years. She is now back and lives with her mother (she is married but her husband is still a student at university); she scored enough to go to private colleges but could not afford it.

The Gr4 completer explained that thanks to her education she can calculate using a calculator and it helps in her retail job. The mid-20s woman who dropped out in Gr 3 said that she could count very well, and her education helped her to do things in a hygienic way. She said that she regretted to have dropped out but she was not serious whereas her father was keen for her to go to school. The poor woman in her early 30s (who never went to school) would want to learn if adult education was coming to the *tabia*.

One of the 16-17 year old girls is in Gr7 and she is planning to reach Gr12. She said that she is grateful to her mother who is sending her to school and buying her clothes, shoes and school materials. Her mother has three children from her father but this is not a marriage relationship. Her father also helps as he buys her notebooks. She said that if she was not studying she would be married and bear children, which is not her interest.

The 16-17 year old girl from a middle wealth family had stopped in Gr6; she said that she wants to continue but her family is facing economic problems. The one from a poor family has never been to school because of her family's poverty. Her mother has had 5 other children with her father but this is not a marriage relationship and so their father does not live with them.

Sexual initiation

The three early 30s women all had their first sex with their husbands; two of them said they had had boyfriends before this (one of them when she was 14; he was her neighbour), but no sexual relations. Two of them married early (16 and 17); one married when she was 19. The mid-20s women also all had their first sex with their husband. The poor woman in her mid-20s *got* married when she was 19, after she completed (and failed) Gr10, to her boyfriend from school. The 16-17 year old girls said that they have not yet started having interest in boys and do not have a boyfriend.

Leisure activities and bad habits

The young women did not talk about leisure. Other community respondents highlighted that adolescent girls and young women do not have much time. They do not go out to recreate like adolescent boys and young men (seen here in one of the tea rooms of the tabia centre).

Girls recreate by chatting and participating in *mehaber*. Several young women in the early 30s and mid-20s age groups mentioned their membership of a *mehaber* and that this was important for them.

Finding work – economic independence

A few of the young women interviewed explained that they started with some paid work when they were adolescent. The rich early 30s young woman started her own business although she stopped it when her husband went to Saudi Arabia and she is now concentrating very much on their farm including irrigation (both she and her husband have land). The middle wealth 30s woman worked on road construction when she was 16. The two 16-17 year old girls who are not at school do not give detail on what they are doing but help their mother, presumably doing retail work or daily labour.

The early 30s and mid-20s women highlighted that young women and adolescent girls have more opportunities to find some work and muster some form of economic independence than in the past. The early 30s young women mentioned daily labour on irrigation and retailing various types of goods as opportunities that were not available in their time. They added that adolescent girls can take credit and use it for trading whereas in their time this was restricted for certain people only. The poor woman in her early 30s said that even girls studying can earn an income, retailing goods on market days (Tuesdays and Saturdays) or doing daily labour (weeding, watering irrigation crops and harvesting) if they have extra time from school.

For the mid-20s women daily labour on irrigation and participating in farming work was already available in their time but not engaging in retailing – which is new. One of them said that nowadays adolescent girls participate in trade equally with young men; and there are even more females than males involved in retailing. They retail vegetables and consumption goods. This was not acceptable in their time. Two of the young women in that age group also mentioned PSNP public works as a source of income for adolescent girls, and so did the 16-17 year old girls, although one of them said that only married young women are working on the safety net. The 16-17 year old girls also mentioned credit for adolescent girls like themselves to start retailing.

Young men highlighted that local jobs are given to young women as a matter of priority, like the jobs of PSNP secretary, cooperative shop keeper, telephone operator, pre-school teacher. The mid-20s Gr 10 woman explained that she used to work as a health volunteer but she is now a preschool teacher (which is a paid job).

Getting married

Most of the women interviewed noted that marriages are no longer arranged by the family, but following the interest of the two partners. Young women marry with their consent in contrast with the past when they were forced by their parents.

They also noted that girls marry later and so do young men. The women in their early 30s and mid-20s explained that this was linked to the difficulties faced by young men to reach economic independence and also to meet the growing costs of wedding. One woman in her mid-20s said that girls too were waiting to have some income before getting married. The early 30s women said that it was easier in their time because life was cheaper, young men had fewer things to buy and were getting land from their parents. One of the mid-20s women said that in her time land was already scarce but it was getting worse these days. Nowadays, it is hard for those who are not economically strong, because *'girls also choose those young men who have money which makes them lead life independently'* (rich early 30s' woman). The younger 16-17 year old girls did not fully agree. They

said that finding a husband and getting married was easy if the girl wanted this but girls preferred continuing with their education.

One of the young women, in her 30s and who had her first child when she was 17, said that marrying later allows girls '*not to bear children when they are still children themselves*'. The middle wealth woman in her mid-20s (married and with one child) explained that

At her age they were marrying at the age of 15-16 years. Now the law has become tight, this is a good opportunity that protects adolescent girls... marriage should be above the age of 18 after knowing what is bad and what is good for them but in her time 15-16 was the time when the girls knew nothing about opposite sex relations. Now they marry at a better age, they can also choose their marriage partner. Adolescent girls can also refuse to marry if they do not want to.

Among the early 30s women one who married at 16 and still lives with the same man explained that

Her husband chose her and she was also happy to marry him. She wanted to get married at that age. There was road construction and she got introduced to her husband while working there. He sent elders to her family and she accepted because she could not refuse her parents and also because she wanted to marry him. Her mother was very keen on the respondent to get married.

Another one said that her husband was chosen by her parents, who were keen for her to get married while she did not want. She divorced him after eight years and stayed almost three years by herself with her two children – although he was supporting her – then she married him again and had a third child. The poorer one had chosen her husband, but she *got* divorced quite rapidly. She continues to live alone with her three children, two from her ex-husband and one from another man.

Among the mid-20s women, both the richer and middle wealth women married a man chosen by their parents, whom they liked or 'did not hate' and they both wanted to get married (one of them said she wanted to do like her friends). They married at 16 and 18 respectively. The poor mid-20s woman married when she was 19, after she completed Gr10 but failed to get enough points to go to a government preparatory school. Her husband whom she met at school is continuing his education and he is a student at Semara University.

None of the 16-17 year old girls was married and the one who continues to study said that this was not her interest.

Establishing an independent household

Two of the early 30s women and the mid-20s women highlighted that in their times married couples took time before establishing their independent households whereas nowadays while people married later, they promptly established their independent households. The early 30s women seemed to have mixed feelings about this, linked to the fact that households established themselves but had no land of their own and so were doing this with a livelihood based on activities like daily labour or retailing goods which they characterised as '*hand to mouth*'. However, the poorer woman in her early 30s said that while the majority of the girls established their independent household rapidly after marriage not all were doing this. Some of them could stay up to 2 years with their parents while their husband migrated in the Arab countries.

The young women in their early 30s had indeed waited some time before establishing their own household. The richer one stayed two years with her mother before doing this. The middle wealth woman stayed one year with her parents, her husband was in Asmara and it was until they became economically stronger. The poorer one in contrast went to live with her husband immediately when she married, but stayed only three years with him and then established her own household eight years ago soon after divorcing, in a house that she rents.

Among the mid-20s women the richer one who is now 24 and has been married for 8 years stayed with her parents all this time while her husband was on migration. She had a child soon after their marriage as he had returned briefly then went again. They have just established their household as

he has now come back, and she was given land in the reallocation of 2001 EC. The middle wealth woman married at 18 stayed for 2 years with her parents. Her husband was visiting her from time to time. They did this until they were economically stronger. The Gr10 completer who is married since 5 years is also still living with her mother and her first young child as her husband is a student.

Having children

The early 30s women all mentioned contraception, and that this was not common in their times. So, one said, while there are perhaps a few more unwanted pregnancies than before (e.g. among the Gr9 and Gr10 girl students) because of the fact that girls marry later but engage in sexual relationships, this is not frequent because they take contraception. Another seemed to be less sure and said that there are more girls now who have children outside of wedlock. But she also noted the big change with much greater availability of contraceptives and in particular, the injections.

The rich early 30s woman said that

Currently there is a good opportunity to have healthy children. In her time there were problems with the health of children. In her time there were many births and many deaths. Now there fewer births, and deaths of infants are reduced a lot. Currently married adolescent girls are limiting births using contraceptives.

The rich mid-20s woman said that young couples nowadays limited the number of children they have due to economic problems: *'they want to bring up fewer children in a good way'*. When they marry their wives use contraceptives after having one child – which she said was also the case in her time (she is married and has only one child who is 7 but her husband came back from Saudi only one month ago). The middle wealth mid-20s stressed that in her time adolescent girls were not usually using contraceptives or they had to go in group and up to Dera, and young women delivered soon after marriage; whereas nowadays adolescent girls can go individually and get contraceptives at the health post. It is easy to get them, which is a very good thing. There is birth spacing and fewer children are born. The poor mid-20s woman added that in her time young married women did not use contraceptives because there was a perception that using them before having a child could provoke permanent infertility.

The 16-17 year old girls said that most young couples do not have children early. When they marry they take contraceptives, though some of them have one child first. Anyway they take contraceptives to limit the number of children they have. The one from a poor family said there are also many young women beyond the age of 20 who bear children without marriage. She added that sometimes adolescent girls may get an unwanted pregnancy and *'when this happens they go to a health facility and abort in Atsbi or Mekelle. This is not openly talked about in the community because it is not an acceptable thing.'*

The early 30s women had their first child when they were 17 and 20; they had four children (rich) and three children respectively (middle wealth and poor divorcee). The early 30s middle wealth young woman said she is using injections (her children are 11, 7 and 3). Two of them mentioned that they delivered at least once in Dera and one had an operation. The mid-20s women, all three married, had only one child. Two of them were married since 8 and 5 years respectively, but for one her husband was in Saudi and only just returned, and for the other he was still a university student. The third one, who is living with her husband, did not mention contraception but she had a difficult delivery for her first child, a 2-year old daughter. She also delivered at the Dera health centre.

There are many female-headed households in Harresaw (51% of the households). Linked to this, several community respondents noted that it was not rare for men to have one official wife and one or even several 'concubines' – with whom they had children. Several women interviewed were in this type of situation and explained that they had done this because they wanted children. An additional explanation is that the men usually plough the land of the different women. Two of the 16-17 year old girls lived in a female-headed household where the father was not present because this was not a

marriage relationship.

There is more on having children in the section discussing maternal health in section 4.3.

Community participation

The early 30s women participated to community activities like full adult women. Two of the three (middle wealth and poor) are development team leaders (hence party members, and also women's league members). One of the two (poor woman) is also a *tabia* Council member. She said that she attends party meetings and the Council meetings and '*has equal rights to participate to important decisions as it is done through voting*'. She has never been to school but is leading her development team's meetings. Her sister who is the health volunteer on the team is Grade 10 and teaches women about health, delivering at the health centre, drinking clear water, using latrines etc. The middle wealth woman is also a member of the land administration in her *kushet*. The richer one is actively involved in farming but seems less engaged in the community affairs, though she is a member of a 1-5 group and explained that this is useful.

That is in contrast with the mid-20s women who have no particular role in the community even though they all three are married women. This may be because two of them are not yet really established as wives in their own household. The richer one said that adolescent girls did not participate in the community's affairs in her time and this was still the case today. They mentioned that they are doing the community free labour works and pay the membership fee of the women's association. They were members of an *equb* for one, and *iddir* for two of them but these were very new. One of them said that she liked the 1-5 weekly meetings because it increases her awareness about health issues. The Gr10 completer said that she does not participate in *tabia* or sub-*tabia* positions. But she is a preschool teacher after having been a health promoter.

The 16-17 year old girls said that adolescent girls, including themselves, do not have participation in the community's affairs and there is no change in this. Themselves did not participate in the youth association or the women association or in any other community organisation.

Gender inequities

The rich early 30s woman explained that married couples nowadays are helping each other and there is no longer beating of wives – two big changes compared to her time. She explained that in her case her husband has stopped beating her thanks to the teachings of the government. Until then he was beating her and her children were crying. Now they are all right. Other respondents gave a mixed picture. Some said that domestic violence against women was continuing but a number of women explained that educated men are not beating their wives and are generally much less conservative.

Similarly, several people said that the strict gender segregation between men and women with regard to 'women's work' at home is decreasing especially among the young educated generation; and also due to the fact that there is also a less strict segregation in the economic sphere. Women do like men in many things, as one woman explained it.

Linked to these trends, a number of women said that the perception that '*women are weak*' is decreasing, though some of them said that these changes take time. Women still do not plough. One woman who is a trader said that women are less good than men in loading and unloading things which is a limitation for a trader, but they are better at buying and selling. The Dedebit officer said that women are better than men in relation to credit because they do not drink and misuse the money.

Women are paid less than men when they do daily labour. They pay more than men when they migrate to Saudi Arabia (it is 4,000 *birr* for men; 5,000 *birr* for women).

Most people said that the rights of women and girls in relation to access to land and other properties in divorce or in cases of inheritance have been enforced since a long time. A number of respondents including *tabia* officials said that their rights had not changed but they were better enforced because

of greater awareness among the women and the elders had received training.

In Harresaw *tabia* there are various forms of affirmative actions aimed to diminish gender inequities. Female-headed households are given priority in getting reallocated land. Young women are given priority in getting locally paid jobs like PSNP secretary, preschool teacher, telephone operator and cooperative shop keeper. There are separate structures for male and female development teams and 1-5 network groups and this is with the objective of making it easier for women to fully participate. Women also represent 50% of the *tabia* Councillors and some women are really active in decision making processes – although there continues to be much fewer women than men on the *tabia* Cabinet and women's participation in the Council is not 'equal to men'.

Age inequities

The most often mentioned inequity linked to age is in access to land. Most young people are landless.

Positions of responsibilities in the community structures also seemed to be reserved for married people.

Social equity interventions

Assistance to poor people

The main government support to poor people is through the PSNP. There is no other system. The Adonay project and World Vision used to provide various types of support to poor and vulnerable people (see below) but they have phased out. This was confirmed by both *tabia* officials and different community respondents, who generally said that there had been no problem with such support but this was no longer available.

There are **free medical services** provided to very poor people and former fighters with disabilities. A person has to show a support letter from the *kushet* officials to ensure that he/she is too poor to pay for medical services; then it is given to the *tabia* manager. Other people explained that there needs to be a letter of the *wereda* and this takes a long time especially for patients who are referred to further medical services. Around 2000 EC three people from each *kushet* were registered for exemption of payment for health care.

The health centre head said that the system was not working well because the *wereda* budget to refund health facilities when they give free services to exempted patients is very small. *Wereda* officials said that in 2003 EC the service was interrupted due to budget constraints in the *wereda*. All community respondents interviewed on this topic knew about the exemption for PLWHA, war veterans and very poor people with a letter; several mentioned its limitations. As described earlier there were cases of people who had been refused to get exempted because they did not fulfil the criteria for which they were asking it (the disabled girl) and others who did not feel they could ask for it (the elderly woman with her old husband).

There are no other exemptions for poor people. Everyone who takes water from one of the water points pays two *birr* per month. Education is provided for free and payment is small, but there was a suggestion that the poor sending many children to school should be exempted and also poor children of veterans. Land tax is also paid from the amount of crop they harvest as everybody has the duty to pay land tax. The community contributions are deducted from the food aid they receive and "*are not difficult to pay*". One person mentioned that very poor people could get a letter from the *wereda* permitting them to take dead wood from the protected forest to sell it and get an income.

Interventions to help vulnerable people

Wereda officials mentioned various activities. They explained that the *wereda* labour and social affairs office assisted disabled people to engage in income-generating activities (craft work and milk

production). Those engaged in milk production were organised in association and given land, 30,000 *birr*, fodder and shelter for the cattle (cement was given by the *wereda* administration and iron sheets by the education office). Officials said that people had shown improvements, but also noted problems in that people did not want to work as a group and so they continue individually, and there was need for more technical advice. Officials said that the veterans' association should be supported to engage in income-generating activities too. The same office supports children with polio to get crutches, shoes and artificial legs in sending them with a letter to Mekelle.

At the community level in Harresaw, *tabia* officials and community respondents explained that the 1-5 networks are supposed to help **elderly and weak people** in doing their activities (like weeding, constructing or maintaining their houses). But according to key informants from the community this has not been fully implemented. There are some initiatives but they are not enough. The problem is that the community cannot come to similar consensus that can be implemented.

There are no other government programmes supporting elderly people. Government interventions for **PLWHAs** include access to ART in Atsbi, and free health care for associated infectious illnesses. But there is no other specific support. There is no government intervention for **orphans**, even though it is a big issue in the *wereda* as a whole and in *tabia* Harresaw, and no support to **people with disabilities, mentally ill people, and elderly people needing assistance**. For all these groups of vulnerable people the *tabia* is providing or organising support out of locally available resources (by giving them priority for land in the case of PLWHA, and in getting food aid; also in mobilising labour to assist the people or their families with various activities).

There used to be support to poor and vulnerable people by two NGOs active in the *tabia* and the *wereda* for five years, the Adonay project and World Vision. But they phased out recently and so *wereda* officials said that this type of support was not sustainable.

The **Adonay project** was giving sheep to PLWHA. **World Vision** was giving sheep and training to those disclosing their status; they also *got* training on their health, how to live positively and improve their livelihood and the importance of PMTCT. Officials explained that there were visible changes for those who *got* the sheep after the drought; World Vision also replaced sheep which had died due to drought. But the woman interviewed living with HIV AIDS explained that her three sheep had all died as they were not local and could not resist to the local climate. There used to be some supplementary food but that has stopped too, and transport to Atsbi is not subsidised or people have to walk which is tiring.

Adonay and World Vision also assisted orphans but *wereda* officials said that it was far from sufficient considering the magnitude of the problem. *Tabia* officials explained that when this support was active it was a good thing. World Vision in particular was doing a lot (support in grain, livestock and school materials) and was also supporting children living with poor parents. Adonay project was giving money to orphans who could not engage in income generating activities (500 *birr*/ year) and seed capital (1,000 then 1,500 *birr*) for those who could. One problem is that livestock died massively during the drought and this affected the support to orphans as well.

In Atsbi *wereda* officials explained that there is a local sponsorship programme called '*hade hitsan nihade tikal*' or 'one child for one organisation'. This is organised by the *wereda* labour and social affairs office. Support is raised from individuals and organisations like Cabinet members, the Orthodox, Muslim and Protestant churches, workers in an organisation, and wealthy individuals. They pool their resources to assist one child or those who are wealthier assist one child individually, by buying them educational materials and clothes for one year. In their views it is a good thing as it also increases the commitment of community people to help needy people. But it also raises issues as the beneficiaries sometimes take this support for granted, children complain about the clothes and families with whom the children are living want some other types of support.

Adonay and World Vision were also assisting mentally ill people and disabled people or their families and elderly people. But this was as part of their overall programme, not as a specific support to those

kinds of people.

Now that these projects phased out there is no such support. *Tabia* officials explained that there were cases in which the support was successful in terms of improving the livelihoods of the people concerned and their families, but also many in which the support was not used effectively and also drought undermined part of the effects. They suggested that it would be better for vulnerable people to establish associations (like the war veterans with disabilities) and undertake income-generating activities – for which they need some financial and material support to start.

Community respondents usually knew about these support activities and were appreciative of them. For instance, one middle wealth man explained that

The disabled people get support that is provided by NGOs and is given through the government. They are selected at the tabia level and are given a wheelchair and mirkuz (hand crutch). However, there is shortage of supply so that not all disabled people are supported. Besides, those who receive the materials do not use them, perhaps the landscape is not appropriate for them. Financial and livestock support is provided for blind people. The elderly also get support from the federal level and they had been given blankets. There is a quota for orphaned people and they are given such materials as exercise books, sheep and clothes. The community contributes money so that the orphaned children continue their education. The HIV positive people are given priority to get land; they get additional food aid for free for 8 people. Although the community was helping them (with labour) in the past, this has not been possible in the same way recently as their number has increased. For the female headed households, some labour is reduced in the FFW public works; they are given priority when there is NGO support. As for sex workers, as they do not disclose themselves, I have not heard of any support provided for them.

Many mentioned the Adonay and World Vision projects that had phased out. Most of them confirmed that there was no special support from the government to the various vulnerable groups identified in the community and there were many such people who needed more support. *'But whenever there is some kind of support to the community they are considered as a special case.'*

Promoting equity for women

Legislation and awareness-raising and interventions

Harmful traditional practices affecting women

Tabia officials explained that there is no **female circumcision** in the community since a long time. And there has been much progress about a number of other HTP harming women. First, in the past **rape and abduction** were considered as heroic actions and were common occurrences. The rapist was forced to marry the girl by way of reconciliation. Nowadays girls are accusing the men who rape; as a result men fear the harsh sentences foreseen in the law (15-25 years of imprisonment), and rape and abduction have almost disappeared. The community has been oriented that these actions are harmful practices, and generally they support the law.

The law also punishes people who violate the rights of women and this includes **male violence against women**. *Tabia* officials explained that the *wereda* and *tabia* women affairs' offices and women associations follow up cases and sue to the court. However, the punishment is sometimes too lenient. For example, a student who killed a girl after she refused to be his girlfriend was punished with only 10 years of imprisonment. In other instances, offenders are released earlier by '*amecro*'. Thus, the punishment is not educative as it should be. Although there is full support to avoid violence against women, there still is a sense of acceptance of male domestic violence which is a misunderstanding of the problem.

Men and women from the community talked about the teachings against these HTPs. They usually said that rape and abduction had become very rare. In relation to husbands' violence the picture is mixed. Some women said that the community was not cooperating with this government message. A number of women said that their husband was not beating them but this was because he was

educated (wife in middle wealth household and in the politically important household). However, the rich young woman in her early 30s explained that

The tabia women affairs and administration teach to avoid male violence against women. Her husband was beating her but now her rights are respected because of the lessons given. She appealed for divorce but her husband promised he will behave better. Her children were crying when her husband was beating her but now the children are fine.

The new family law bans **underage marriage**; the minimum marriage age is now 18 for girls, which is a big change. This and the way it is enforced are discussed in section 4.5. This law promotes equity for women as it enables girls to continue longer at school. *Tabia* officials explain that this is followed up by the women affairs' office of the *tabia* and other relevant sectors, who accuse those who arrange such marriages. Those who are found to violate the law are punished and most often the marriage is cancelled. The challenge is that parents fear unwanted pregnancy before marriage – which indeed occur – and so they want their daughter not to have such problem and want to see her married as soon as possible. For this reason they lie on their daughter's age.

Wereda officials highlighted that there is resistance by certain specific groups, like Muslim in some of the *tabias*, deacons from the Orthodox Church, and female-headed households who do not have male support and want to marry their daughter to have protection for the family.

Community respondents said that by and large the community was cooperating with this law. The rich young woman in her late teens explained that

Banning of underage marriage is good because it made her to continue her education. Her mother wanted to make her marry but the respondent appealed to the school and the mother was called to school by the women affairs officer and the marriage was cancelled. This is very important to her.

Human re/pro/duction

There are more female students at **school** than male. The community is more positive about sending females to school. The problem is that girls' performance is still below that of boys, especially in higher grades. The *tabia* women affairs' office and women association and health providers go to elementary schools and provide education about reproductive health for female students. In 2003 EC, HIV/AIDS VCT was conducted for volunteer female students. The students have been able to get better knowledge on HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. The girls' club in the school has played a great role, and helped female students to form an Anti-AIDS club.

Regarding **health**, with the deployment of the HEWs women are supported to keep their personal hygiene and maintain environmental sanitation, use vaccinations, have ANC follow up, and use improved technologies that save their time and energy and support them to improve their livelihoods. The HEWs are playing a great role in helping pregnant mothers by taking them to the health centre at the time of delivery.

Generally there have been a number of interventions that benefitted women. As a result, the number of educated women is increasing and there are fewer cases of death of mothers and children. The HEWs and health promoters as well as a number of women from the community highlighted the role of the female development teams and 1-5s in relation to maternal and child care. Community respondents mentioned tutorials for girls in the Gr 1-8 school. However, as explained in the section about education (4.3) the schools in Harresaw do not all have adequate sanitation – even the new secondary school in Dera does not yet have any latrine at all.

Livelihoods – Economic empowerment

Women are given priority over men in the *tabia* **land reallocation**. This is well accepted by the community as there are more landless women than landless men. There is no change and since the TPLF era there has never been an issue in relation to women's **rights to land and other properties**, generally and in case of divorce. *Tabia* officials said that the change is that women are more aware of

their rights and these are also better enforced even if the marriage is customary. *Wereda* officials were of the views that there is an issue with elders often being biased and favouring men (who can invite them to drink *sewa*). *Tabia* officials disagreed with this, saying that elders had enough knowledge and had no bias. Among the women interviewed most said that elders were not biased or they had not heard of biases. In the cases studied by the researchers women's rights were upheld even when the cases had been seen by elders (see section on justice in 4.4).

In relation to food for work, there is no change in the modalities for the free community labour. But in the PSNP pregnant women are **exempted from work** when they reach 6 months and are given maternity leave. They also have 10 months of leave after delivery. At *wereda* level it has been agreed that maternity leave should start at four months but this has not yet been implemented because there is no written direction/ letter that orders the *tabia* to implement this. The maternity leave measure has been supported by everyone in the community because the PSNP PW work is hard and it was affecting the women.

Vulnerable women receive equal support from the government and NGOs that aid male and female HIV patients. The women association members contribute money and grain to support women who have health problems and those who live with HIV/AIDS. The PLWHA (both males and females) are also supported by the safety net programme, through getting more grain than their normal share; the community supports them in doing farm activities and in constructing their houses.

In relation to livelihoods *wereda* officials said that attention to women was 'mainstreamed' in all activities. *Tabia* officials explained that the women affairs' office coordinates activities by which women participate in the **women's package** and get credit services to improve their livelihood. *Wereda* officials said that women are encouraged to engage in the production of milk and poultry, and cafeterias and drink houses. One woman from the community said that the credit service was in place but this was not new.

A number of women have taken loans (or for a few, came back with capital from migration) and have engaged in small business, selling tea and drinks and running shops, in the centre of the *tabia*. Improved poultry was mentioned by wives and one of them said that it was beneficial because the hybrid laid more eggs and had more meat. But diseases were an issue.

Community respondents highlighted many other changes in relation to women's role in the livelihood field – some of which only indirectly or not related to government interventions for women or livelihoods generally. One woman summarised this saying that:

Now the involvement of women and girls in farming, business and daily labour work is increasing. Many women are increasing work on farm activities. They harvest, thresh with oxen, they do all types of farming activities except ploughing. This change came in the last five years, and it came because many husbands have migrated to Saudi Arabia. Sharecropping is minimised. When a woman has an ox, if her husband migrates she does not want to give land for a sharecroppers, and she also does not want to pay much for daily labourers. Girls also do farm work. In the past five years there is also an increase in the involvement of women and girls in retailing goods and vegetables. Now there are many women and girls who are engaged in petty trading and other businesses. Since 2003 EC women and girls also engage in daily labour whereas previously working for others was not something acceptable. (Wife in the successful household)

Women's political empowerment

As a rule women should get 50% of the positions in all *tabia* structures. *Tabia* officials explained that this has been achieved with regard to women's representation at the *tabia* council, and the number of women party members. But at Cabinet level out of the 14 cabinet members only three are women. So while there is change, it is not as desired. There are activities to empower women and bring them into leadership positions. However, practically there is not much change. This is because many women are too busy with their domestic activities and do not want their home life to be affected when they have to spend time in meetings, and so they do not want to come to leadership

positions. Their husbands may also not allow them to leave their domestic responsibilities and spend time in meetings.

The pattern is similar with regard to women's participation in *wereda* structures. *Wereda* officials explained that 50% of the *wereda* sector vice-head positions, which require a first degree, are supposed to be occupied by women. In early 2012 this was achieved. Since 2004 EC 35% of the heads of offices should be women (up from 30% since 2001 EC). This was not achieved. They said that heads of office are appointed by the *wereda* administrator, and that to be a head of office education does not matter much. A woman with only 10th grade could become head of office if she has good political leadership and other capacities. But '*women have capacity gaps in this respect*'.

Wereda and *tabia* officials also explained that for the PSNP in principle 50% of the foremen (sic) were supposed to be women, but this was not practical. Men were preferred for the job in addition to their better ability to read and write.

At the community level one important recent change is the establishment of separate male and female development teams and 1-5 groups. *Tabia* officials said that this was decided by the *wereda* women affairs office and women association, as a response to the fact that in the past structures and meetings were dominated by men and women's membership and participation was weak. *Tabia* officials highlighted that as women now meet by themselves '*they have been able to explain their ideas without being oppressed and they feel free*'.

The women interviewed had no particular opinion about this specific change. Discussing more generally about women's empowerment in the community's affairs, the WA leader and the women affairs' representative on the *tabia* Cabinet highlighted good achievements in awareness but the need to do more, further raising women's knowledge and training them so that they would be able to take up various leadership positions. Women had diverging views as to whether women's participation in politics was greater or not. They also had different opinions as to whether women were still considered as 'weak'. Some stressed that this is no longer the case because women are seen to '*do everything like men*' (e.g. wife in the middlewealth household). But others said that this had not yet changed much.

Several of the young men interviewed explained that the government had various affirmative action policies in favour of women. There is tutorial for girls (and weaker students) in schools and female students pass with lower marks; in the community female-headed households have priority access to land (two lots for women for every one lot for men); they also have priority in getting local paid jobs (PSNP secretary, telephone operator, service cooperative shop keeper, *tabia* secretary using the computer, 0-grade teachers etc.). However, women are paid less than men in daily labour: when men are paid 50-60 *birr* women are paid 30-40 *birr* only, which the young man mentioning this found rather unfair.

Women's organisations

In early 2012 the **women's association** in Harresaw had 982 members, out of whom 775 women were said to be "*very active*" by the WA leader. She explained that those above the age of 75 and 80 send applications to stop paying the membership fee. Young women can become members when they are 18. There is also a women **league** and a **federation** in the *tabia*. In 2003 EC the league had 85 women members according to the WA leader (*tabia* officials said 98 and that in 2004 EC the number had reached 150). 65 of them are "*very active*". The women's league and the WA "*do not have separate work; they work together*". But to be a member of the League one has to be a member of the WA and of the party. Some women indeed complained that having to pay the three membership fees (WA, League and party) is not fair.

Wereda officials described the main role of the women's League as working to put women in political leadership position. *Tabia* officials explained that as the League was new in Harresaw, it had not yet done much. They described its role as follows:

... its principle is to raise the knowledge of women about politics by which they can understand that they have rights equal to their husbands at home, to enable them to play leading roles in implementing the government's economic as well as political policies through being members of the political party. So far, the members of the league have been able to actively participate in the monthly political meetings and have been able to raise their political knowledge and share their experiences. The number of members is also increasing over time.

They explained that the federation does not have members and funds of its own. It organises the association and league and checks on membership fee collection.

The female development teams are under the WA. All development team leaders are members of the WA (and of the party). At the same time they also work very closely with the League. In all teams there is a representative of the League.

Women members explained that meetings of the WA and of the League discuss the same topics. There are monthly meetings. At the last WA meeting they discussed about underage marriage, youth migration and maternal health. At other times they discussed about taking credit and paying back on time, sending female children to school and equal rights of women in marriage.

The WA leader said that there were achievements like better awareness of women, fewer underage marriages and more female children going to school. The WA, through the development teams, was also helping to ensure that women supported each other in domestic and farming activities and in times of hardship. Women were also mobilising to help weaker members of the community. For instance, the WA members had contributed 1 *birr* each that had been shared among the 6 female PLWHA of the *tabia*. Women members were usually fairly agnostic about the benefits of being a member of the WA. The wife of the politically important farmer was not a member of any of the three women's organisations, and knew nothing about their activity.

Youth policies and programmes

Youth organisations

In early 2012 the **youth association** had 290 members, all males and aged 15-35. The members of the youth league were 50, all males and aged 18-28. The league started in 2002 EC and it is not yet very strong. The members of the league must be party members. There was no youth federation. The YA leader explained that the YA and the league work together on all youth issues, with the youth affairs' office of the *tabia*. Several respondents said that the role of the League was not very clear. The membership fee is separate. It used to be 3 *birr* but increased to 5 *birr* in 2003 EC for the YA, and for the league it was 3 *birr*.

Members of the two youth structures are all males because women have a separate association and league. As explained above some women said that this had been decided because it was better for women who were not listened to in gender mixed structures. Hence, development teams were established separately as well. *Wereda* officials suggested that young women shifted from YA to WA because the women association is stronger and gets more resources than the YA (in the form of training, access to credit etc.). Some youth from Harresaw thought that it was not good and in future young women and young men should work together.

The YA organises youth so that *"they participate in different development interventions to improve their lives"* and provide labour to support weaker members of the community. The leaders explained that there were some achievements. *'Youth were able to express their feelings openly'*. For some of them their lives improved because of the interventions. For instance, 12 youth *got* land on the hills and planted trees, and 56 landless youth *got* land in 2003 EC.

But illegal migration and lack of cooperation from the community are big problems. The community does not want to give communal land. Sometimes the *tabia* administration refuses to give credit to unmarried youth because it does not trust them. When the YA leaders try to convince the members

not to migrate they respond that they do not have any other livelihood alternatives because they do not have farmland. As they put it

There is hopelessness among the youth. They want to see dramatic improvement in their life in a short period of time. That is why so many youth migrate to Saudi Arabia.

One influential young man, leader of a successful development team and *iddir* and member of the league, explained that youth ask the question of why the government does not create job opportunities for the youth. Moreover, in the *tabia* the land reallocation process is corrupt, and the conflict between *gots* about land is harming the youth generally. He said that the league needed to fight for this problem to be resolved.

A number of youth who are simple members of the association or their parents said that there was no benefit to being a member and no visible result achieved by the association. They said that *tabia* officials and the government were promising things but they were not implementing them.

Youth livelihoods

Wereda officials explained that there were many activities trying to improve the livelihood of the youth in the *wereda*, as summarised in the box below for the year 2003 EC.

Box 3: Youth livelihood interventions in Atsbi wereda in 2003 EC

Farm land is given to youth (845 between September 2010 and May 2011, of whom 489 female and 356 male; and again 555 in May-June 2011, of whom 189 female and 366 male): some of it is rehabilitated communal land and hillside land, some is farming land without heirs or taken from people who have other livelihood means (civil servants etc.) – as is now allowed by the new regional land law. Some of it is given on an individual basis, some on a cooperative basis. Youth are encouraged to engage in fattening, honey production, fruit tree or eucalyptus planting.

Among the 845 youth 6 cooperatives were formed to work on irrigation – but not in Harresaw. In Harresaw groups have been formed to work on honey production.

In urban areas there is the urban package, started in 2003 EC: credit of 5,000 to 10,000 *birr* for small and medium enterprises. 426 packages were given; the screening was done by the youth affairs' office of the *wereda* and REST.

Elsewhere there is less credit given to youth because they use the money to migrate. They get inputs in kind – e.g. motor pumps, irrigation drip systems – like other farmers.

There was 10-day technical training in Atsbi for 400 youth, on poultry, irrigation, goats and sheep and beehives. Other training was given through the SME office, for youth taken to Agbe, Mekelle and Adigrat, for two months, on cobblestone chiselling and masonry.

Wereda officials said that there was some success but one big issue is the lack of budget so the youth office cannot train many youth for the long term. They suggested that there needed to be a project to help in this area. Another big issue was the growing youth migration, which was mainly illegal. While some of the migrants succeeded there were also very sad story. In June 2003 EC 49 youth from *tabia* Hadnet (neighbouring to Harresaw) died at the same time on the way to Saudi.

Tabia officials highlight a number of interventions aimed to improve the livelihoods of the youth of Harresaw. The DA livestock explained that there is a livestock youth package by which landless young men and women are supposed to engage in beekeeping and production of honey, and fattening. *Tabia* leaders said that **hillside land** was recently allocated to youth to this effect. The youth are also given **farmland on an individual basis** – through the land reallocation process. There are also youth who **got land on a cooperative basis**, like 12 cooperatives for the production of potatoes, but they are not well established yet. There are some cooperative groups who put beehives. They were given loans. Those for the production of potatoes have already received land.

Young people mentioned the farming land reallocation process but some of them said that it was biased, and anyway youth are only one among several groups to be given land in this way. They said

that they heard that in the next reallocation high priority would be given again to female-headed households (more lots are reserved for them), veterans and PLWHAs (getting land without lottery) and they expect that only a few youth will get land. To get land in this way one has to be a member of the youth association which they found was not fair. Community respondents highlighted that land to be reallocated was small compared to the number of landless people including youth, and in some *gots* there had been no land reallocated. People in Endagebriel *got* (in Ma'ekel *kushet*) had refused to reallocate land because they wanted other *gots* to give land to compensate the land from the *got* taken for public buildings; the other *gots* had refused, and the process was stalled.

By early 2012 the youth package had not been very successful. One young man explained that there was resistance to give land to youth groups. That must be seen in a context where land scarcity and various land use and reallocation activities had raised tension. In Harresaw the hillside land used to be communal grazing land; it has become 'community forest' area but is still used to grow grass for people's livestock. Landed people are reluctant to give it away. The young man added that there was little chance that this would change as long as land-related decisions would be taken by landed people exclusively.

One group of 12 youth was said to have started to plant trees on hillside land. But one respondent explained that this took time and youth wanted an income more rapidly and were more attracted by migration. Some community respondents explained that implementation had started, e.g. one woman said that some communal land had been taken and this affected her household but she was happy because it was for the youth. Other said that to their knowledge this policy had not yet been implemented. Apparently decisions are taken on a *got* basis, which may explain these different stories. One man explained that in Maekel *kushet* people had refused to give land to youth because they wanted to use the land for their cattle (through cut-and-carry).

Tabia officials also mentioned **credit service** given to youth in cash and in kind. They are given loans of up to 6,000 *birr* on an individual basis. Others were given modern beehives in kind as a loan. The price of one modern beehive is 1,150 *birr*. The youth are also given training and advice about how they should work and how they should manage their money. The training lasts 1 to 2 days and includes technical skills as well as skills of how to manage and change themselves.

Tabia officials said that many youths have started agricultural activities based on their plan, and there are youth who have become successful in honey production. However, these interventions are undermined by the **migration** of the youth to Saudi Arabia. They migrate even after taking credit. Some of them do indeed become successful; others die on their way to Saudi Arabia.

Tabia officials' suggestion is that the government must create job opportunities for the youth. Many youth are highly attracted by migration in Arab countries because at home there are no satisfactory job opportunities. A lot more should be done on honey production and livestock production, for which there is good potential in the *tabia*. One of the *tabia* officials, reflecting on the fact that the future of the youth was a big issue for the community, said:

There are many landless youth in the tabia; their number is not even well known. There is no big intervention to solve this serious issue as such, although recently the tabia administration gave land to landless youth. There is no NGO working in this area. In future students who complete 10th grade should be given job opportunities. They should be made to organise in a cooperative and do non-farm activities, because the land is affected by recurrent drought. The TVET should be expanded so that many more students will get a chance to get skill training there. The government should give loans to youth so that they can engage themselves in income-generating activities. For the future such development activities should be expanded and the youth should be made to learn and work. As a solution landless and other youth migrate to Arab countries illegally so the government should close the illegal migration routes. It would be good if the government can send them through a legal way. It would be good if land could be given to youth.

The young people of Harresaw have diverse aspirations. Some of these are not very different from

what must have been those of their parents; others reflect new ideas about livelihoods. The aspirations of the young women and men in their early 30s, mid-20s and late teens and of various wealth backgrounds who were interviewed in the course of the fieldwork reflect this mixed picture – as presented in the box below.

Box 4: Aspirations of the young people in Harresaw

Rich young woman 30s - For the next five years she wants to work on irrigation using fertiliser and improve her life. She will make her children go to school and help them to have government jobs. She has a concrete plan: she is going to take credit because it made her grow. She has asked to take a dairy cow this year.

Poor young woman 30s - For the coming five years she aspires to have land and build her own house. With her life there is nothing different she plans to do because she has no money. She will make her children continue their schooling.

Rich young woman mid-20s - For the next five years she aspires to open a shop and sell goods. She wants to live in Wukro and work with her husband. But she has not yet a concrete plan to do this.

Middle wealth young woman mid-20s - For the next five years she aspires to open a shop and improve her life. She wants to be engaged in retailing goods and selling vegetables in Dera. When her husband comes back from Saudi they have plans to open a shop and to improve together. The plan is not concrete yet.

Poor young woman mid-20s - For the next five years she wants to open a shop and get improved and make her household get better food and clothes. She has no concrete plan; it is more of a wish.

Rich young woman 16-17 - In the coming five years she aspires to get higher education. She wants to reach 12th grade and to get good marks that will enable her to join university. She has a concrete plan to achieve her aspiration. She will be studying very hard.

Middle wealth young woman 16-17 - For the next five years the respondent aspires to continue her education but only if her household becomes less poor. She does not have a concrete plan.

Poor young woman 16-17 - In the next five years the respondent wants to be engaged in retailing goods and to improve her life. She also wishes for improvement for all the household members. She does not have concrete plans to start a business.

Rich young man 30s - He has planned to be engaged in livestock trade and farming and to improve his live by working hard. But as natural disasters occur frequently there are risks. He also has decided not to take credit after he completes paying his current debt because as the interest rate is very high, disadvantages are greater than advantages. So, he wants to change his life by saving from what he earns on his farmland and from his trade.

Middle wealth young man 30s - He wants to leave his responsibilities at the *tabia* and to be fully engaged in his private activities, in doing irrigation and fattening. Then, he can improve his family's livelihood and get out of the safety net programme. In order to achieve this, he has opened an account at Dedit in his and his wife's name. He has planned to open a saving account for his daughters too. He has great interest to send them to school. He wants to save money so that he can buy a milk cow.

Poor young man 30s - For the coming five years, he has planned to get land and improve his livelihood through farming. He also wants to send all his children to school. Now one of his daughters is 1st grade; the other one has started at the child-to-child programme. As there is a plan to reallocate land for housing, he will receive land and build a house. He has also planned to buy an ox.

Middle wealth young man mid-20s - For the future he wants to re-sit for the grade 8 national exam privately and continue his education. His parents want him to learn like his sister does. He wants to play his role in helping his parents to improve their life by completing his education.

Poor young man mid-20s - For the coming five years, he has planned to improve his household's life by using necessary inputs on rainfed and irrigation land. He also has planned to continue his education and to publish his poems if he gets sponsorship. Although he asked the *wereda* youth association and the *tabia* administration for sponsorship and they promised, he has *got* no practical

support so far. He is an active participant in the DWET (Demtsi Weyane Tigray) Radio Programme; the journalists there encouraged him and promised him to do their best to help him.

Rich young man in late teens - He has planned, for the coming five years, to participate in associations to do some work or to borrow money from his father (who lived in Saudi) and then to participate in irrigation by renting land. His parents had been paying their debt so far; but they have completed paying their debt and he hopes that they will save money with which they will improve their life. He discussed with his friends about getting land at the hills and the possibility of doing irrigation farming; but they have not yet planned to implement their ideas.

Middle wealth young man in late teens - For the next five years, he has planned to be engaged in fattening business and save enough money to continue his education at private colleges. Otherwise, he will target to improve the livelihood of his family by participating in farming and trading.

Poor young man in late teens - For the coming five years he has planned to improve his life by doing shoeshine and shoe repairing side by side with his farming activities. He has already started together with his friend. He also has planned to improve the life of his family. He wishes to be role model for the community that if everyone works hard, it is possible to change life without going abroad.

It is striking that there is no mention of migration. Yet at the same time, this is said to be an increasingly strong aspiration of the young generation. Community respondents explained that this is because youth who fail to continue further at school – at 8th or 10th grade – do not want to do agricultural activities; they think and are told by successful migrants that in Saudi Arabia there are many good job opportunities with good payment; they see improvements in the life of those who went; they *'want to get more at once'*, said one person.

Generally community respondents expressed concerns similar to those of the *tabia* officials. One man also said that there is a problem with implementing plans with regard to youth (e.g. a plan for a youth recreation centre) and that this needed to be improved: *'It is better not to announce a plan that is not implemented, or if it is announced, it has to be implemented'*. They also thought that government needed to do a lot more with regard to creating various types of opportunities for the youth (small land, jobs in factories to be built, blocking illegal migration routes etc.).

Youth and HIV/AIDS

Tabia officials explained that there is education given to the youth on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Community conversations and other tools are used to teach the youth as well as the community as a whole. There is a budget for this and the health extension workers monitor implementation. The *tabia* administrators also participate in these lessons. The issue of HIV/AIDS is discussed with the development teams, male and female. *Wereda* officials mentioned ten days' training given to youth on peer education, by REST, and that for about four months payment was given to youth facilitating peer education. There are also youth music bands, and they entertain people on Sundays with poems, drama and music. This was not mentioned in Harresaw.

VCT is done in the form of a campaign in the *tabia* whenever there are meetings and other community gatherings. However, the HEWs explain that there is a shift in policy and VCT is no longer carried out as a campaign because this is costly, and it is desirable for VCT to be taken out of people's own will. *Tabia* officials explained that youth are encouraged to take a VCT test three months before getting married, and that youth were now more willing to take a VCT test in their own *tabia* (previously they were going to other places to do this).

Tabia officials believe that the community has acquired better awareness. The youth are using condoms to protect themselves from HIV. But teachings should not stop so that *'the youth will have not only better awareness but also practice what they know'*. *Wereda* officials also said that while there is good awareness, there is a difference between what youth know and what they do in practice. Even if terms in awareness there also are issues as youth are not all interested in the different awareness raising activities.

Community respondents were not all upbeat about the effectiveness of the measures undertaken in

relation to HIV/AIDS and youth. One poor man said that few people in general including youth take a VCT test individually, and not all are taking a test before getting married. He suggested that there should be HIV/AIDS experts in each *kushet*, and programme coordinators. One poor woman said that in her views VCT campaigns should start again. Among the household heads and their wives, some said that contracting HIV/AIDS was not an issue for young women; one male head said that contracting HIV/AIDS was not age-related; several explained that it was difficult to be sure, generally and about youth, because many people did not disclose their status. The woman heading a poor household was more affirmative, saying that many people are thought to have HIV/AIDS; and explaining that it spreads in the *tabia* because of people who go outside (like men in towns) and get infected and have relationships in the community afterwards.

Youth recreation

Wereda officials explained that there are two youth recreation centres in the *wereda* as a whole, in Atsbi and in another smaller town. In some *tabias* land has been allocated for a youth recreation centre but nothing has been done because of budget constraints. This is also affecting the existing centres (no tea machine, no fridge to cool soft drinks) – although in the centre in Atsbi there is DSTV, a tape player and indoor games like chest, checkers and table tennis. Youth centres do not have much custom and so one of them was transformed into a public library. Young people use private team rooms and TV rooms as recreational areas.

In Harresaw *tabia* officials explained that there is no intervention to provide the youth with recreational facilities. There is no youth centre in the *tabia* or nearby where youth could go and entertain themselves, because there is no *wereda* support for this. Community respondents confirmed.

There are a few private TVs, satellite dishes and DVD players (five TVs and 4 dishes) and the youth watch the news and other TV shows in the *tabia* tea rooms. Most of these youth are male. The most popular TV shows are drama and wrestling. For the future there is a plan to entertain the youth on Sundays with the TV at the *tabia* hall. There is also one corombulla which again is used by the male youth. Heads of households and their wives also highlighted that these recreational opportunities were also available in the *tabia* centre and so less easily available for the youth not living at the *tabia* centre.

Community respondents explained that it is not usual for young women to go out to recreate, unlike young men, and that they have too much workload to do so. They entertain by participating in *mehaber* and informal chatting.

Tabia officials suggest that in future the *tabia* and the *wereda* should cooperate and make the youth learn computer skills. Currently there is only one computer at the *tabia* and it is used by the *tabia* administration.

Fields of action /domains of power in 2012

Cross-cutting

Climate change

The climate of the *tabia* is highland/dega. The area is drought-affected, which is caused by “*as’hayta*” (frost), snowstorms and insufficient rainfall. The hot wind that blows from Afar also affects the crops. This pattern has been in place for a long time and ten years ago there were drought every three years. In 2000 EC it was very bad which caused a very serious crisis and hunger in 2001 EC. Since then (i.e. in the past two years) the rains were better and crop production was better too.

Several people stressed that the climate was becoming more variable, also in relation to frost and average temperatures. So, some people said that the temperature was increasing; others said it was decreasing and the frost season was longer. Rains were more erratic or came late and destroyed

crops. DAs explained that the occurrence of frost was less, so people should plant cash crops on their irrigated land earlier as they are pushed to do. But among the respondents there were people explaining that their crops had been destroyed by frost as they had planted too early.

Land use

The main changes in **land use** in the *tabia* have come with the policy of reallocating land to landless people; the zero-grazing policy; the expansion of public buildings and housing areas; and a big push to use irrigation, with the construction of a dam (which was still under way in 1995 GC) and of a number of communal wells, as well as a policy encouraging people to dig ponds or wells on their own land. In early 2012 the *tabia* land was used as indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Land use in tabia Harresaw in early 2012

Use of land	Area in hectare	Percentage
Farm (small holder land)	319	2.67
Irrigated land (small holder land)	350	2.94
Grazing land (individuals)	403	3.38
Communal forest land	370	3.11
Governmental forest	10,265	86.19
Land not used for farming (government offices and houses)	204	1.7
Total land	11,911	100

Two types of land were reallocated. Mostly in 1990 EC, residential land was allocated to build houses in the *tabia* centre, from communal grazing land too degraded to grow grass. In 2000 EC and 2003 EC farming land (including irrigated land) was reallocated from people deceased without known heirs, civil servants and other people living in towns and migrated people away for more than 2 years, and from (wet) communal grazing land with the '*willingness of the community*'.

Farming land was allocated by plots of 0.25 ha. Eligible people include resettlement returnees, people deported from Eritrea, families of war veterans, elderly people and landless youth. As the land available to be reallocated is far smaller than what is needed allocation is done by lottery. One respondent suggested that the process was biased as he said that only those with good connection with the *tabia* administration got land. In 2003 EC women were given priority: for every one lot given to men two lots would be given to women. The *tabia* land administration leader explained that 125 landless people of whom 56 youth had *got* land in 2003 EC. They had identified other land that could be allocated to 21 people and had reported this to the *wereda* land administration.

The 1990 EC allocation of residential land marked the foundation of the small town in Endagebriel. Since then several public buildings were constructed there: the FTC (in 1990 EC) and houses for the DAs (in 1998 EC); the health post and HEW houses (built by World Vision in 1997 EC); the *tabia* administration with the *tabia* office and a newly constructed *tabia* hall (2003 EC) built with people's contributions from the PSNP/EFA grain, and rooms for the telephone, the cooperative, the police and land affairs. The town is growing though not dramatically as it is not well served by road. Respondents interviewed on the *tabia* public buildings all appreciated the services found at the *tabia* centre, but highlighted a link with an ongoing land conflict between Ekunta *got* and Endagebriel *got*. There is another more urbanised area in Abyidera, near Dera.

The zero-grazing policy introduced three years ago also brought important changes. What used to be communal grazing land and was not reallocated is now left for grass to grow. There are still some areas where ploughing oxen can be fed twice a year when the community decides (which is a tradition which came from their father). Otherwise the land which is now called 'community forest land' is left to be rehabilitated. Even on their own individual land people cannot graze livestock, and have to feed it by cut-and-carry. The people interviewed were generally in favour of the policy, including those initially resisting it. However it is said that people in Harresaw *kushet* continue to send their livestock to graze freely on the dry open area which is found there.

Grass grown on the community protected forest land is sold by auction, which benefits those who need more grass and provides an income to the community. Those who have enough private grazing land or few or no livestock can also sell grass (a quantity which used to cost 50 *birr* is now sold for 500 *birr*). Landless people can engage in fattening or rearing as they can buy grass. Households with scarce labour find it easier to cut and carry or buy grass and feed animals at home rather than herding. Many people of all ages explained that it made it possible to send children to school; some of them compared with their experience of having dropped out from school because they had to herd the livestock. There were mixed views in relation to the *wereda's* argument of focusing on quality rather than quantity of livestock, and as to whether animals kept at home were better fed hence producing better.

The construction of the dam and the irrigation scheme has made Endemariam Wu'o and Endegabriel much desirable places to live. About 20% of the land in these gots is irrigated. People living elsewhere have been told to dig ponds and some communal wells have been dug with government assistance. But this too contributes to the land-related conflict. In early 2012 almost 3% of the total land of the *tabia* that is, almost a fourth of the land not reserved for government forest, was used as irrigated land, while there was almost none seventeen years ago.

The conflict between gots in the *tabia* has several facets, all related to land use. It was precipitated by the new land reallocation policy in 2003 EC which says that land must be pooled and reallocated by *got* (the smallest geographical unit) whereas it previously was done by *kushet* (a wider area, between *tabia* and *got*). People of Endagebriel *got*, where much land had been taken up by public buildings serving the whole community, explain that this made reallocable land scarcer in their *got*. They argued that the distribution should continue to be made for the *kushet* as a whole. But the administrators of the Ekunta *got* (which is found in the same *kushet* as Endagebriel *got*) refused and gave land for about forty people in their *got* only, whereas in *Endagebriel got* there has not yet been any reallocation. Meanwhile, people from *Ekunta* are prevented from using water from a communal water point constructed in *Endagebriel* but near their *got*, because the *got* administration also refused to give compensation land for the land lost to the well. One more element is that while land is so scarce in *Endagebriel*, people from *Ekunta got* want to add one church in their *got* while they already have one.

The case went to the *wereda* court which decided that as all gots are administered under one *tabia* they should all feel equally served by the *tabia* administration but did not give a solution. The *tabia* land judges postponed the case and some people say that the judgment will be biased because the land administration people are from *Ekunta*.

There is yet another policy of allocating 'land on hills' to youth groups, to grow trees (like apple or eucalyptus) or keep bees – but the community has to be willing to do so. Some said that the *tabia* had started to do this and had given land for 12 or 20 youth but they could not get organised; others said it had not been done yet because some landed people disagree. Landlessness is one major cause of increased youth migration. It is said to be a factor of inter-generational conflict and conflict between siblings. At a meeting where the youth association leaders were trying to convince the youth not to migrate as land was being reallocated, the youth explained that as long as decisions would be made by people with land things would be hopeless. Some youth said that they were hopeless because they had been told that in future reallocation priority was going to be given to elderly people and families of war veterans and they would not get a chance.

Environment

Main issues

The main environmental issues in Harresaw *tabia* are deforestation, erosion and floods, and water scarcity in some parts of the *tabia*. In the past ten years there has been a strong response to environmental issues, organised by the government and which most community members

appreciate. This includes implementation of the zero-grazing policy as discussed earlier; a lot of soil and water conservation activities done with community labour; and tree plantation, maintenance of the government protected forest, creation of the community protected forest and plantation of trees on individual land. SWC and tree planning and forest conservation activities are paid when they are done through C/FFW (including the PSNP public works). The same activities are also carried out unpaid as all able-bodied adults are expected to contribute 20 days of free community labour annually. This was increased to 40 days though *tabia* officials say that this was done only in 2002 EC as there was so much to do after the 2000/1 EC drought.

Tree planting and SWC activities compete with others also requiring community labour. So, while in 2002 EC the focus on SWC led to the successful rehabilitation of one watershed in Harresaw *kushet* (see below), in 2003 EC it was decided (by the *wereda* and experts) that the focus would shift to irrigation and this was expected to continue in 2004 EC. Some of the *wereda* officials were concerned that SWC activities were getting neglected. At the community level there were mixed views too. Many recognised the benefit of rehabilitating land for the community as a whole. However, people living outside of the Harresaw *kushet* were complaining that they were not benefitting directly. Moreover some people highlighted that SWC activities benefited landed households, not the many landless ones who would benefit more from work on roads for instance.

Watershed management

Water potential is much uneven. There is good access to underground water in three of the five *gots*, but virtually none in *Harresaw kushet* and *Ekunta got*. Rehabilitating eroded land can lead to increased underground water and springs but this is a long term endeavour. *Wereda* officials explain that getting water in some parts of the *tabia* is beyond the *wereda* capacity, and that the regional water resource office should come and take water through pipes from those places with plenty of water resources.

The area most affected by erosion is *Harresaw kushet*, where gullies became wider and wider, cutting farm land into two and washing more land away because of flash floods. Checkdams built with stones and sand were not strong enough. Since a few years works have been done using gabions and cement walls and the results are much better. The community is particularly proud of the Zereroha watershed. However, there are mixed views as to whether on the whole erosion is increasing or decreasing in the *tabia*, as work cannot be done everywhere at the same time.

The Zereroha watershed is found in *Harresaw kushet*. The place was chosen based on an assessment of problems and benefits. The aim was to avoid fertile soil from farm land to be further eroded, and to generate and save water. The presence of water would protect existing trees and plants and help newly planted ones to grow, which in turn would be beneficial for beekeeping. The NRM DA studied the area – interviewing elders to better understand the history of the watershed. A baseline map and a map of the area once developed were drawn. The *wereda* experts came and agreed. The *tabia* SWC committee, Cabinet and Council participated to the decision. The *tabia* leadership and partisans of and opponents to the idea went for experience sharing in *Kalamin tabia* in the *wereda*.

Most of the work was done in 2002 EC and includes using gabions and cement walls for checkdams in the upper catchment, in addition to terracing, digging various water retention structures and planting trees and plants along the river. It was done using both PSNP public works and unpaid community labour. There were some complaints that people from other *kushets* had to walk long distances for work which did not benefit them directly.

Yet, the Zereroha watershed is very popular among *wereda* officials and community members alike. Several people explained that there were other watershed projects previously but this one was effective: the change was visible. Water has started to stream in the lower catchment, and floods from the upper part do no longer wash farm land away. The community living in *Harresaw kushet* drink clean water as it has been possible to separate water points for human drinking, animal drinking and cloth washing. Animal fodder plants were planted and most grew well so people could

cut grass and feed their livestock. With more water and trees there is better honey production in the area. People who have land beside the stream use water for irrigation. There are some people who stress that these good results were also obtained in years where rains have been better and generally there had been better production in the *tabia*.

The watershed is managed by a watershed management committee which has its own bylaws. *Wereda* officials said there was no plan for more work in the watershed but there was a plan to use the rehabilitated area to rear livestock. The DA and community members explained that more should be done, including in other watersheds, but there were budget constraints. Also, as said above in 2003 EC the decision was taken to work on irrigation activities under the PSNP public works. But the NRM DA would like the government and NGOs to collaborate, and allocate enough budgets to also be able to continue the NRM works.

Trees, community forest and grazing land

There is a nursery in the *tabia*, which produces 400,000 seedlings every year including fodder plants. Most of this is sold to community members. With protecting plastic 40 seedlings cost 1 *birr*. A part is reserved for communal planting as decided by the *wereda* agriculture and rural development office. The nursery head explains that about 80% of the seedlings planted individually grow well. Several respondents indicated that they benefited from this activity (getting fodder, using eucalyptus for construction, fuel or to sell it). The success rate is lower on communal land (50%) but still enough to lead to some remarkable change when plantations are done on rehabilitated areas such as along the Zereroha River in the watershed area.

The Government owned and protected forests are found in Harresaw *kushet* and Ekunta *got*. They are guarded since 1988 EC and guards are paid on the *wereda* budget. These forests have various kinds of trees and wildlife like hyena, foxes, deer, rabbits and moles, all protected. The community forest land is also guarded since three years. The guards get FFW without participating in public works. In addition, people feeding their oxen pay 5 *birr/oxen*, of which 250 *birr* go for paying the guards looking after the grass for the oxen (*sa'eri be'eray*), and the remainder for a monastery found in the *tabia*. Trees can grow as they are not destroyed by the livestock because of the zero-grazing policy. There are fines for people caught trespassing these rules. The community is said to benefit from the forests as they get grass, and some people pay a tax to the *wereda* to cut dead trees in the government forest. The forest is also good for beekeeping.

Soil fertility

Land in the *tabia* is not much fertile though its fertility varies from one place to another. The greater or lesser presence of underground water is an important factor in the soil fertility. A number of community respondents highlighted the importance of the soil and water conservation and watershed development activities and of measures such as the zero-grazing policy in this respect. People explained that terracing had protected their land from being washed away. Others explained that even though they initially resisted the zero-grazing policy they could see that it was having a very rapid effect in letting underground water to regenerate.

A number of respondents from the community said that the land fertility was declining (land was becoming '*thinner*'). The woman head of a poor household said that for this reason fertiliser was needed and the DAs forcing people to take fertiliser had good effects, although there were other problems affecting harvests like rust. The woman head of the more successful female-headed household also thought that land was getting thinner, because it was too much used because of land scarcity. Because of this the community was forced to use fertiliser which was very expensive. She explained that the government introduced pulses because they are good for soil fertility.

The male head of the politically important household said that land without fertiliser was not producing much, but fertiliser worked only on relatively fertile land. He said that with fertiliser the yield could reach 7 to 8 quintals per ha against 3 without fertiliser. The head of the poor household

agreed that fertiliser was needed otherwise the land was not producing much but he added that therefore the price of fertiliser needed to decrease.

Infrastructure

Roads and transport

Tabia Harresaw is found off an **all-weather road** from Atsbi to Dera (with bridges built over the rivers). It takes 20-30 minutes from the *tabia* centre to walk to the road. There is no regular transport to Dera; most people walk. There is public transport to and from Atsbi two to three days a week (market days). In early 2012 the frequency is increasing and transport from Atsbi to Harresaw could be contracted when there was no public transport. The road was paved to make it passable the whole year through cash/food-for-work (C/FFW) some five years ago and is maintained in the same way by the communities living along the road. Transport came only two years ago.

In early 2012 the cost to go to Atsbi was 10 to 12 *birr* for one way, up from 5 *birr* two years before. Similarly, costs had also increased to go to Wukro (20-30 *birr* from Harresaw), Adigrat (45 *birr*) and Mekelle (35 *birr*). It is feasible to walk to Atsbi (it takes 2.5 to 3 hours, instead of 45 min to an hour by car) but not to the other places. Among those interviewed, a number of poorer people still walked to Atsbi as they could not afford the cost – including elderly people without relatives and PLWHA going monthly to Atsbi to get their ARV drugs (the drugs are free). Reportedly, 50% of the community still walk to Atsbi to save on the transport cost.

There have been some improvements in **internal roads**, also made with C/FFW. But no bridges were built, so that in flat grassy areas during the rainy season the roads may be impassable. When the dam is full one road to take livestock to Dera market is cut. Within *Harresaw kushet* there is no road. This is a problem to get the machines to extract honey to the modern beehives found in the forest. But thanks to the existing roads transport can get to some parts of the *tabia*: cars can come to bring goods and people for funerals, mournings and weddings, trees can be loaded and taken to be sold.

People of various wealth, gender and age highlighted the many benefits of improved roads and transport availability. It makes it easier for those who can afford to get to the nearby towns for various businesses, to seek better health care, to visit relatives and for visitors to come, to take one's products to Atsbi market and sell them at better price etc. Importantly, ambulances (called with mobile phones) can come for pregnant women having complications during their delivery, and other emergencies. Several respondents gave examples of household members or relatives whose life had been saved in this way. Yet health workers were explaining that lack of access by road in some parts of the *tabia*, and irregular transport, were big obstacles to fully implement the new 'skilled delivery' policy by which all women are supposed to deliver only at a health centre.

Many people also highlighted as a big benefit the fact that the grain they get through PSNP and emergency aid could come directly to the *tabia*. As two women explained:

They do not need to send others to bring their ration. Previously those sent by blind and weak persons were eating the ration for themselves.

*Previously she or her husband were going to Atsbi and paying money for donkey rent and spending between one and four days to take the food ration, paying for loading and for guards. They were staying with relatives but it had costs: they used to buy water from the pipe, and to give 3-5kgs of the grain they got to her relatives. Most people do this if they stay with relatives and friends; the relatives do not ask for it but there is expectation. Now there is no problem, they only pay for the car to bring the grain to the *tabia*.*

The *wereda* does not have plans for road construction. *Wereda* officials explain that communities have to continue to improve the road network through C/FFW. World Vision was active in road construction but phased out of the *tabia* and *wereda* altogether two years ago. The *tabia* Harresaw administration have a plan to pave a road between Dera and the *tabia* centre with C/FFW. Several

respondents wanted internal roads to be expanded and improved, and transport to be more regular and less expensive. One person mentioned that police should control overloading of cars.

Electricity

There is **electricity** in some parts of the *tabia*. It was first installed in 1996 EC in *Abiydera got* (near Dera town) and served for the Grade 1-8 school and health centre found there. A second installation took place in the *tabia* centre in 2001 EC. The FTC, the *tabia* administration and the health post *got* meters first and are currently using electricity. Since then a number of private meters were installed in *Endagebriel* (some say 4, others 10). One respondent said that 95% of those living in *Endagebriel* have access to electricity (this probably means 95% of those settled in the emerging *tabia* centre town). The man involved in collecting payments of the bills said that only about 20-30 households in the *tabia* as a whole have access. Dwellers of *Ekunta* and *Harresaw* got have no access to electricity because it is far from the centre.

The government installed electricity in collaboration with the *wereda*. People with the financial capacity could then ask for a meter to be installed at a cost of 700 to 1200 *birr*. This is very expensive for many people in the *tabia*, so people who *got* a meter redistribute electricity to others by extending electric cables. They charge 7 to 10 *birr*/month for a bulb and 10 *birr* for a TV. People charge their phones where there is electric power. In some households without electricity children go in a house where there is access, to study.

Electric power is mainly used as a source of light (which has come handy as the price of kerosene has steeply increased) and to recharge mobile batteries. Some people use it to watch TV and listen to radio. One household has a refrigerator. Grinding mills were installed in other places than *Abiydera*, and in the small town a few women and youth have opened cafeterias with a TV to entertain people.

There is a desktop and a TV and DVD player in the *tabia* office - received as rewards from the *wereda*. The computer is used by the *tabia* secretary for letters etc. (She is paid by the *tabia* budget while the *tabia* manager is a *wereda* employee). The TV and video enliven meetings at which videos on development undertakings are showed. There is a plan to use the TV and video for entertaining the community on Sundays. In *Abiydera* the Grade 1-8 School is in the process of opening a computer lab for Grade 7 and 8 students and with internet access as it received five computers from UNICEF. But at the health centre there are problems arising from poor installation by the contractor, and for some reason the fridge does not work at the health post.

Communications

The community has access to **phone** communication through a wireless line at the *tabia* office compound, and mobile phones. The *tabia* phone started functioning in 1998 EC. It is still giving service today and there is a female operator paid on the *tabia's* budget. From 40 to 60 a day at the beginning of the service the number of customers has decreased a lot as people use mobile phones (including for instance the *tabia* manager when he communicates with *wereda* officials for his work). But the *tabia* phone is still useful for poorer people who cannot afford a mobile phone (like among those interviewed for the research, a destitute woman, an agricultural labourer, a young dependent woman living and working with her sister, a poor widow and a poor divorcée).

The mobile network reached the area in 2001 EC and the coverage gradually expanded so that by 2012 approximately 60% of the *tabia* is covered. *Kushet* Harresaw is not covered, and there is at times network interruption. Those who benefit from it highlighted all sorts of advantages in this new ability of communicating within the *tabia* and with the outside world without depending on the *tabia* phone and having to queue for a long time. As a woman said:

Now, we order items at home as equal as the big towns, we ask for prices, we call for emergency health service and save our life from death. We call to health services when we need delivery service so they get ready until we reach there and we are easily communicating with our relatives in Saudi.

Mobile phones enable the many families who have migrants in Saudi Arabia to communicate regularly if they wish so and can afford. It also makes it possible to keep close links with children living in towns like Dera, Atsbi and Wukro, which is the case in a growing number of households. Migrants send sophisticated models which allow listening the radio and music and even watching videos. Community members explained that they could get information on life in Saudi in this way.

In the male-headed households interviewed it still was the head who owned the mobile phone though their wives used it too. Many youth have one. People can also use others' phone. As few households have electricity at home they charge the mobile when they go to the *tabia* centre for business or a meeting or in town for market. Several people reported an increase in theft of mobile phones on the market at Dera.

Generally people suggest that both electricity and mobile coverage should be expanded and reach everywhere in the *tabia*.

Drinking water

The WASH programme, implemented by the region and financed by UNICEF, World Bank and the African Development Bank, is active in the *tabia*. This and other NGO activities helped to increase the coverage in **safe water**. But many people in the *tabia*, especially those in Ekunta *got* and Harresaw *kushet*, drink water from unprotected sources. Under the WASH programme community contribution of 10% of the water point construction cost is a must but it can be in kind (sand, labour). Communities are also trained to establish water committees that manage the water points with monthly contributions from the people using the water. The *wereda* health office regularly checks the water quality and adds purification liquid when it is required.

In early 2012 there were six functional water points for **drinking water**, all in Lima'et and Mika'el *kushets*, including the hand pump water point in the Dera School. Some respondents said that there were long queues to get water and not always enough water. In total, twelve communal wells had been built. The other six were not functional because they had dried up (one dried up after two years) or due to some other problems. There were also 58 private wells or ponds, but only some are functional (see above the example of the elderly woman who sold back her plastic when she was asked to repay the loan for it), and those which are do not hold water for the whole year.

There were also five roof catchment installations, of which three were working properly. One of these had been installed in 2002 EC at the Grade 1-4 Harresaw School. The health post has water from a roof catchment installation too. At the health centre in Abyidera there is an installation for piped water but it is faulty due to poor work by the contractor; in addition there is an unpaid bill of 1,750 *birr* and water was cut.

In Harresaw *kushet* water can be taken from the Zereroha River. With the watershed rehabilitation there is more water and it has been possible to protect one point where water is taken only for humans. In Ekunta there is no safe water point and people use unsafe water from streams and ponds. Some people have to walk 30 minutes to get to an unsafe water pond, and one and a half hour to get to a hand pump water point. In uncovered ponds the water gets very dirty and may be covered with algae. One respondent explained that people want water to be taken by pipes to Ekunta and they have contributed 48,000 *birr* but nothing has been done yet.

All (working) communal safe water points have a committee and are guarded. People contribute 2 *birr*/month for 2 jerry cans per day regardless of the size of the containers. It used to be 25 cents at the beginning. There is no exemption. The drinking water point at the Zereroha river is also guarded but there is no contribution. According to one water committee leader they keep people's contributions at the bank and use the money to pay the guard and to finance minor repairs. When there are serious problems they call the *wereda* technicians but it may take time.

In one case the water point was not fenced and parts of the pump were stolen. The *wereda* officials said that they would repair the pump if the community was fencing the water point, which they did;

but the pump has not yet been repaired. Sometimes when the water gets bad or has worms the *wereda* adds purification liquid but the water point must then be closed for one month and people have to use other water sources.

Community members are told to boil the water they drink. The HEW said most of them do. Only one respondent noted cases of diarrhoea. However, in 2002 EC an epidemic in *Harresaw kushet* killed about 20 people. People with the illness suffered of vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and loss of appetite, they were bedridden for 3-7 days and died eventually. The *wereda* health officers who came did not give details but said that it was caused by poor hygiene and sanitation.

The young women interviewed explain that clay water pots have disappeared and at least for some adolescent girls the distance to fetch water is much less, so things are better now.

Urban development

The small town area with the *tabia* centre was said to be growing, although it was still a rather small place and a small number of people living there. One growing trend for people who have the means is to build in Dera or Atsbi. Some rent, others have students staying there, yet others have children opening shops, and migrants had plans to return and live there. Among the respondents there were many mentions of household members like adult children or step-children having left the households and living in towns, mainly Dera and Atsbi and sometimes in Wukro.

Livelihoods and recent events/changes

Generally

Balance of livelihood activities and recent changes

At both the community and household level the balance of livelihood activities in early 2012 had changed significantly since 1995 GC and even in the past five years. One *tabia* leader explained:

There is better harvest production since last year and this year. Although it can't feed for the whole year, it has been better than the situation in 2005 G.C. when it is compared in terms of selling livestock and honey, the daily income that is earned from PSNP and Emergency food Aid, and daily labour. The income earned from cash crops (trees and irrigation farms) has increased since 2005 GC. Also, the culture of doing local work has increased: community members engage in paid farm and non-farm labour in the community which has created additional sources of income. As a result, the seasonal migration to Humera and other places that was common in 2005 has decreased. The participation of the community in various trade activities has increased because shops and drink houses are expanding in the newly emerging town in the tabia. Although there had been migration to Saudi since a long time, the numbers of migrants have increased due to the drought of 2001 EC. As the best solution to pay credit is migration, almost all the youth are potentially willing to migrate.

Thus, the **weather** remains a major factor and creates uncertainty on the 'best balance'. **Increasing landlessness** is another major factor. Land policies (including land reallocation and other changes in land rights as explained later in the report) cannot fully tackle its growing impact. This makes it necessary for an increasingly large number of landless people to find other livelihood options, among which migration in Saudi Arabia has taken a growing importance.

For the landless migrants, many of whom are youth and mainly single, such migration is replacing other livelihood means, instead of complementing farming like seasonal migration to Humera or Eritrea (before the war) used to allow. There are also landed and married men, migrating under pressure to pay debt that they are unable to pay in other ways. In such cases they have to be careful in relation to their land, for if they are seen to be away for too long they might lose it.

Education has brought change at the household level. As children go to school longer there is less labour available for both farming and domestic activities. Adult women are said to be more involved in farming activities than in the past, which may be a related trend. Adult women also explained that

they have less support from their daughters which is increasing their workload; others disagreed and explained that girls performed domestic chores after school. The demand on boys' work may have decreased as herding animals is no longer needed because of the zero-grazing policy.

At the community level, **education together with migration** brought change in expectations which are reflected in particular in young people's choices.

Failing to pass Grade 8 or 10 examinations is one reason for migration. Those who pass Grade 10 migrate because there is nothing to do in Harresaw. The land of their parents cannot feed them, and even educated youth cannot get jobs.

The leading adult male role models for the community in tabia Harresaw are those who come from Saudi Arabia. They are better off than the community in terms of many things. The work aspiration for the young men is do trading in shops. They do not do farming and labour works. Men who come from Arab countries are involved in trading and do not want to do farming and labour works in the community. (One young man from the community)

More people, mainly young but not all, are involved in **trading and retailing** on different scales and in service activities concentrated in the *tabia* centre.

At the same time in relation to farming, **irrigation** has expanded and opened up new opportunities. Although the crop DA complains that the community does not yet use the irrigated land well (refusing to plant early and to grow cash crops like beans rather than barley) many respondents mentioned income generated from irrigated farming or vegetables. For those without irrigation like in Harresaw *kushet* **honey production** is an increasingly profitable business as the price of honey got higher and higher in the past few years. A number of respondents explained that production was getting better too, notably thanks to the rehabilitation activities making a better environment for the bees.

Irrigation and migration also create **daily labour opportunities**. In households where the head or older sons are away in Saudi there may be labour gaps. While it was practically unknown to work for a wage for others in Harresaw in 1994/5, in early 2012 there were 60 to 70 people in the community whose main activity was agricultural daily labour.

Livestock activities can be successful and beneficial. Zero-grazing and focus on fewer better quality livestock, availability of hybrid/foreign breed and veterinary services in Dera were mentioned as positive factors. One respondent explained he had just sold an ox 5,000 *birr* after fattening.

But many households lost a large number of livestock in the 2000/1 EC drought. This seems to have affected the community more severely than the total harvest failure. First, government assistance was less effective in mitigating the effects of the drought with regard to livestock than for the human food shortage; animal fodder was brought in but it was very late and one respondent explained that it was only for cattle and not for sheep and goats which died in large numbers. Second, much of the livestock was taken on credit and there was no waiver on repayment. Third, it takes time to restock, especially if households have to start from worse than scratch – after having repaid their lost loans.

Within the livelihood portfolios, **PSNP and emergency food aid** plays various roles depending on the type of household. For the very poor it is said to be very important to just survive. For slightly less poor households it complements other income sources and improves daily life without enabling major improvement. For instance, people use the money they would have used to buy grain that they get through PSNP or as EFA as start-up capital for smallscale retailing. But some better-off households who recuperated from the 2001 EC drought left the PSNP '*by their own decision*'; they stopped participating in the public works as their own livelihood activities were more profitable than the PSNP transfers. This includes female-headed households. In yet other households, one of the spouses (usually the woman) continues to work on the PSNP, doing the share of the other who can engage in more profitable activities. PSNP serves as a cushion in case the other spouse's activities would be unsuccessful. Moreover and even though women are said to participate in an increasing range of activities '*like men*', the PSNP income is more easily accessible than many options.

Opportunities linked to **inward investment and salaried work** remained minor. There is no investor in Harresaw and only a few people from the *tabia* had a government salaried job in the *tabia* administration and sector offices. There were some jobs at the nursery, and part-time jobs as guards of water points and of protected areas.

Community management by male and female community members elected or appointed in different capacities takes time, which cannot be spent on livelihood activities. A number of respondents had one or several roles for which there were not paid or compensated. Many of them explained that they wanted to quit the role as it was detrimental to their livelihood. Some explained that they were forced to hire labour and the work was not well done. These included the security committee leader, the irrigation committee leader, one militia leader, the female tax collector also member of the Cabinet, Council, party and WA, the cooperative chairman, the land administration chairman and the *tabia* vice-chair who is also the propaganda officer and party leader. But '*...in the Council there is pressure when people are elected: they should serve the community, it is not acceptable to refuse.*' (One of those who want to quit his role).

Independence of the farming economy and future potentials

The question of the independence of the farming economy and future potentials needs to be unpacked into

- How much of the local economy is farming vs. non-farming?
- Is farming only sustainable?
- Is the current balance (which is not farming only) sustainable?

From the section above there is a sense that the balance of livelihood activities may have tilted **further towards non- and off-farm based activities**. Some of the factors driving the changes are linked to government activity. This includes PSNP, education and the associated aspirations, better access and transport and linkages to market, and some of the new activities or technologies (e.g. irrigation). Others factors are unrelated like migration or are factors that government activity fails to tackle like landlessness.

As to whether farming only is or could be sustainable, the answer seems to be 'no'. There are people of the view that, as explained by one of the *tabia* leaders:

In the community they could develop without PSNP by migrating to Saudi and doing irrigation for those with water...

That is, taking together farming and non-farming opportunities the local economy could become independent. But the same person also explains that the local economy continues to largely depend on the weather when he says:

The best harvest season was 2003 EC, when on average production that could feed for 6 months was harvested. The gap was covered by safety net, daily labour wage and selling livestock and eucalyptus. The worst season was 2001 EC when the entire crop was lost and there was no food even for animals.

On the whole views are mixed with regard to the **necessity of the safety net, which community members do link to dependency**. There is a sense that PSNP remains necessary because as a whole the community needs '*external support*'. The same people recognise that some households – including whose livelihood is based on farming – did not need PSNP last year. But last year was remarkably good as said above and:

In the community there is drought which is not predictable. At that time animals die; the poor and the rich lack food to eat and need support. What makes people need PSNP is the drought. At individual and community level there is fear that drought might happen again.

Many respondents also drew a sharp difference between the '*very poor with many children and elderly people who cannot work and have no support*', who need PSNP for longer periods of time, and the '*rich for whom it is additional to what they have*'. PSNP does not create a better life but

prevent life to get worse, and support those people who otherwise would have nothing.

In relation to farming it is hard to understand the balance between crop and livestock production for the community as a whole. **Irrigation** has picked up significantly, as is measured by the expansion of irrigated land. It is also reflected in many respondents' accounts – in which irrigation is behind some clear success stories. This seems to be less the case with honey and livestock production activities – for the latter, presumably because it takes longer to recuperate from livestock-related losses which were massive in 2000/1. However, irrigation too is dependent on the weather as the level of water in the ponds and retained by the dam varies greatly depending on rainfalls. In bad years like in 2000/1 EC the area which can be irrigated is considerably smaller than in good years when the dam is very full, and fewer households get water.

From people's accounts **illegal migration** seems to play a bigger role than any other non-farming alternatives in making the local economy less dependent, and the 2000/1 drought prompted a markedly steeper upward trend in terms of number of migrants. However, the sustainability of this option is under question: many respondents highlight its largely illegal nature as a problem.

Remittances are partly ploughed back into the local economy in various forms. A lot of it pays debt, which may or may not be productive. Much of the earlier debt arose from the 2000/1 drought-linked livestock losses and this migration-linked income was therefore not productive. With the better years, paying debt is likely to be more productive as some examples do show from among those interviewed. Moreover, there is a snowball effect as some migrants pay for relatives in addition to their own debt and the debt of their immediate parents. Arguably even when migration occurred to repay loans that did not build assets, combined with the PSNP it provided a better basis to start afresh. As several respondents explained:

PSNP prevented people from migrating for food or suffering from hunger and selling their assets. Previously many people had to migrate in search of food. The people who migrate now are those who want to pay back their debt and to live a better life; but not in search of food.

A non-negligible part of the migration-linked income is consumed including on higher expenditures for weddings etc. and some luxury goods like more sophisticated mobile phones. But many respondents also mentioned higher health and education expenses and that being healthier and better educated would contribute to the community's economic development. Migrants also invest in towns and clearly, in a number of cases migration will be followed by households leaving the community to live in towns.

Effects of inflation and other events affecting livelihoods

The effects of drought have been discussed above. They continue to be devastating although government assistance mitigated the shock in the most recent ones, including in 2000/1. At the household level livelihoods are also influenced in a major way by episodes of ill-health and deaths especially of working adults.

Inflation is an everyday reality as it translated in much higher prices for inputs, farming instruments, and food and household items. Inputs at least doubled in price between 1999 EC and 2003 EC, and the cost of improved wheat and onion seeds more than doubled. Farmers continue to purchase inputs as they increase production when conditions are good. Some food stuff doubled or a little more than doubled like sugar and oil; other more than tripled like coffee; onions, peas and salt quadrupled, and tomatoes became seventeen times more expensive. Transport, schooling costs etc. also increased. Kerosene became very expensive (35 *birr*/litre while it used to be 7 four years ago) as well as grinding grain (from 7 to 24 *birr* to grind 50 kgs).

At the same time, output prices increased very steeply as well. Those growing tomatoes, peas, onions and generally vegetables save on money they would spend in buying these items (if they were) and benefit if they can sell a surplus. A big ox was sold 12,000 *birr* in 2003 EC that is, four times more than four years before. A big sheep had doubled its price and could be sold for 1,200 *birr* in

2003 EC. Barley, which many farmers continue to produce, including on irrigated land, was sold 520 *birr* for 50 kgs in 2003 EC instead of 250 in 1999 EC. Honey had quadrupled like oxen, from 30 to 120 *birr*/kg. Labour wage rates had roughly quadrupled as well over the past four years.

At the community level there is a sense that inflation has mostly benefited the community (70 to 75% of the people according to the *tabia* leadership) as people who have land and/or livestock have things to sell (honey, livestock and livestock products, trees, crops) and *got* very good prices. However, in many households a part of the expenses which previously used to have to be covered by what the household could generate through selling some of its production is now covered by remittances. And there are around 25% households who do not have much or anything to sell.

The *tabia* leadership explained that in spite of higher prices people were consuming more and a larger variety of products, and modern household goods. This came from being exposed to urban places. In relation to food stuff, the consumption of vegetables had increased a lot since 2005 GC. In contrast people were eating less meat and fewer eggs, due to the big increase in market prices. It made it more difficult to buy them. For those producing meat and eggs they would sell a larger proportion as it was very profitable, and were buying assets.

Smallholder agriculture

Weather and pests in the last few years

The drought of 2000/1 is much present in all memories. Besides the complete harvest failure due to lack of rain, the community lost 1,500 cattle, 2,000 sheep and goats and more than 60 donkeys and mules. Some rich households lost 50 and more sheep and several cattle. Some households managed to sell some of their livestock but at low price.

In the community there is a crop disease called *humedia* (rust). It damages beans, peas and wheat. It makes crops look as though they were burnt with fire. It affects crops when they ripen, especially when there is not enough rain as the rainfalls wash off the *humedia*. This is common and it affects all the three *kushets* equally and regularly. Rust affected wheat crops in each of the past three years. There was a pest invasion in vegetables in 2001 EC, which got within the vegetables and prevented them from growing. This was also linked to insufficient water. For various reasons (explained earlier) spraying was done too late and too little, and many farmers lost all or most of their vegetable crop.

Several women also mentioned epidemics with the chicken, and that improved chicken breed, though profitable, were vulnerable to these. One woman thought that earlier improved breeds were better than those introduced now.

Land for farming

Farm land allocation

Land laws

The Region enacted a new Land Law in 2000 EC, mainly geared to make land available to as many people as possible while preventing acute land fragmentation. This creates a tension. In early 2012 landlessness was a major and growing issue in Harresaw in spite of the land reallocation activities described earlier. Land scarcity was also generating tension between *gots* within the community. The main provisions affecting land rights in the new law are summarised in the box below.

Box 5: Changes in regional land law affecting Harresaw

When parents die the first-line heirs are the children. If children already have land or live outside of the village land is transferred to grandchildren. Adopted children who have lived for at least 5 years and have helped the household by doing some work have the right to inherit land. Land is divided as long as individual plots are not smaller than 0.25ha. If the land is too small children have to use it together and share the crop. Relatives and siblings cannot inherit the land, which is new. If there is no one to inherit the land it is taken by the government to be reallocated.

If one spouse dies, the share of land of the deceased is divided. One half goes to the living spouse and the other half to the children, with the same caveat related to minimum landholding size. Relatives and siblings of the deceased cannot claim this land. This is new and has created problems.

In case of divorce women have the same rights as men. If each spouse had land before marrying they each take their land. If the land was given after they married, they have to share it even if there is only one name on the land certificate. But individual landholdings cannot be smaller than 0.25 ha. If individual landholdings are below this, they have to find an agreement whereby one takes the land and the other is registered as landless and gets a chance in the land reallocation. If they cannot find an agreement the land is taken by the government to be reallocated.

Land issues were supposed to be addressed by the *tabia* land administration, which was established in 2002 EC as an entity distinct from the *tabia* administration and from the social court which until then were dealing with land reallocation and management generally and with land-related cases. *Tabia* land judges are supposed to be people well accepted by the community and include women.

There were only a few detailed opinions about this new arrangement. Several respondents suggested that land administration was more biased than the social court in making decision, as noted earlier in relation to the conflict between *gots* and the allocation of land to youth.

Rainfed land

There is no data on the average land size. Someone said that some households owned 1 ha of land. There also are many landless people. Many households own several unconsolidated plots of land – as they inherited from different sides. When spouses are from and own land in different *tabias* (e.g. because the parents of one spouse died) they have to show that they plough both landholdings; this is not always easy depending on the distance.

Plots reallocated as farmland to landless people are 0.25 ha. This is also the smallest acceptable size for any land plot in the community, in line with the new land law.

Irrigated land

A large part of the *tabia* land is taken up by a protected government forest (on the border with Afar). Roughly 1/4th of the rest is irrigated since the construction of dam some 17 years ago as part of a regional programme. This dam allows gravity irrigation and benefits 180 households (approximately 16% of the households in the *tabia*) mainly in Endegabriel *got* – in good years. When the rains are poor the level of the dam decreases and in bad years far fewer households benefit from it. There is another smaller dam irrigating 11 ha of land and which benefits 15 households. The size of land plots with the dams is variable.

There are other irrigation activities though all of them on a smaller scale. Some households have access to water from small streams in the rehabilitated watershed. Some households use water from ponds or wells, and this is again pushed very strongly as a priority. Water harvesting on an individual basis was not successful (there were 657 ponds at some point but many have collapsed) the *wereda* has now sent instructions coming from higher up that priority for the PSNP PWs and free community labour had to be given to digging communal wells for irrigation. At the time of the research 34 were functioning already and another 27 were under construction. The size of land which might be irrigated in this way is not known.

Land registration

Like in the *wereda* as a whole, farmers were given a 'land ownership certificate' (in the words of *wereda* officials) in 1996 EC. For jointly held land it was given in the name of the household head only, although in case of divorce this land is shared. This certificate had no photograph. A process has been initiated in model *weredas* at the regional level to modernise the land registration system. Atsbi Wemberta is one of the model *weredas*. New certificates will be given with the photographs of both spouses in the couple and other important information. The regional government has already

sent three modern GPS and their software and information storing desktops. The *wereda* must now hire qualified experts on a contract basis, train them and start the work.

Wereda officials identified some changes in granting land certificates, arising from the new regional land law. People owning land but who went away to another place for 2 years and above do not get a certificate. If there is legal evidence that they have not lived for 2 or more years in the village their land is taken and is reallocated to another landless individual. Land is also taken from people who have a salaried job. Between 2000 and 2002 EC, employees earning less than 1,000 *birr* monthly were left the choice, their salary or the land. Since 2002 EC, anyone who has a salary cannot own any kind of rural land.

People who have land registered have rights but also duties specified in the land law. Anyone who owns land should protect it, treat it by using inputs, and properly keep it to be inherited from generation to generation. Lack of compliance with these legal provisions is tolerated for two years but if there is no improvement the land is taken by the government. The community has been sensitised about their duties of keeping and using their land properly.

In Harresaw *tabia*, officials explained that those households who received land before and during the last land redistribution of 1983 EC have land ownership certificates with the name of the land owner and the land boundaries. Those who were allocated land in 2000 EC and in 2003 EC through the land reallocation process have received a certificate that indicates the name, boundaries and size of the land. The new land law has been implemented and so there are people who own land but did not get a certificate.

Community respondents said that having a certificate was very important and it needed to be improved with photographs like in some other places. One woman who had a land case with her brother explained that the case was judged in her favour because she was able to present her land certificate – and in addition the people who had at the time demarcated her land could be her witnesses.

Sharecropping, renting and contracting (buying) land

Some people said that sharecropping was decreasing because even women alone were trying to manage by themselves and hiring daily labourers for ploughing. It also is discouraged by DAs and *tabia* officials especially for irrigated land, because they think that people who have land should make sure they draw the maximum benefit from it. However, it must still be practised on a fairly large scale judged by the interviews of female headed households and older or weaker people. It is also one of the ways young landless people get access to land (and some of them are successful in exploiting the land very well). Moreover, some strong farmers sharecrop in to expand their farming activities. There is no data on the proportion of land that might be sharecropped in the *tabia*.

Land renting used to be uncommon in the *tabia*. However in the last few years people have started to rent out their land to pay debt. This was pushed up as a practice by the drought in 2001 EC when many people lost a lot of livestock including livestock taken on loans. These are mainly people who cannot or do not want to migrate (because otherwise, migration is said to be a better strategy); or who have tried but have been unsuccessful. There are also people who rent out their land to get the cash needed to migrate or send someone on migration.

It is also used as a threat i.e. people are threatened that their land will be taken and rented out if they do not pay their debt or even if they do not use properly their land especially irrigated land. However, there has not yet been any case of application of this kind of threat.

Schools rent land to get an income. The champion model farmer interviewed (one of ten in the *tabia* and 160 in the *wereda* and who has been a champion for 5 years) said that he was renting land to produce in addition to his own farmland. He produces various vegetables in addition to grain. One young (26) man who is involved in business as his main activity rents land for farming as well. So does another young (27) man who runs a shop and is also engaged in providing other shops and tea

houses etc. with supplies from Atsbi.

Crops and changes – subsistence and cash crops

Agricultural products for subsistence and market

Farmers usually grow different varieties of barley and wheat as grain crops, mainly for consumption as the production does not cover more than six months even in a good year. But some farmers sell part of their household's production. Especially, people who get a second harvest as they produce barley during winter with irrigation do this. Getting the PSNP grain also allows some households to store their own grain and sell it at better price at other times of the year. Grain trading exists but is not large-scale in the area.

Farmers also grow pulses. Beans, lentils and peas are relatively common. Several respondents mentioned that they get good price on the market for these. One farmer explained that he sold peas for 8,000 *birr* last year, and paid a debt he had with this income. The crop DA explained that the community should turn much more decisively to producing these types of cash crop (and pushed for beans specifically) rather than barley only, with the irrigation.

Many farmers grow onions, garlic, green peppers, spinach and *gomen* (a variety of cabbage), caulis, potatoes, tomatoes and some other vegetables. At the community level these are now grown on a much larger scale than in 1994/5 GC, but many people were already growing some vegetables five years ago. Like for the grain much of it is for consumption, especially in the poorer or labour-poor households. But some farmers do sell vegetables and get a good income from this. Problems include pests (like in 2003 EC) and that some vegetables are easily stolen, which farmers explain, pushes them to revert to grain.

Eucalyptus and apple trees have been introduced relatively recently as cash crops. A few farmers took apple trees and the trees are just starting to produce. As one woman explained, seedlings can easily be destroyed by animals. Eucalyptus is planted on a large scale by some farmers (one farmer recently planted 1000 seedlings) and several respondents mentioned an income from selling it. One issue is that transporting the trees is not easy as internal roads are not very good. Watering the seedlings is a time-consuming business.

Sources of cash from agriculture and market demand and linkages

In early 2012 according to the *tabia* leadership the main sources of cash from agriculture were selling irrigation vegetables, eucalyptus and roots and cactus. This was complemented by livestock-related income. Butter and hides had increasing value. Fattening was profitable. So, those keeping livestock and especially using improved breeds for meat and milk/butter were doing well too. Honey was important too.

Farmers get information on prices by calling people in towns. They sell in Dera or Atsbi, themselves or through intermediaries (like one young man and one female-headed woman interviewed in the course of the research, who started doing this much earlier during the 1985 GC drought when she was bringing grain from faraway places and the business was more steadily profitable than now).

Farmers sell individually, and they also decide individually what they produce and stop producing even on the land irrigated by the dam for which farmers have a management committee. This trend is not unique in the *wereda*. *Wereda* officials recognised that there had been challenges in organising irrigation cooperatives, and also they had some work to do in order to enhance market opportunities for irrigation products in the neighbouring towns and *weredas*.

The *tabia* leaders noted that income earned from cash crops (trees and irrigation vegetables) was a lot higher in 2003 EC than four years before. Quantities sold by people were higher too for both grain and vegetables, thanks to better production (linked to three years of good rains). They said there also was more livestock production (poultry, butter, honey). Some farmers mentioned easier transport to markets as a positive factor, and also that Dera market was bigger and had a livestock market since

two years.

As discussed earlier all agricultural outputs were sold much higher prices in 2003 EC than four years before. This successful young farmer, landless but sharecropping, explained that this was a very important factor:

He said that he is 31 years old and has been successful because he implemented modern inputs provided by government and because he used the credit money properly. Besides, the increasing price of the products he sells has helped him to be successful (this was a very important factor).

A number of other respondents highlighted the benefits of the very high market prices as well. Also, in their responses a number of farmers showed that they were responsive to market signals, or trying to. For instance, one man explained that he had started producing beans and lentils as these had a high market price. One of the farmers interviewed as a model farmer explained that in future he would decrease his grain production and expand his production of irrigated cash crops.

New crops

Apple trees were the only new crops introduced in the past five years. It was introduced in 1997 EC but in early 2012 it was only two years since the first trees started to give fruits. It is not yet very common. Eucalyptus as cash crop, a larger variety of different vegetables and various improved seeds were introduced before 2005 GC, but further expanding their use continues to be a high priority of the government interventions.

Farming technologies

Most farmers are using traditional techniques with ploughing oxen, traditional farming ploughs of different sizes, hoes and sickles. The grain is threshed by oxen and other domestic animals. Some farmers have started to use wet reserving technologies (Tyrijer and Broad-Bed Making/BBM ploughs). The DAs and the *tabia* leadership report that an increasing number of people use fertiliser, improved seeds and pesticides as the community started to produce in the winter season using irrigation. However, one respondent explained that pesticides are not common in the community.

New farming technologies include *stina* or treadle pump, which pushes water in a container placed at some height by foot-peddalling, and drip irrigation. These were introduced in 1998 EC by the government agriculture office. They are said to be very beneficial to those who use irrigation. Also, compost is used as a fertiliser since 2000 EC.

Fertiliser and improved seeds were already there more than five years ago. There are farmers saying that fertiliser has become indispensable because the land has become 'thin'. Others highlight that when they are well used, on fertile soil, and when there is enough rain, fertiliser and improved seeds are very beneficial. One woman farmer said fertiliser could quadruple her yield. The head of the middlewealth farmer interviewed explained that fertiliser and improved seeds greatly enhanced his irrigation activities and he had seen a considerable change in his production.

Others raised issues such as rust attacking improved wheat, fertiliser and improved seeds failing when there is not enough water, or fertiliser not being adapted to their soil. Almost all respondents mentioned that fertilisers and improved seeds were very expensive and the price should decrease. A few noted that fertiliser could only be purchased at the *tabia* cooperative where it is expensive while they could find it at cheaper price on the market.

In 2002 and 2003 EC there was pressure on farmers to take modern inputs. Community members resented this even when they explained that they could see the benefits. There were several mentions of farmers not wanting to sow the same crop as others along the same irrigation canal (which the DAs want them to do) or to use fertiliser on their irrigated land who were threatened that they would not get water. Or they were told that they would have to sign a letter that they did not need any support and would be taken off the safety net or emergency food aid. The cooperative chairperson explained that the pressure came from the *tabia* leadership. Farmers forced to take

what they did not want to use sold it at low price, and they were hiding what they were sowing.

The outcomes of using modern inputs are sometimes dire, even when there is no pressure:

In the last year agricultural extension workers advised her to take fertiliser, chickens, improved seeds. She took fertiliser and improved wheat. She was not using fertiliser when she was with her ex-husband. She wanted the fertiliser but they said that she should give cash, there is no credit. She sold grain from the house and paid. Some of the money she borrowed from relatives and she has not paid back yet. She bought improved wheat by selling a small sheep. But she did not benefit from it because the wheat was destroyed by rust. (One poor female divorcée)

Irrigation technologies

Irrigation

Irrigation activities have been much strengthened in the *tabia*. The big dam, constructed in 1994/5 by the government with an NGO, serves Endegabriel and Endemariam Wu'o *got*. According to the Felege Hiwot irrigation committee leader there are about 180 farmers with land in this scheme and the irrigated land represents 20% of the two *gots*. There is another smaller area of 11 ha of land belonging to 15 households, in Abyidera. The government has also encouraged people to engage in irrigated agriculture using water from hand-dug ponds. Since 1997 EC a number of communal wells were dug (34 functioning and 27 under construction in early 2012). The PSNP public works in 2003 EC were done on building and maintaining communal wells.

However, in the *tabia* irrigated land can produce only once a year in the winter in addition to the summer rainfed production. Moreover, for most of the sources the water hence production capacity depends on the yearly quantity of rainfall.

In early 2012 the number of motor pumps had increased from 7 in 1997 EC to 13; although only 6 were in operation because of the high cost of fuel. Some of those who had bought a pump rented it to others. Some people had started using treadle pumps and drip irrigation. Ten drip irrigation installations had been provided (there were only 2 in 1997 EC) and 6 of them were functional. One installation is in demonstration at the FTC (see picture).

The irrigation-related packages were considered as successful. However, much of the watering was still done manually. Daily labour on irrigation had become a good job opportunity.

The Felege Hiwot scheme linked to the dam is managed through a committee but people refused to be organised in an association. Farmers with land which gets water from the dam paid an initial 12 *birr* which were deposited in a bank account, to be used by the committee to maintain the pump serving the scheme. There is no other sharing of resources. The committee makes sure that water is distributed and used orderly. Members work together to maintain the canals. The committee has rules and regulations that were agreed upon by the beneficiaries and approved by the *tabia* council. It can punish those who transgress the rules such as stealing other farmers' water turn or sending livestock on irrigated land, and those who do not use their land properly. This could go up to confiscating someone's land in case she or he had been warned three times already. But by early 2012 there had been no such case yet.

Smaller schemes like people having land besides a stream also organise themselves to share water. In addition in early 2012 there were many households having small individual plots that they irrigate with water from various sources.

Irrigation was repeatedly mentioned as an important government intervention by many different kinds of people. Some of the young people said that they wanted to engage in irrigation rather than migrating. It can be successful for female farmers too, as showed by the example of this woman who is heading her own household:

*The respondent has irrigable land and she uses it herself. She hires daily labourers to work on the irrigation. She grows spinach, caulis, lettuce, carrot, onion and garlic. She has 2 *tsimdi* (0.5 ha) and all is*

irrigated. She uses water from a well. She started to use irrigation to consume for herself. Since 2003 EC she became very effective. She was given stina (treadle pump) as prize at Atsbi wereda for her good performance in irrigation activities. She has benefited a lot. She decided to get out of PSNP because it is better to work on her irrigation land. She gets a variety of vegetables to eat. She earns a better income from the irrigation. She paid a debt that she had and bought a hybrid cow. She has enough money for her life.

The *tabia* leader explained that there are PSNP beneficiaries who support graduation because this would encourage them to focus on their irrigated farm whereas voluntarily they would not do this. However, as showed by the example of the woman above some people do choose to exit voluntarily. Another young woman, registered as a single PSNP beneficiary, explained that she too stopped working in the PSNP as she was doing better working on her mother's irrigation rather than getting 15 kgs of grain working five days on the PWs. One respondent explained that for those who have land (unlike this young woman) it makes sense to try and stay on the safety net besides working on irrigation. This allows them to consume the PSNP grain while selling their irrigation production and buying assets with the income.

The DAs would like the land to be better used and in particular, they want farmers to produce cash crops instead of grain (beans, peas etc.) and sow earlier. This is not fully successful as discussed elsewhere. However, the *tabia* leadership explained that irrigated land was being gradually better used. More people with irrigable land were using it by themselves rather than sharecropping, and they were becoming productive.

Water harvesting

This is discussed in various places above. Private pond digging was not very successful in the *tabia*. Many collapsed. People who took plastic on credit were at times not able to repay except by selling the plastic. Apparently the idea is now that the community should dig communal ponds and this is part of the regional push to expand irrigation. In 2003 EC it had become the focus of the PSNP PWs and it was planned to continue in 2004 EC.

Livestock contributions to livelihoods

The animal hybrid service started in 2000 EC and the community has been provided with hybrid cows, goats, sheep and chickens. Respondents have a mix of local and improved breeds. Among our respondents local breeds still dominated.

Wereda officials highlighted the benefits of **improved breeds** in terms of production – for instance an improved cow produces 2 litres of milk when a local would produce half a litre. In the community no respondent mentioned improved sheep. Several mentioned improved cows (milk is not sold in the *tabia* but butter is sold and profitable), calves and oxen (for fattening), and chicken. Several women found hybrid chicken to be profitable because they lay more and bigger eggs and selling eggs provides a good income. *'They also have good meat and are huge like small sheep'*. One rich woman farmer agreed that people including herself benefited from hybrid cows (more milk, better meat). Several respondents noted that fattening was highly profitable within a few months.

One farmer said that improved breeds need more feed which is a problem. Insufficient fodder was indeed mentioned as an issue by several respondents. Even in good years, frost prevents grass from growing and reduces the quantity of grass that can be harvested. Grass has become more expensive as well. New fodder is being introduced – e.g. elephant grass is planted along the river where the watershed is being rehabilitated. It is successful and appreciated, and a number of respondents mentioned that they were planting animal fodder seedlings – which are produced at the nursery.

People appreciate the vet services at Dera. But one respondent mentioned that there was an ongoing epidemic and no solution from the *wereda* office. The disease is called *afe mear*, the infection starts in the cattle's mouth. At the time of the fieldwork several people had lost cattle to the disease in the past few weeks, including a woman who lost her four cattle.

With inflation the price of livestock and livestock product has become very high, which makes it profitable. However, death of animals worth several thousands of *birr* is common and hard to make up for. The associated debt can be very problematic. This pushed many to migrate due to the unpaid and unpayable debt arising from livestock death during the 2000/1 drought, and continues to be the cause for many migrations. On the other hand, people also sell livestock to be able to send a household member to Saudi Arabia.

Livestock ownership varies tremendously among households, and continues to be used as an indicator of wealth both formally (in relation to the PSNP graduation process) and informally in the way for instance the *tabia* leadership distinguishes between households that should be self-sufficient and others.

So for instance, before the drought one of the respondent had 3 oxen (2 local and 1 hybrid), 4 local cows, 4 hybrid calves, 2 donkeys, about 30 sheep and 15 foreign chickens. He lost 7 cattle, 25 sheep and all 15 chickens to the drought, and sold 2 more cattle. However, in early 2012 he had again 3 oxen (local, hybrid and foreign), 2 cows (traditional) and 2 calves, 4 donkeys and 24 sheep, and 7 chicken (local ones mainly). He did not say how he had managed to recover. In comparison, one woman heading a poor and small household had eight sheep of which three were small and six improved chickens that she found profitable but was concerned as they were fragile. She had lost about twenty sheep and a calf during the drought. She sold the one cow she had to pay for her son to go to Saudi Arabia, where he had travelled recently.

There is a tradition of **producing honey** in the *tabia*, as the forest areas found on the border with Afar are conducive to this. Modern beehives were introduced in 1999 EC by the agriculture office, on the ground that they give more production. But there are issues with the technology: farmers explained that the very cold weather in the area makes it more difficult to extract the honey than with traditional hives. They are also expensive. The livestock DA complained that he had received a plan from the *wereda* that the community should take 300 modern beehives but this did not work as people did not take them. So, many farmers continue to use traditional hives. The drought was also very bad for bees and many hives lost their bees.

The beekeeping package for the youth was also not successful because reportedly the young people who borrowed supposedly for engaging in honey production sold the beehives (given in kind) to migrate to Saudi Arabia. However, as the selling price for honey steadily increased in the past four years more farmers are said to be interested to become involved in honey production.

Inter-linkages – share-cropping, working parties, oxen exchange and sharing etc

Sharecropping or land renting in and out is practised. However, some of those who used to have to sharecrop or rent their land out now hire daily labourers – including female divorcées or widows and households whose male head is in Saudi Arabia. Officials also highlight that sharecropping out also decreases thanks to the availability of credit which gives people a chance to buy inputs or oxen.

Sharecropping or renting in is done by younger men who do not have their own land but also established farmers who want to add on their own land (like the model farmer interviewed, see below). Irrigated land is sharecropped or rented as well – which is discouraged by DAs and *tabia* leaders who say that households doing this do not benefit as much as if they were working hard and producing themselves.

Ploughing oxen are shared or rented though it seems mostly against work. Households have links with relatives in other areas like they used to in the past. They can bring their livestock there when fodder is scarce in Harresaw.

Working parties are not practised in the area. They were already not common in 1995 GC. Recently the government is trying to encourage small groups of households to work together for activities demanding intensive labour, going from one to the next. This is one of the objectives of the recently established development teams and 1-5 networks. It contributes to the government goal of doubling

production and becoming self-sufficient in the course of the five years of implementing the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP): working through the 1-5 network is supposed to make the work completed more rapidly.

Agricultural labour

Daily labour

In early 2012 there were 60 to 70 people whose livelihood depended mainly on agricultural labour and the trend had been on the rise in the past few years. They worked mostly on a daily basis although arrangements could be made for some time, for instance when a person does the agricultural work in a household whose male head is in Saudi. The wage rate has steadily increased including in the past five years. In early 2012 men earned 50 to 60 *birr/day* (60 *birr/day* during harvest time when the demand peaks) and women up to 45 *birr/day*. Younger women and adolescent girls are also increasingly involved in agricultural work including daily labour on irrigated farms and other farming activities and can earn 30 *birr/day*. One respondent explained that there are cases in which young men work with payment even on their own parents' farm.

The government-led interventions or advice just mentioned – that households should work on their land themselves and/or through 'free' shared labour arrangements – were partly in tension with this trend. The *tabia* leadership explained that local daily labour was replacing the seasonal migration to Adigrat, Wukro or Humera for farming activities. But many of the people depending on daily labour were landless so for them, it was not a way of getting an income supplement but their main income and livelihood. Daily labour absorbs part of the local unemployment as many youth from the community are landless and other job opportunities are limited.

An increasing number of women and youth of both sexes do daily labour as well, notably on irrigation farms. Some men go to Afar to do daily work similar to the work they could do in Harresaw. One of them explained that it is not better paid, but there are no holidays and so the income is a bit better.

Herding animals is no longer supposed to be practised. There are still people sending their livestock to other places (including in Afar) when the fodder is scarce in Harresaw and in some households they hire labourers to do so.

Longer-term agricultural employment

Longer-term agricultural employment (male workers living with the household or shepherds employed by households in Harresaw) has become very rare. It is replaced by daily labour. In early 2012 there were no more than three paid shepherds in Harresaw.

A few members of the community were found in longer-term agricultural employment elsewhere. One orphan boy living with his sister dropped out of school due to economic problems and went to work as paid shepherd in Afar for one year. In one of the interviewed households, one of the adult and married sons lives in Humera where he is renting land.

Government farming interventions

Development Agents

Like in all *tabias* of the *wereda* there are three Development Agents in Harresaw.

The **crop DA** is in charge of the general agronomy and irrigation activities. He assesses the total area of farm land and suitable options with regard to using modern farm technologies, plans the necessary types and amount of inputs, mobilises the community, provides advice and does supervision. The *wereda* agriculture office supplies the necessary inputs. Credit to buy the inputs is provided by DECSI (Dedebit Credit and Saving Institution) and the *tabia* multi-purpose cooperative. People who borrow cannot have debt from earlier loans. There is no specific package for women and youth. All those who own land can get credit services to buy inputs. In some *tabias* where there is a

lot of irrigation activity there is an additional DA but in Harresaw the crop DA also provides advice and guides the community on irrigation activities, telling them what and when to sow and linking closely with the irrigation committee leader on issues such as usage of water etc.

The **livestock DA** assesses the livestock resources and availability of fodder, plans for interventions like fodder plantation, and teaches the community about how to keep and feed livestock at home. The inputs are supplied by the *wereda* agriculture office. This DA identifies whether people who apply to get credit service for livestock packages will be able to repay their loan and sends his assessment to the *wereda* for approval. When the *wereda* approves, the DA works to help those people get credit from DECSI and the cooperative. The beekeeping activity is considered as work of the livestock DA.

The **NR DA** leads on introducing the reforestation and soil and water conservation packages. He is responsible for preventing deforestation, planning where and how SWC activities should be done and selecting areas for watershed development. Inputs used for the NRM activities (cement, gabion and various materials) are supplied by the government. People can buy seedlings at the nursery. The community provides work through the PSNP and as free community labour. The NR DA is also leader of the *tabia* SWC committee (which decides on PSNP PWs) and of the *tabia* development committee.

In Harresaw the three DAs work as a team and their work is integrated. They plan together and discuss together the various achievements and gaps. For instance, the zero-grazing policy was implemented by identifying the respective categories of land (government protected forest, community protected forest, grassland for ploughing oxen and private grassland), which was led by the NRM DA. As the land was used to plant grass and animal fodder or reallocated as farming land for landless people, the livestock and crop DAs were also involved.

The DAs divide the work among themselves by *kushet*. In one *kushet* the one DA who is in charge of it covers all activities of all three DAs. When there is a need for specialist advice in one particular field the *kushet*-assigned DA calls on his colleagues.

The DAs in Harresaw appear to be working with different kinds of households. A woman leading a poor FHH said she *got* good advice from the DAs and benefited from using improved wheat and fertiliser. One respondent who was happy with the agricultural advice he had *got* was a young landless man involved in share-cropping, who took a treadle pump and irrigation drip installation on credit, dug a well on the land he is renting, and is using improved fertiliser, seeds and new crops of wheat. Several respondents said that they were consulting the DAs for various issues and seemed happy with the advice. One respondent said the crop DA was much better than his predecessor.

Yet some women and other weaker members of the community said that they had not *got* advice from the DAs (like one physically disabled woman even though she had been forced to take fertiliser in 2002 and 2003 EC). In other cases advice was not taken up and could well have been problematic for the small and weak households to whom it was addressed. For instance, one poor widow and one poor divorcée was approached to take modern beehives, new breeds and fodder even though the households did not have the labour to make these investments profitable.

The DAs explained that while there were some achievements, there was continuous resistance and lack of awareness on the side of the community. Farmers complained about costs but did not calculate the benefits. In relation to irrigation they refuse to grow more profitable crops like beans and continue to grow barley. Or they refuse to sow early as they are advised to do.

If people talk about problems of frost the tabia administration and others consider it as opposition and they relate it to politics.

The crop and livestock DAs also complained that the conditions for farmers to get credit were too tight. In addition, Harresaw *tabia* had a bad reputation of having much debt. This was creating a bottleneck because without credit people could not take the packages that the DAs were responsible to introduce. At times promised inputs were late so that activities were failing, which undermined

the community's trust in future interventions. The NR DA thought that they needed to be able to take farmers more often on experience-sharing visits as this was more likely to convince community people, e.g. when they could see the benefit of growing vegetables resisting to frost like caulis.

Model farmers, Development Teams and 1-5s

Government interventions in farming livelihoods are promoted through the model farmers and the development teams and 1-5 networks.

Model farmers

There are models (or champions) in relation to the HEP (like several of the households interviewed). There is also a broader (and evolving) concept of role model which is discussed in section 4.4. **Model farmers** are often the same people who are supposed to play broader role models. For instance, it is now official policy, as explained by a *wereda* official, that:

... there is a change in that the one who should be tabia chairman should be a model man and a rich farmer. So the tabia chairmen have been trying to play a role model by getting graduated from the safety net programme voluntarily and by paying their debt on time.

In Harresaw indeed, the *tabia* leader explained that

... he was graduated in 2003 EC. When the quota was sent from the wereda he decided to graduate voluntarily. As he fulfils the benchmark for graduation, he was also identified by the DAs and safety net secretaries... The reason for him to be willing to graduate was because the leaders are expected to be role models in the community.

Model farmers are expected to lead the *tabia* committees. Thus for instance, the elder committee comprises model farmers. The eleven male farmers identified as rich and successful were also known to be strong members of the Council and of the party and were expected to be effective in mobilising the community to improve their attitude, work hard and improve their life.

At the same time, one of those interviewed explained that he had become 'model champion farmer' precisely when he had been allowed to resign from his position as social court leader and to focus instead on his private activities and follow the DAs' advice. He is a 50 year old man. He further explained that:

In 2003 EC there were 10 individuals identified as champion model farmers from Harresaw... The criteria include improving one's life using the government inputs properly, the demand for new technologies, and changing one's attitude. Model farmers are identified by the tabia cabinet and the community approves; then their list is sent to the wereda. He had been a champion for 5 consecutive years. He participated in training in Wukro and Mekelle, about how to improve one's life using agricultural inputs and how to keep personal hygiene and sanitation. The champions are expected to use the government agricultural inputs and modern beehives, and to be role models for other community members. Thus, as he had promised during the training, he took two modern beehives, fertiliser and improved seeds... So far, he had been able to produce from rented land in addition to his farm land... As a model farmer he uses irrigation, fertiliser, improved seed, BBM and tyriger. He has one milk cow and he does fattening. He contacts the DAs when he has any problem or when he wants advice in doing his farming. He also contacts the wereda experts when they come to the tabia. Besides, he communicates with other model farmers in the tabia. For example, he discussed with the crop DA recently about what kind of fertiliser to use for irrigated land, how much to use and when to sow seeds. This is because last year his crop was affected by the frost because he sowed it early.

Young men and women farmers can also be models, formally (see e.g. the woman who got a prize in Atsbi for her irrigation activities) or 'de facto' when they are considered as successful and others look on them (see e.g. the young landless man sharecropping and succeeding in irrigated farming, who was appointed as development team leader and is leader of the only successful *iddir*).

Advantages in being a model farmer includes getting priority in training (and therefore per diem) and

sometimes prizes. Privileged contacts with DAs and *wereda* experts can also be beneficial although no respondent mentioned that model farmers *got* any special treatment in terms of access to inputs. On the contrary, being a model prompts expectations that may harm. One respondent explained that models are expected to repay their debt timely, and some leaders were removed from their leadership position because they were not able to do this. Another mentioned the expectation that models would be first to graduate from PSNP as potentially harmful to them. They are also expected to help DAs and the *tabia* leadership to mobilise the community for things that are not popular with everyone like taking fertiliser.

Model farmers are expected to show the example in relation to livelihood activities. One member of the community explained that

We have agreed during the public meeting that we will achieve the 5 year plan to free our country and our-selves from poverty and we will no more depend on aid. The model farmers are also saying that they will double their production and will be free of poverty.

Views of members of the community about the importance of model farmers vary. A number of women, discussing about this including in relation to agriculture, said that it was very useful:

When it is seen to be good it makes her think 'why cannot I do like the champions and models?' Observation makes people feel that doing things is possible... People get convinced when they see things already done... If someone cannot understand by theory they are willing to get changed by watching already done things as it shows that it is possible. (Three different women)

Other women seemed agnostic or did not have any experience of model farmers. Male respondents rarely mentioned model farmers in the way they were influenced in their own livelihood activities. Training and demonstrations at the FTC were more often mentioned.

Development teams and 1-5s

The **development teams and 1-5 networks** were established in 2003 EC. Their broader role in relation to the community management is described later in this document. In relation to livelihood activities, the members of these structures are expected to help each other in activities like weeding and collecting harvest. They should also help poor and elderly people in providing labour. The leaders follow up the activities of their members.

In early 2012 there were 51 development teams, 21 male and 35 female. There were many 1-5 networks reporting to the teams. All households are expected to be included in a 1-5 networks. Most respondents indeed mentioned the development teams and 1-5 networks in one way or another. Women mentioned them most often in relation to health issues, which appear to be the main issues on which the women's development teams and 1-5 networks focus. The men's development teams are supposed to focus mainly on agriculture – in particular, how to implement activities to reach the government-heralded goal of doubling one's production. The development teams and 1-5 networks are also actively promoting better maternal health, the health family packages, children's education and avoiding dropouts etc.

The women interviewed were often quite positive about the role of these new grassroot structures. They mentioned a number of achievements, in the health field mainly although some of them also noted the effectiveness of working together for weeding. There were examples given of cases when the 1-5 networks had helped elderly people in working on their land. But a few respondents seemed to be fairly confused about the development teams and networks. One destitute woman knew the development team but not the network. One physically disabled woman said that she was not member of either and this seemed to be the case of one destitute man too. An elderly woman did not know of either. Others explained that they were not active members as they were busy with their private activities (e.g. e poor male divorcé, and some women too).

Men mentioned the development teams in relation to debt repayment and other payment issues, mobilising farmers to take inputs, and the organisation of the PSNP and community free labour (see

picture: a meeting of a development team discussing the works to be done). There was no mention of development teams in relation to e.g. harvesting or irrigation. Indeed one young man who is a development team leader sounded frustrated by the lack of effectiveness of development teams in relation to making sure that the community benefit from irrigation by getting farmers to plant cash crops and vegetables. He was of the view that there should be rules and regulations for the proper use of irrigated land, just like for the protected grassland; and that anyone who would not cultivate irrigated land based on the rules and regulations should be punished and confiscated his/her land.

The Farmers' Training Centre

The **Farming Training Centre** was built in 1990 EC. It was given 1 ha of land for demonstration in 2000 EC. That land is irrigated and the crop grown on it is sold, which provides an income for the FTC. Houses for the DAs were built in 1998 EC, which the *tabia* leader explained is good as DAs do not have to rent houses and can concentrate on their activities.

Training was provided on preparation of compost, fertiliser, improved seeds, ways of ploughing including on slopy terrain and depending on the amount of water, use of modern BBM and other instruments reserving soil wetness, vegetable growing, treadle pump and drip irrigation (there is a demonstration at the FTC), keeping and feeding livestock at home, modern beehives (there is also a demonstration model at the FTC), best practice of poultry, and planting of trees (acacia and olive) as cash crop. Sometimes DAs take farmers on experience-sharing visits for instance in a *tabia* with better use of irrigation.

Views as to whether the FTC is useful were mixed. Many of the male respondents were quite positive. Some found the training useful even though the weather prevented them from fully implementing it. Others appreciated the demonstrations instead of theoretical teaching only, although they noted that failed demonstrations prompted resistance to implement the new techniques. There were also respondents saying that nothing was being done with the FTC, mainly women. One respondent who found the FTC useful highlighted that the community did not know what was done with the FTC income and wanted more transparency about this.

Crops interventions

The various activities described above (new crops and modern farming technologies including use of fertilisers and improved seeds, expansion of irrigation, advice by DAs and training including at the FTC, role of champion model farmers etc.) all seem to be interventions led by the government.

Livestock interventions

There are two types of livestock packages. The youth package is described in the next section together with other youth-specific livelihood interventions. The farmer's package is given to land-owning men and women farmers and includes multi-activities such as poultry, fattening, and milk production.

There are success stories related to the package. One respondent explained that even though he had lost a lot with the drought, he had understood that credit was good and the fattening business was profitable. Another explained that:

When he decided to take a loan the first time, it was because he had nothing at hand; so he took the credit and was able to buy 2 oxen, 2 donkeys, 2 cows, and over 20 sheep with his profit. He would have continued to live in poverty if he had not been able to get the credit service. He did not have difficulties to pay his debt because he was paying it soon after he earned profit. Due to the drought of 2000/1 EC he lost 6 of the 8 sheep due to famine. Since then he has shifted his business to keeping oxen rather than sheep because the livestock feed that was provided by the government was only for cattle.

But there are also dire failures, like this 41 year old poor man (married and with 4 children).

He borrowed 5,000 birr from Dedebit in 1997 EC after having been admitted in the livestock package. He intended to keep a milk cow and beehives and fatten sheep. He took the credit by cash. He bought a

cow and sheep and had started livestock trade. He then sold the cow and bought an ox. But he was unable to pay his debt because he lost the livestock due to the drought in 2000/1 EC. And he was not able to work because he was severely sick in 2002 EC. He then went to Afar for daily labour work and had saved some money. But he used the money for his daughter's medical treatment as her eye was infected by a cactus thorn. As he had no money to take her to a clinic in time, her eye has gone blind. Now, he is searching a person who can rent his land so that he can pay his debt.

One of the Dedebit experts who follows up loans in Harresaw explained that in 1995/96 EC (that is, at the start of the package programme) *'the credit was given by force'*. It was used as performance measure for the *tabia* leaders who therefore were *'putting a lot of pressure on the community to take credit. Those who refused were asked to sign that they had enough to support themselves and they did not need aid. So, to avoid exclusion from aid, most people took credit unwillingly.'*

The *tabia* leader recognised that a lot of credit had been lost in the drought because so many livestock died then. Other responses suggest that this includes credit taken under pressure as just explained. Yet there is also a discourse, including among community members, that credit and packages can help when they are wisely used.

The modalities for the livestock package have evolved over time in part to try and ensure better credit use. Community members explained that early on farmers had to take credit in group and did not like this. Credit was also provided in kind and the livestock was bought in bulk so it was bought at high price, and was not of good quality. One said that this was no longer the case (since 2002 EC) and that the package beneficiaries were getting cash individually so they could go to the market and negotiate the price and assess the animal's quality. But he explained that credit given for people to replace the losses of 2000/1 was in kind *'so that the community would not misuse the money and would not be left with empty hands'*.

There is a **veterinary service** at Dera in G/Kidan *tabia*. It serves four *tabias* and provides animal vaccination and treatment, washing, and hybriding. It started in 1999 EC (2000 EC according to some respondents). The experts get the necessary inputs from the *wereda* and from the federal government according to the *tabia* leadership. Previously, veterinary services were provided by experts from the *wereda* coming to the *tabia*. Now the experts from Dera come to the *tabia* and give treatment at home when it is too difficult to carry the animals.

Most respondents appreciated the service, which is not very far; although many said that it would be better if it was given in the *tabia*. Community members also complained that when the expert was on leave or absent for another reason the service was interrupted. For instance at the time of the fieldwork the hybrid service expert was on training for 2-3 months and there was no service.

Finally, in relation also with the NRM interventions, new fodder is being introduced. Farmers are encouraged to buy seedlings and grow it on their land, and seedlings (e.g. elephant grass) are also planted in rehabilitated communal land including in the Zereroha watershed.

NRM interventions

The various NRM activities described above all seem to be government-led. The PWs done under the PSNP are of major importance with regard to carrying out the government NRM interventions. The role of the government even seems to have expanded. Community respondents highlighted that earlier on it was the community deciding about the work done through free community labour but this had changed and it was now first studied and proposed by the *tabia* experts and administration; a simultaneous trend was that priorities were the same for the PSNP PWs and community labour.

Non-farm occupations

Local non-farm employment opportunities

As said earlier there is no investor in Harresaw. Some investors are active in Felege Genet (a neighbouring *tabia*) in olive oil production. They created 30 job opportunities, trained farmers to

introduce olive trees on their land and brought an oil production machine which will create more jobs. According to *wereda* officials this activity could be undertaken in Harresaw and some other areas of the *wereda* but there is no plan for this. Investors from Mekelle opened the Dera Bottling company (based in Atsbi) which created 98 jobs for Grade 10 and diploma holders. It is not known if there are any employees from Harresaw.

There are six people from the community who are salaried in fulltime jobs, like the *tabia* manager. Two of them are women. There are other non-full-time salaried jobs depending on the *tabia* budget - like the phone operator and the young girl who runs the cooperative shop (see picture below). Young men explained that women are given priority in getting these kinds of jobs, due to government affirmative policy.

Fifteen people get paid at the nursery. This started with World Vision, when the salary was better. They are paid now from the *wereda* budget, in cash or grain depending on what is available. The head is paid 22 *birr*/day for 30 days a month. The guards and labourers are paid 15 *birr*/day which is the same as the PSNP wage rate for 2003 EC. Another eight community members are paid in cash or grain on the *wereda* budget as guards of the government protected forest.

The water point guards are paid by people's user fees.

There are a few other roles attracting some payment. This is decided by the *tabia* leadership and the community as the payment comes from a community pool of resources. These include the community protected forest guards (paid in grain from the PSNP/EFA and by the user fees from people whose oxen graze there twice a year) and the fifteen militia on duty when people work on PSNP public works (paid as if they are working on the PSNP PWs).

Local non-farm business and trading opportunities

General

In many households in early 2012 at least one person was involved in local non-farm business and trading activities, though most of the times not as a full-time occupation.

The table below summarises the information on the off- and non-farm livelihood options in 2012, and compares it to options that existed in 1995 GC.

Table 2: Off- and non-farm livelihood options in Harresaw in 1995 GC and 2012 GC

In 1995 GC	In 2012 GC
300 people involved in off-farm work including	In about 300 households there is at least one migrant in Saudi Arabia, in addition to the options detailed below. <i>Tabia</i> officials said that more than 50 people are engaged in non-farm activities
1 blacksmith	Not said
	2 metal workers
10 weavers	1 weaver (in prison during the fieldwork)
	2 tailors
15 hairdressers	10 hairdressers
1 carpenter	3 carpenters
20 masons	5 masons
2 plasterers	3 people skilled in putting iron sheet roofs and cementing
No shop in Harresaw	30 adult people involved in trade (honey, butter, grain, livestock) in towns (also women); 7 people said to be 'businessmen'; 1 delala Male youth engaged in various trades like skins from Afar, shoes and consumption goods to Afar; many young women & adolescent girls retailing 6 shops, 10 drink houses, 1 billiard in Harresaw
No agricultural daily labour in Harresaw	60 to 70 people living mainly of daily labour

In early 2012 migration in Saudi Arabia (which is described later) dwarfed the other alternatives. In

the four large male-headed households interviewed there were no members involved in non-farm businesses. In the female-headed households children or youth were engaged in income-generating activities – on a small-scale but which seemed to be indispensable. But all six households without exception had at least one migrant in Saudi Arabia. The richest and most successful had several sons in Saudi Arabia since several years. Another father explained that since his son migrated a few months ago, he had been able to save 30,000 *birr* on his son's bank account, after having paid his debt of 2,000 *birr* and bought an ox and some farming implements for 7,000 *birr*.

Wood and grass sale

There are a few poor people who are given a paper by the *wereda* and are permitted to collect and sell dead wood from the government protected forest. Otherwise fuelwood selling does not seem to be common in the *tabia*. Grass is sold, more so nowadays with the zero-grazing policy. People who have grassland but no or few livestock sell it to people with a large number of livestock and who do not produce enough fodder from their own land. Grass has become expensive (a quantity which used to cost 50 *birr* is now sold for 500 *birr*), but there is no information on how important grass selling is as an income-generating activity in the community.

Trading

Trading ranged from very small (e.g. selling a few eggs on the roadside) to larger operations (e.g. employing three skin collectors in Afar and selling them in Atsbi) and involved people from different backgrounds – including students and women. For instance one middle-age woman was buying grain and beans locally and in Dera and selling to Atsbi – including hers'. She used her donkey to transport her load. She had started the business in 1985 GC, bringing grain from faraway places as there was no grain in Harresaw. The business then was profitable whereas in early 2012 the profit was small and fluctuating. It was more profitable for people who had enough capital to buy at harvest time, store for a while and sell at better price later in the year.

Many young women and adolescent girls but also young men were engaged in retailing vegetables (see picture).

One young man explained that he supplied the shops and drink houses with the goods and drinks they needed, in addition to running his own shop. He transported these items by car from Atsbi then donkey to the *tabia* centre.

Services

There were a few new service activities like fixing bicycles and mobile phones, shoe repairs and shoe-shining (see picture: young men also trade shoes between Afar and Atsbi).

A number of women and young people were private running shops (6) and drink houses (10) or helping relatives in these activities. This could be in rented houses or rooms, thus providing an income to the owners of the place. Running a shop was said not to be good business because there was competition, the price of goods to buy was high, and they could not afford a high margin as people in Harresaw would not buy. Yet, the number of such undertakings may well continue to increase as young women coming back from Saudi Arabia with some capital seem to be attracted by this type of opportunities.

There was one *delala* (broker/fixer) involved in facilitating livestock transactions on market days and making 500 *birr*/month out of this. He wanted to expand his business in brokering for land and houses, taking an official license to do so. He was influenced by other *delalas* active in Atsbi. He could see a growing trend of people investing in land and houses in Harresaw, Dera and Atsbi with money from migration in Saudi Arabia.

Transport

Transport was a good business with not much competition.

Traditional health services

This has become a marginal livelihood option as people's health behavior has changed with the greater availability of modern health services and the government teachings. In Harresaw there are only a few traditional healers left. The one who was interviewed, a 61-year old man, said that he was no longer very active at all: he had one or two patients in a year. He charges nothing for poor people and up to 100 *birr* for people who can afford it. The TBAs are not paid for the services that they render. Anyway they are not supposed to assist deliveries any longer. In principle pregnant women should call the HEW and the HEW should help them to get to the health centre.

Production

There were a few job opportunities for skilled workers including construction, roof covering, cementing, painting, tiling and woodwork. In early 2012 three individuals were engaged in this type of work. According to one of the three, the cost of wood had increased so the demand for woodwork was low. Also, there were few people affording iron sheet roofs and cemented and painted walls. Another problem was that the community complained about the price of materials and people gave jobs to those working at lower prices rather than those using the best quality of materials.

The man interviewed had learned the skill in Eritrea and returned in 1990 EC. He was paid on a daily basis at 50 *birr*/day for construction work. For roof covering and cementing and painting he worked by contract: he *got* 300-400 *birr* in 2-3 days but he hired assistants. His son helped him during his non-school time; he was hired like the other employees. The man was planning to continue and if possible expand his work as it was getting better over time. He had not tried to take credit although it was available, because he feared losses and debt. When he needed some money for instance when he was paid late and had to pay the people he had hired he borrowed from friends.

Government non-farm livelihood interventions

There was no mention of other interventions by the government which would try and support the development of non-farm activities in Harresaw, beyond the general *wereda* policy toward inward investment. TVET opportunities are scarce and were reportedly not affordable by many. *Wereda* officials mentioned the necessity to get youth involved in income-generating activities including micro and small enterprises but there was no mention of any specific plan to do so for the *tabia* or more generally. There was no mention of any assessment of market opportunities, except in relation to commercialisation of irrigated agriculture products. Respondents usually did not seem to expect much from the government.

Marketing

Output markets

Some of the opportunities just described respond to a market demand from outside of the community, like those people buying and selling hides, grain and other agricultural including livestock products as intermediaries. However, most of the households undertake to sell themselves what they produce. Trade between Tigray and Afar also offers opportunities - as has been the case since a long time, although people now trade non-agricultural products like household goods and shoes (new from Atsbi to Kuneba and used from Kuneba to Atsbi where they are recycled).

Other local nonfarm opportunities such as the new services and shops respond to a demand from within the community, mostly influenced by urban trends and returnees from migration and partly created by the very same people who undertake these activities.

Input and consumption markets

For the shops and drink houses in the *tabia* centre issues of access to land, electricity and inputs arise. Land in the *tabia* centre was reallocated as residential land to landless people in 1990 EC.

People who received this land either engage themselves in these activities or rent the place to others. Access to electricity is not an issue as shops and drink houses get it from other people's meters. One man said he would prefer to have his own meter. As for inputs, shops and drink houses get supplies and drinks by the dry-weather road reaching the *tabia* centre. The plan of the *tabia* administration to pave a road to Dera would benefit them when it would be done as it would make sure that they could get goods and supplies at all times even in the rainy season.

PSNP and other food-for-work

In the *tabia* there are only government-supported 'food aid' programmes: the Productive Safety Net Programme and the Emergency Food Aid programme. Under the PSNP there are two components, the public works (PW) and direct support (DS) which many people now call 'federal support'.

The **PSNP programme** started in 1997 EC. Its first phase was completed in 2001 EC. Its second phase started in 2002 EC. The community identified two main changes with the start of the second phase: (i) now all members of beneficiary households have to be included (there could no longer be partial targeting); (ii) there is a plan to graduate people and implementation has started. Few community people knew about the formal appeal process that was supposed to have been strengthened according to *wereda* officials. The **emergency food aid** became important in 2001 EC because of the drought and continued to be available since that year.

In practice, as is described below, all households have been included in one or the other programme. The data for the PSNP in 2003 EC is summarised below.

Table 3: Number of households and people benefiting from PSNP in 2003 EC in Harresaw

Public Works					
Households			People		
MHH	FHH	Total	Male	Female	Total
301	641	942	1.614	1.700	3.314
Direct Supports					
Households			People		
MHH	FHH	Total	Male	Female	Total
130	153	283	196	230	426
TOTAL					
Households			People		
MHH	FHH	Total	Male	Female	Total
431	794	1.225	1.810	1.930	3.740

The number of households under PSNP (1,225) is higher than the total number of households for Harresaw given by other officials and mentioned earlier in this report (1,124). Yet this does not include the households who are under EFA. This may be due to data being given for different years and differences in the way households are defined. For instance, one young woman living with her mother while her husband was away in Saudi may be considered as part of her mother's household in the lower figure if only landed households are considered, whereas she was registered as a household by herself for the PSNP.

Taking the population data from the *wereda* (6,003), in 2003 EC 62% of Harresaw's people were under the PSNP. According to one *tabia* official there were another 1,294 people in EFA. Thus, a total of 82% people were getting support one way or the other in that year. However, the most important concept for the community is that **all households are supported**, to different extents.

Targeting beneficiaries

In the *tabia* the PSNP and EFA are considered together when it comes to targeting. As explained by community members from different backgrounds (decision makers and simple beneficiaries)

- All households were included under one or the other programme (the 45 households identified

for graduation in 2003 EC will only be excluded in 2004 EC).

- Until 2001 EC this was achieved by spreading the PSNP support through partial targeting. Better-off families were getting fewer members registered as PSNP beneficiaries.
- When this became no longer permitted the EFA quota was bigger because of the drought; better-off households were included under the EFA programme, to which partial targeting was applied so that all households could get some assistance.

Targeting also considers labour capacity. Some respondents stressed that aspect and explained that: (i) those who are poor and have labour capacity are under the PSNP PWs; (ii) those who are poor and do not have labour capacity 'at all' are under the direct support; (iii) those who have a 'middle level' labour capacity are under the emergency aid. Others put this the other way round and explained that emergency food aid was better for better-off households who were busy with their own activities because work requirements were less onerous and more lax. However, studying households' wealth was said to be used for graduation.

For the PSNP there is annual retargeting (in November or December for the following year), but since 2001 EC when full family targeting started to be applied, this is only to replace people who have died or left the *tabia* by newcomers and new born. For emergency aid there is annual retargeting as the quota varies and people's status too. Under the PSNP the quotas for PW and DS are given separately. The direct support beneficiaries are said to be those above 60, the disabled, handicapped and orphans, the weaker ones on grounds of age, health or disability. If the DS quota is too small, some of them who are better than others are included in the public works.

Here are a few examples of the use of the different 'categories':

- One woman who is rich (2 oxen, 15 sheep, 15 chickens, irrigation land and she sharecrops in) gets emergency aid which is good as work requirements are less demanding
- One disabled man is not under PSNP PW because he cannot work; he has been under emergency food aid for the last two years
- The family of a mentally ill person gets PSNP PW but the mentally ill person gets direct support
- One deaf person gets emergency aid according to his helper
- One poor widower who has become old and weak says he has now been put under the emergency aid because there was no direct support quota
- When there is not enough quota for all people who should be in direct support (when people become old and sick for instance) they are put in the emergency food aid category. But in some cases they continue to be counted as PW even though they do not work
- People make appeals for the 'open quota' (quota left as people left or died) and if the open quota is not enough to accommodate all appeals the poorest are given priority
- One person who had a health problem appealed to the *tabia* manager and was shifted to the emergency aid. But his wife continues to be doing public works under the PSNP even though he had asked that she should be shifted too as she has to take care of him.

The targeting process

The food security task force of the *tabia* is chaired by the *tabia* chairman. This has been so since 1997 EC when the PSNP programme started. The role of the FSTF is to distribute the quota coming from the *wereda* to each *kushet*, follow up and supervise the identification of beneficiaries and approve the final list before it is sent to the *wereda*. There are 12 members: the *tabia* chairman, DA, justice and security, *wudabe/aderejajet* (party recruiter), propaganda (who is also the party leader in the *tabia*), religious leader, community elder and chairs of associations.

Within the *kushets* the work is done by the development team leaders. There is no longer a formal *kushet* structure but there are informal *kushet* coordinators. To try and avoid conflict, before the list goes to the FSTF it is announced in a *kushet* meeting and the community suggests upon it and makes arrangements. The meeting is led by the *tabia* Cabinet member who is generally in charge of following up all development interventions in that *kushet*.

The *tabia* chairman thought that there was no need for the *tabia* council to see the targeting list.

Inclusion and exclusion

In terms of outcomes, nobody among the respondents said that people who needed support were excluded, except perhaps newcomers waiting for retargeting. Many respondents noted that there were better-off people who (last year) '*in practice did not need PSNP support*' and were included. But it was said to be impossible to exclude them because they had been included in bad times and could be taken off only by graduation. There were cases of people getting a better income from their own activities and who had decided to stop working for the PSNP. In some cases their wife was working on their behalf. No respondent used the expression 'self-graduation', but there were cases which were genuine self-graduation with no member of the household continuing to work.

Some suggested that there needed to be a way for richer people who did not need the support to be excluded as they were wasting their time on the PWs rather than improving themselves through their own activities. Whereas poor and weak people should get more and longer support.

Several respondents (many of them being part of the *tabia* elite but not all) stated that being included or excluded had nothing to do with party membership or links with the *tabia* leadership. As one respondent put it, it did not matter because '*everybody is eligible*'.

Measures in favour of vulnerable groups were mentioned. When someone dies the family gets one month of the deceased person's ration as support. *Tabia* officials said that they were supporting mentally ill, orphans and PLWHA by giving them priority and 'full quota' in the PSNP or emergency support. They were targeted before anyone else. As there is no other support, the 215 old people who need support are included under direct support (like this old man who did not remember when he had been included in the programme and said that if he could not get the aid he would die because he has no property or livestock to sell in time of crisis). One orphan who had returned from being away as paid shepherd had been included in the emergency aid, after he had participated to the free community labour campaign as he was asked to do by the *tabia* officials.

One female PLWHA complained that other PLWHAs were getting double rations as a mark of support from the *tabia*, but she was not and she did not know why. *Tabia* officials had told her she would get this next year. One woman who is working at the nursery and gets 300 *birr*/month wanted to participate to the PSNP PWs in addition but she was told she could not. One agricultural labourer said that he had been taken off from the emergency support unfairly. He had not been to the works for one month because he was bed-ridden but the *tabia* officials had not accepted his case. One poor man explained that in 2003 EC he had been included in the emergency aid and while at the beginning he *got* for five then four family members now it was for only two. He put this down to biases: some people get for all members but some with worse problems get only for a few.

As described earlier there were community members mentioning threats of being denied the assistance they were getting, if they would not take fertiliser. In earlier years this was related to taking household packages and credit for these. One *tabia* official said that there was no threat of using PSNP exclusion to force people to do things. He explained that

When individuals refuse to dig latrines, when they come to PSNP PWs they are sent back to their home to dig a latrine. There were many people who constructed latrines in this way.

One respondent explained that those who do not participate to the community voluntary work are excluded.

Appeals

There is a *tabia* appeal committee chaired by one of the community's elders (an emergency aid beneficiary). This man said that the committee was reorganised in 2003 EC and they were given training. Previously the appeal committee was not meeting. However, the woman interviewed as 'appeal decision maker' (wife of the nursery head, rich and getting emergency aid) said that the

appeal committee was still not functioning – they did not feel responsible. Also, the community *‘does not give much attention to the appeal committee; they prefer to go to the tabia cabinet members for appeals’*. So, the same committee was hearing appeal and making targeting decisions.

Most appeals were said to be of three types: (i) people claiming more worked days than mentioned on the report going to the *wereda*; (ii) people wanting to be categorised under DS instead of PW and (iii) people under emergency food aid wanting to have more members of their families included. All respondents mentioned appeal processes that did not involve the formal appeal committee. Instead, they said that:

- Appeals could be put to the *tabia* manager and go to the *wereda* if the case was not solved
- Appeals were presented in writing to the *tabia* administration
- Most appeals were done verbally
- Appeals were put to the *tabia* chairperson
- Appeals to get more members included in emergency aid were resolved by discussing the problem with the development teams and the community which identified the beneficiaries
- Appeals came to the *tabia* Cabinet and were discussed in Cabinet meetings
- Appeals came to individual members of Cabinet.

Tabia officials said that the *tabia* Cabinet was giving solutions. In some cases Cabinet members were giving resolutions individually, when appeals were coming to them individually. One rich woman – who had been graduated *‘against her interest’* - said that people who do not have good relations with the *tabia* did not get their rights respected in appeal processes.

Graduation

According to *wereda* officials graduation started with the PSNP second phase. A participant can graduate only when the household’s total wealth (livestock, grain, property, house, etc. with outstanding debt subtracted) is equal to or above the benchmark: 5,600 *birr* per household member.

The *tabia* chairman said that in Harresaw graduation had started in 2003 EC (elsewhere in the *wereda* some graduation took place in 2002 EC) when 42 households had been identified. He was part of these 42: he had volunteered to graduate as he had to play the role of model. DAs and PSNP secretaries studied the possessions of beneficiaries every year since 2002 EC for the selection. They assessed income, animals and ownership of houses in town. This was made easier thanks to the presence of the development teams.

These 42 households were still under the programme but would no longer from 2004 EC onwards. When they were identified they were given 150 *birr* as a sign of good will. He said that

There will be a programme called HABP through which graduates will form their own credit and savings organisation to withdraw from DECSI and accumulate their own wealth. There was a one-day orientation for the DAs and tabia leadership and it is on the way for practical work.

A quota of 204 households to be identified for graduation had been sent by the *wereda* for 2004 EC. The identification was ongoing during the fieldwork. The *tabia* chairman explained that graduates are not replaced by other beneficiaries and there will be no beneficiaries left at the end of the programme. The table below gives some information on the graduated households and people as at the end of the fieldwork.

Table 4: Number of PSNP graduated households and people in 2010 and 2011

	No. of graduated			
	HHs		People	
	MHH	FHH	M	F
2010 (2002EC)	7	35	75	97
2011 (2003EC)	27	102	177	243

One poor male respondent noted that many FHH had been identified for graduation, as is showed in the table; these were wives whose husband was in Saudi and they were expected to get remittances. But, he said, there were other people who had considerably improved their lives with irrigation and honey production, not relying on migration, and who had been left in the programme. However, as another person remarked, it is difficult because families of migrants have assets that are not visible. It is said that they keep their money at the bank. One man explained that

He was informed of his graduation in 2003 EC by the tabia officials and DAs. He resisted because he has not yet improved his economy. He said that the properties (assessed) (livestock and house in Dera) were not his possessions but those of his children who live in Saudi. If only his property had been considered he would not be graduated because there are people who have better economy than him and they still are not graduated. (He resisted to no avail and was given a graduation certificate).

There were cases of people saying that they had graduated against their will, like the rich woman mentioned earlier. The *tabia* leader told that there had been several households who did not want to graduate. So far, there had been no sale of assets for the purpose of staying in the programme, though he feared it might happen in the future. Another woman explained that she had stopped working and being paid as she was getting a better income by daily labour on her mother's irrigation, and therefore she had not paid attention when she was told that she was graduated.

Generally there is a sense that in good years some households would not need PSNP and therefore, graduation is a good thing. The *tabia* leader even said that there should be some means by which beneficiaries could graduate sooner. As said earlier, it is seen as a necessary prompt for people to focus on their more profitable private activities. But there is fear too as the community think that all households cannot graduate within four or five years, and in bad years all households need support.

Type, quantity, timeliness and use of support

In terms of number of months in which there was some support, it was not possible to obtain reliable information for the emergency aid. For PSNP, in addition to the six months every year there were four months in 2008 (2000 EC), two months in 2009 (2001 EC), none in 2010 (2002 EC) and five months in 2011 (2003 EC). Payments in cash increased from 8 *birr/day* in 2008 and 2009 to 10 *birr/day* in 2010 and 15 *birr/day* in 2011. A few respondents discussed the question as to whether this was exploitation considering the much higher wage rate for local daily labour.

Within the 11 months of PSNP support in 2003 EC/2011, grain was given for 4 months and cash for the other 7 months. The 15 *birr/day* were better but not sufficient to buy the quantity of grain equivalent to grain payments. When it is food, under PSNP last year it was only foreign wheat. Generally respondents said that it was of good quality. Under emergency aid there seemed to be a wider variety of food stuff, including sorghum which people did not like. Many respondents said that the support was not enough especially when it is in cash but also when it is only 6 months. There was a sense that the poor and physically weak, beneficiaries of DS, needed more continuous support. It should be different from the public works beneficiaries and more than 6 months.

Cash comes to the *tabia* with the *wereda* cashier. For grain it depends on the participant's choice whether she/he goes to Atsbi or makes it come to the *tabia*. Public transport to Atsbi is now available so quite many people go to fetch their grain as they can avoid spending a long time to do this. When it is grain there are issues with loading and unloading and also the *wereda* cut some kgs as it gives based on quintals and there may be some kgs missing.

People mostly use the food for their own consumption though sometimes sell some to buy coffee, salt etc. For those better-off who have some food of their own it is additional; or it allows them to store and sell their own production at better price; for the poorer it is the only food. When it is cash it is used for clothes, salt, coffee, sugar, red pepper, soap, medical costs, payment of small debts and school costs. One poor woman said that without PSNP her child would have to stop and do daily labour work; another person said that he would have to send his daughter herding.

Most respondents explained that PSNP payments were late and irregular. In kind it takes 1 to 2 months, in cash up to 3 months. Some beneficiaries are forced to borrow until the payments reach the *tabia*. For instance, in 2003 EC the payments (for six months of work from January to July) came in April, May, July, September, November and December. There is also no regularity: sometimes they give the ration for two months at once and they give the next month's payment two or three weeks after. As a result '*the PSNP beneficiaries did not know when it was given because it never came regularly*'. The PSNP secretary and the *wereda* blame each other in terms of delay. Emergency aid was said to be even less regular.

The delays in payments are much problematic for poor families, who have to borrow or find other means of making it up. For instance one man explained that:

He has 8 family members and get support for them all. Last year he worked for 11 months, received payments for 11 months and expects payment for the remaining months. As payments were late he was forced to purchase grain for four months with money earned by his children doing daily labour.

In PSNP (public works and direct support) '*there is a picture of the beneficiaries*' since 2001 EC. This is not the case for emergency aid. No respondent made the link with his or her rights with regard to quantity and timeliness of support (or used the words 'client card'), though some people used the card to respond on the timeliness of the support.

Almost all respondents interviewed (except a few older or weaker ones who did not know) talked about the **contributions** that the community is making out of the PSNP and emergency aid grain. The contribution was 1kg/month/person. The grain is deducted at the *tabia* level and is auctioned. The income is used for various projects. Those mentioned were: the construction and provision of school materials for the G/Kidan high school (where Harresaw children go), the construction of the *tabia* office and hall, the purchase of an ambulance, contribution for the construction of a regional stadium and recently, contribution for Abay Dam (ongoing, it had been decided that Harresaw would contribute 50,000 *birr*).

One of the *tabia* officials explained that in 2003 EC the community contributed 38,000 *birr* for various development projects including construction of the *tabia* office/hall and materials for the secondary school. Contributions are deducted from all transfers in grain, PSNP PW and direct support and emergency aid. There is no exemption.

Generally respondents who mentioned this practice did not object to it, and projects were found beneficial or important. However, roughly half of them objected to the lack of transparency: they did not know how much had been earned with the grain auctioned and how money was used. The tax collector mentioned that while she could see the revenue accruing on the *tabia* bank account she did not attend the auction so she did not know how much grain had been sold and at what price.

Some of the community members also noted that the decision to contribute was taken at the community level; so, people who did not agree were forced to adhere to the majority's decision. They said contributions should be decided individually. One person mentioned that the community had said that they would no longer pay unless there was more transparency. But another explained that people who would not accept to contribute would be hated by *tabia* officials and face difficulties in administrative affairs. Yet another said that the *tabia* council had taken action to convince the few people who were initially reluctant.

Public Works

How is it decided? *Wereda* officials explained that DAs together with the *tabia* administration decide about the priority activities; this is presented to the *tabia* cabinet to be approved. In addition, it may be necessary to '*prioritise urgent activities that might be orders from a higher level of administration like irrigation schemes and development of water resources*'. However, it is important that activities are decided with the participation of the community and approval of the *tabia* council. In practice as *tabia* officials explained the FFW activities are identified by the DAs and the *tabia* cabinet discuss the

idea with the community. The *tabia* council approves.

One poor man beneficiary said that in previous years activities were chosen by the community but recently it had been by *tabia* administration and DAs. Others had similar accounts; one woman added that '*the community do what they are told to do*'; but generally community members thought that the works chosen were important and useful.

Who is working/not working? Direct support beneficiaries do not work. All other PSNP beneficiaries work. Pregnant and lactating mothers are exempted from the PSNP public works but not from the community free labour. Normally all emergency aid beneficiaries should be working with weaker people doing light tasks such as watering seedlings etc. but in practice this is a lot more lax than for the PSNP PWs. In contrast, when a household is under PSNP PW work requirements can be demanding when there are many dependents who cannot work. For instance:

- One man with eight family members had to work 20 days in a month and his wife 15 days (in 2003 EC one of their daughters helped her). He gets direct support for one person. He said that if he was working less he would work fulltime on his irrigation.
- One woman head of household with children said that whether she decided to go to the PSNP works or to weed her field she was losing income, either because she would be counted missing and payment would be deducted, or she would get her full ration but weeds would grow and her harvest would be less.

A number of other responses similarly suggested that in some households, the PSNP public works requirements were difficult to reconcile with other income-generating activities, or with domestic activities for women. For instance one woman explained that as the water and the wood are far, when she was working on the PSNP she could not do it all; she was giving priority to feeding her livestock when she was coming back home and had no time and no water to cook for her children.

One adolescent girl explained that she worked on PSNP public works when her parents could not do so. She said that in large families when both husband and wife are asked to work many days to cover all family members they take some of their children with them to assist them.

Many people pointed to labour gap due to the many youth migrating. Some heavier work was not done. Work done was only half what would be expected.

How is the work done. Once decided, work to be done is measured by the DAs and agricultural cadres of each *kushet*. Depending on the nature of the work it is allocated to individuals or groups. In the groups when there are many women men complain because work takes longer. This is solved by discussion. Some respondents said that the work gets divided and men do heavier work and less work is given to women. Tools and other inputs are provided by the government. Sometimes there are shortages or inputs are late, like the elephant grass in Zereroha watershed.

The works are supervised by foremen. The DAs supervise too as the foremen do not have the technical expertise. The foremen record attendance. Development team leaders make people come and work. The PSNP secretary takes the attendance lists from the foremen to compile and send them to the *wereda*. There can be issues as foremen make mistakes or are biased. They also come under pressure to count people who just show up and then go away. There are also issues when the attendance sent to the *wereda* is higher than planned. *Wereda* officials refuse this.

What is done. In recent years the public works had focused on paving roads and watershed rehabilitation (in 2002 EC). Now they were told to focus on irrigation as a high priority (a decision taken at higher level as explained by *wereda* officials). So they had focused on communal wells, check dams and maintenance of irrigation canals. Previously there had been a lot of terracing (to avoid erosion of farmland). There is also tree planting, and handling of the FTC crop. The work is done in January to July but can last longer when there is additional budget.

Some other works are considered and paid like the PSNP PWs. This includes:

- The six guards of the communal protected forest.

- The fifteen militia guarding people's property when they work on PWs . It used to be 30 but the DAs made it to be reduced to 15. An alternative version of the story is that the community went on strike and demanded that militia should work like everyone and through discussion with *tabia* cabinet members it was decided that 15 would continue to guard people's property and be paid without doing PWs.
- The 12 members of the SWC committee paid to 'guide the community in the PSNP PWs'.

One man mentioned that he was not working on PWs because he was handicapped from the war but he was contributing as he was mobilising community people to repay their debt.

Several women said that the work is hard, like carrying stones and soil on hilly terrain. One woman heading a poor household explained that:

The problem for her household is that the works makes her to be so busy. Sometimes the land given to dig is rocky and it takes her much longer. Old people are forced to work and they get so tired and fall down. This is so because they have no choice. It takes time if the person was in public work and gets moved into direct support there has to be quota from the wereda and they wait for long time. The community do not cooperate to support the elders. Individuals work on their own work plots. There are injuries when transporting stones or splitting stones. Lactating women carry stone and soil. People get tired because the work is very hard.

People expressed different preferences depending on their perspective. Several mentioned that tree planting and working on the watershed was better because it was lighter work – but others said that the watershed was far for them and they did not benefit directly. Some said road construction was very important as it allowed cars to enter the *tabia*, though others said it was very heavy work. Activities like work on the irrigation canals, communal well construction and terracing along farm land to avoid it to be washed away had immediate benefits, but the watershed management work was said to bring sustainable environmental rehabilitation. This was said to be very important, all the more that these activities could not be done individually. However, yet others stressed that watershed rehabilitation as well as all SWC activities brought no benefit to landless households – as opposed to works on roads for instance.

Impact. With the watershed development, affected areas have been rehabilitated, the underground water resource has increased, grass and forests have grown and are protected, the development of water streams has created a conducive environment for irrigation activities. Terracing and other SWC helps conserving fertile soil. Many respondents of all backgrounds expressed their appreciation as the changes arising from the SWC were visible. The Zereroha watershed was said to be very popular. The research officers could indeed see these achievements by themselves.

Impact of the PSNP and EFA generally

Tabia officials and most of the community members interviewed explained that the PSNP (PW & DS) has both positive and some negative impact on the community. On the positive side

- It prevents people and especially the poorer households from eating less, having to borrow food or to sell assets, getting in debt in hard times or migrating (to find food). Even if they borrow, they pay when PSNP support comes.
- It makes better-off people or those who have irrigation able to sell their agricultural products when the price gets higher as they consume PSNP grain; or they use the money they would have used to buy food to get engaged in business.
- People use PSNP support to buy school materials and for health costs. It makes children go to school because students do not want to school when they feel hungry.
- Public works have given job opportunities.
- Environment rehabilitation activities benefit the community as a whole.

But it has a negative side too:

Its negative impact is that beneficiaries create conflict in times of identification and its worse impact is that the community has developed dependency syndrome/culture while individuals could make efforts to improve their life depending on the available resources they have. Indeed, there are beneficiaries that support the graduation, especially those who have irrigated land because they think that there would be nothing that encourages them to leave the programme voluntarily; but if they are excluded by graduation, that will help them to concentrate on their individual activities. (Tabia officials)

One man explained that PSNP does not create livelihood opportunities; it is good for the poor with many children, the elders who cannot work, the weak who cannot go elsewhere to find work. But, said another adding on the issue of dependency, it is not good the way it is done because *'the community is not now using all its natural as well as human resources, because the PSNP is considered as a sustainable source of income'*. One woman, recognising that it was indispensable in times of drought, summed it up in saying

PSNP does not create improved opportunities in livelihoods or better jobs. It creates a culture of dependency because when people can do other jobs and get better income they waste their time doing PSNP works. The payment for PSNP is very small. At community level the dependency is that they want what is given from government instead of doing what is better for them.

One man said that thanks to PSNP *'there is no one who does not have at least a sheep'*. As said earlier, *tabia* officials and some members of the community stressed that without drought at least a part of the community could support itself. Some said that *'For the future it will be good if the rich are excluded because when people go to PSNP public works they give up many important livelihood activities'*. But *'drought scares the community every time'* and *'PSNP should not be stopped because there are many people who have no land and who are very poor. If government is to stop it, it has to provide work opportunities or factories for the community'*.

Savings, credit and debt

Savings by individuals

People in Harresaw still save in the form of livestock. An increasing number also have savings in cash at the bank or with Dedebit (also called DECSI, the regional microfinance institution), including migrants sending remittances and their families. The Dedebit branch of Dera said that it had 300 people from Harresaw with savings.

Community-organised credit

Tabia officials explained that the government is trying to get people to establish local saving and credit associations so that they develop the culture of savings to help themselves to improve their lives, and gradually withdraw from DECSI. They related this to the start of the Household Asset Building Programme, which has not yet started practically. *Wereda* experts have come to sensitise people and help develop the registration document for a rural savings and credit organisation which will 'take over' these services from the multipurpose cooperative. But there is lack of interest as the multipurpose cooperative has not worked as people hoped. For instance one of the respondents saved 400 *birr* with the newly formed saving and credit association but has 20,000 *birr* on an account at the Dedebit branch in Dera.

Wereda officials explain that in the *wereda* as a whole the local savings and credit organisations have started savings three years ago, but not yet credit as they have not collected enough capital.

There is no tradition of *equb* in the community. The government is trying to get *equb* organised under the umbrella of the development team structure but this is very new. Some of the *mehaber* provide small loans to their members, usually with the money which is being saved until there is enough to buy something for the church or the priest. These are small sums and for short periods of time. It is further described in the section 4.5 on *mehaber*.

General government credit

In the *tabia* saving and credit services are provided by two formal institutions. While they are not themselves government structures, they are instrumental in providing government-related credit.

The **Dedebit Credit and Savings Institution (DECSI)**, founded in 1986 EC to support the community of Tigray to recover from the war against the Derg, started a branch in Dera in 1989 EC. DECSI's initial capital was from the regional Associations. In rural *tabias* like Harresaw DECSI provides credit for various packages promoted by the government. For this it gets a guarantee from the regional government. People are therefore screened and need to have a letter from the *tabia* administration supporting their loan request (see below). DECSI also provides credit unrelated to government interventions. However, it is not clear whether it does this in rural areas; in Harresaw it seems that it is not possible to get credit from DECSI without a government letter.

The *tabia* **multipurpose cooperative** started in 1992 EC. The capital came from the government through the *wereda* agriculture and rural development office. The cooperative also provided credit financed for a World Bank credit programme which has now stopped. It provides credit for other types of packages (see below). It also is the channel through which farmers take or are made to take annual agricultural inputs (fertiliser and improved seeds) although it seems that these are now no longer available on credit and have to be paid cash.

The various packages for which community people in Harresaw can take credit include non-agricultural options like capital for opening a tea house etc. Some people mention women and youth packages in addition to the household packages, but as the system seems to be the same for everyone and all types of packages it is not clear which is what.

According to *tabia* officials the main objective of the credit services is to support the community to get agricultural inputs and to get finance for buying necessary items in improving their lives and build assets. There is not a specific target group because all community members should benefit from the credit. However, there should be more participation of the poorest. To be eligible a person must be 18 years and above, have lived in the *tabia* for more than 6 months and have an ID. Apart from this, there are people who cannot get credit even if they request it. They do not get the necessary support letter from the *tabia* administration. These include those who are known for misusing money and those who have an outstanding debt, including with another institution.

Several young respondents confirmed that credit is available to them so adolescent girls can engage in retailing etc. One 30-year old young woman said that this was a big change as when she was adolescent credit was available on a much more restricted basis.

DECSI – According to the Dedebit staff, about 300 people from the community have savings at DECSI. About 1,002 people took credit since it started operating for a total of 3.2 million *birr*. Current loans concern 500 people and about 1.6 million *birr* to be repaid. Within this, 'bad debt' concern 370 borrowers and 1.1 million *birr* for which the repayment deadline has past, for loans sometimes taken as early as 1995 EC.

DECSI credit is given for the purposes of fattening, milk cows, beekeeping, petty trade, and for crop production. In early 2012 a person could borrow in cash up to a maximum of 5,000 *birr*, for example for milk cows, items for trading and livestock for fattening (against 1,000 *birr* maximum in 1996 EC). In kind it can go up to 15,000 *birr* (for example for a motor pump, milk cow, or bees). Both spouses can borrow in one household. But since 2003 EC this must be with the consent of the other spouse. Before this, there were often conflicts arising from husbands taking credit without telling their wife.

The repayment period depends on the type and purpose of the credit and can be 1-4 years: the credit given for a milk cow should be paid within four years. The interest rate which used to be 9% for long period of time was raised to 18% in 2002 EC. It was recently reduced again to 15%. The interest rate for saving was raised in December 2011 GC from 4% to 5%.

The **cooperative credit service** gives loans in kind in the form of treadle pump, drip irrigation, and improved seeds and fertiliser. Screening of people for credit is done by identifying those who can work and make repayments. The cooperative chairman explained that 70-80% of the community had taken credit at the cooperative. It is lending 150,000 *birr*/year, and at the time of the fieldwork there was about 500,000 *birr* outstanding payment and about 500 people concerned.

The World Bank programme was providing loans of 1,500 *birr* maximum from 1994 to 2001 EC. This was judged too small by several respondents who explained that 1,500 *birr* at the end of the programme was not quite the same as when it started. But there were respondents who benefited from taking this kind of credit. As the service stopped, the capital is supposed to be the *tabia*'s property and to serve as seed money for the new savings and credit organisation.

The cooperative also gives motor or treadle pumps in kind (for a motor pump, individuals should get themselves into a group). The capital is returned to the *wereda* but interests are left for the cooperative.

When they compared the two institutions *tabia* leaders said that DECSI was better in terms of capital size, modern management, staff training, follow up on the ground, advice on loan management, and credit size. The multi-purpose cooperative had better coverage in providing improved seeds and fertiliser. One common limitation was that someone with an outstanding debt could not take another loan. The interest rate was also seen as very high.

Our respondents' stories about credit taking, repayment and benefits or losses range from outright success to complete failure and deeply problematic situations. For instance, one man who in 1997 EC took 5,000 *birr* credit from DECSI as everyone was forced to do then, explained that as he misused the money and got no advice he was now with a 8,000 *birr* debt. Under threat of his land to be confiscated he sent his son to Saudi Arabia by selling an oxen in 2002 EC. His son was caught and deported empty hands. He has nothing else to sell.

Success stories were not all of people already rich or comfortable before taking a loan, like this woman who was able to start selling *siwa* when she divorced from her husband. The DECSI staff thought that especially those people who live in the *tabia* centre and have started shops etc. have benefited. Some rich people failed. For instance one rich farmer who took credit under pressure in 1998 EC lost everything and he and his sons had to migrate to Saudi Arabia to repay. He thought that there were more disadvantages than advantages in the credit service.

Some respondents took credit twice and failed first or when they took credit for the second time but were able to somewhat benefit according to them. Most of the times in these cases, upon increasing pressure to repay the debt one or several household members migrated; or someone who was already in Saudi 'wrote off' the debt as explained by the *tabia* leaders. These are often children for their parents but also step-sons for their step-mother etc. Generally migration is seen as the best option to repay loans. Several respondents explained that at some point everyone in the community was in debt and thanks to migration it had come down to 50 to 60%.

There were also cases of people selling assets or selling what they had bought on credit when they realised that they would not be able to repay out of the profit they were supposed to make. One woman explained that she took credit to buy plastic for her pond but resold it when she had to repay the government. Some people used PSNP to repay debt, though it is too small to be used to repay large loans. Other strategies to repay include renting one's land and borrowing from relatives. Some people rely on sending their children to study and hoping they will be able to help once they get jobs. Generally, according to the Dedebit staff debt has caused great stress in the community.

Some respondents, mostly poor, explained that they had not taken credit and would not as they feared that they would not be able to repay. Several respondents confirmed the story told by the Dedebit experts, that taking credit was forced on them otherwise they would be taken out of the PSNP or the emergency food aid support. One person (who was forced to take a credit of 1,650 *birr*

which reached 4,000 *birr* with interests and which he was forced to repay by sending his son to Saudi Arabia) said this had happened to many in the community.

One new trend by early 2012 is that while migration was first and still is in some cases a coping mechanism to repay bad debt, the stories suggest that in early 2012 some people who would not have dared borrowing earlier on by fear of being unable to repay were doing so as they could rely on migration. Other stories are people who go to repay debt and come back with a lot more, like a man who went to repay 4,500 *birr* but is staying as he was able to construct two tin roof rooms, repair the hidmo roof of his house, and save another 30,000 *birr*; or this 22-year old young women who just came back with 20,000 *birr* capital after having repaid her 7,000 *birr* debt and sent 4,000 *birr* in remittances while she was away.

People appreciated that credit is given to individuals and no longer to groups, since 2002 EC. In any instance the formal group pressure did not seem to have been very effective. It has been replaced by other ways of putting pressure on people to repay, especially in the past two years, for themselves or relatives when these are found to be unable to repay or absent. Various threats are being used, in particular, that people's land will be taken or that they will be taken off the PSNP. Thus far threats have never been implemented. Pressure is exerted by the development team and 1-5 network leaders who get instructions from *tabia* leaders, themselves being warned by DECSI that all form of credit will be stopped if the situation does not get better.

One physically disabled man was denied credit while he had asked for it. One poor woman explained that she was asked to first dig a pond before having access to credit from DECSI, which she now is unable to repay as the drought undermined her plans.

Various suggestions to improve the service were offered, including that: people should be permitted to borrow again to repay debt from an earlier loan as they were likely to have learnt in the meantime how to use the money wisely; interests for old loans should be stopped; the interest rate should decrease and return to 9%; the repayment period should be expanded (two years for the World Bank loans for milk cows was too short); criteria for taking credit should be simplified (the DA argument discussed earlier); on the contrary, assessments should be more strict because debt can deepen poor people's poverty; experts needed to first assess what kind of business could be profitable in the community; there needed to be support mechanisms to help people falling in trouble when natural disasters occur. There was no suggestion that the service should be stopped.

Credit for agriculture including OFSP/HABP

There is no credit which is seen as linked to the PSNP and there has never been. The Household Asset Building Programme or HABP has not yet started. People heard about it but not in any detail. There is a sense that HABP might be a credit facility for those who graduate from the PSNP. As noted above fertilisers and improved seeds are now no longer provided on credit – or it is credit in-kind. For the rest, see above.

Credit for non-farm activities including OFSP/HABP

Credit for non-farm activities is available from DECSI. DECSI staff explained that running shops and other services near the emerging *tabia* town was indeed one of the most successful forms of activities. The respondents engaged in various trades or skilled work did not mention taking credit, except for one woman who had started to sell *siwa* after she divorced from her husband, and one young woman who explained that her father (who had passed away) had been able to start selling kerosene thanks to a loan from DECSI.

Debt

The *tabia* has a poor reputation in terms of repayment. The figures above illustrate that even with DECSI which is supposed to be strict things spiralled out of control (1.1 million *birr* and 370 borrowers from Harresaw with 'bad debt').

One respondent explained that there were people who did not benefit because they kept the livestock instead of doing business, and that most people in debt were youth because unlike married men with families and a sense of responsibility, they were unable to plan their lives. However, the 2000/1 drought is widely perceived as the major cause of failure for many loans. *Tabia* leaders explained that:

Currently, the number of people who pay their debts is increasing; especially those who have children in Saudi Arabia or those who went to Saudi Arabia are paying their debts. Those who have not yet started to pay their debts are those who are poor and physically weak. People who have not paid their debts and whose deadline is over have begun to be accused. Thus far they have got additional time to pay. Generally speaking, as there are many people who have benefited from the credit services, there are also people who have negatively been affected. As a result, many people have migrated abroad.

The stories above illustrate these two coexisting trends. It was not mentioned whether the debt level was increasing or decreasing over time.

Co-operatives

There is no producer cooperative in Harresaw. As explained earlier the farmers involved in the *Felege Hiwot* irrigation scheme refused to be organised in an association. The youth cooperatives for potatoes and honey have not yet been properly established or have failed. There is no women cooperative and there was no mention of a plan to establish one.

It is not clear if the **multipurpose cooperative** buys farmers' outputs. One man said that he was not selling his products to the cooperative because the price on the market was much better. Community respondents generally indicated that they were selling on the market, themselves or through retailers or local traders. The cooperative is a source of credit – as discussed earlier.

The chairman said that the cooperative has 1,280 members who all contributed 12 *birr* at the time it was established, fourteen years ago. It is member of a union found at the *wereda* where the goods and fertiliser and improved seeds come from. As a source of cheaper goods most respondents do not consider it as worthwhile. The prices are not that different; access to markets in Dera and Atsbi is much better than it used to be and people go there much more frequently for other reasons and can shop there; there are private shops in the *tabia* centre. The cooperative shop is found in the *tabia* office compound. The shop keeper, a young woman from the *tabia*, is hired on the cooperative's benefits. The chairman said that these are meagre because goods are expensive.

Dividends were distributed only once since the cooperative started. This was a response to the fact that the community was saying 'this cooperative is not ours'. It was to build people's confidence while the government is trying to get people to form their own savings and credit associations. However, respondents said the dividend, which was given in kind, was very small: 1 kg of sugar/ member, or 20 l oil to be shared by 30 members (estimated to be between 16 and 20 *birr*). Some people who say they are members did not get their share. The chairman explained that this was because their name was not found on the register and they did not have the receipt of their membership fee (paid 14 years ago in some cases).

One person among those who said that the cooperative was not very useful added that the leadership was corrupt. Two had been replaced already and he thought the replacing people are likely to be engaged in corruption too. The chairman, who is a priest, said that he did not want to continue in this position because it was detrimental to his activities but also being in a leadership position was always creating issues with the community.

Migration

Migration opportunities and remittances

Migration - General pattern

Migration has always been important in Harresaw and has continued to be. But the pattern has changed quite significantly in the past decade or so. First, seasonal migration to Eritrea has completely stopped with the war and border closure since then. Second, there continues to be some, but much reduced mainly seasonal migration to Humera and Afar; reduced because there are daily labour opportunities with irrigation and labour for long term migrants' households. Third, and most significantly, there has been a very large increase in migration to Saudi Arabia – involving women too these days - especially since the 2000/1 EC drought but not abating since then.

In early 2012 there still were a few people migrating seasonally for instance to Afar. However, the most important destination and the most talked about in the community was migration in Saudi Arabia. As it was a topic of special interest for Harresaw a specific research module was designed. In addition, all 18 young people of different wealth who were interviewed talked about it, unprompted. Several of the 30- and 20-year old highlighted how much it had increased recently. In each of the six households interviewed one or more members were in Saudi Arabia. The vast majority of respondents throughout the fieldwork mentioned cases of relatives or household members or talked about migration in relation to their own livelihood experience.

The migration to Saudi Arabia started a long time ago, before 1977 EC, as a drought-related coping strategy. One of the respondents migrated to Saudi Arabia at that time. He *got* information from the Afar, as many Afar were migrating to Saudi Arabia since a long time and people from Harresaw had ties of different kinds with the Afar. Among others, people from Harresaw were taking butter, goats, sheep and honey to the Afar who took them to Arab countries through the Afar in Eritrea. People who had the ability and financial capacity were directly going to Arab countries themselves with the goods. These business ties prompted interest in Saudi Arabia among the people from Harresaw. One of those who went first from Harresaw migrated through taking himself 150 kgs of honey to Saudi Arabia through Eritrea, in 1977 EC. He travelled by camel, crossed the sea with a small boat, sold the honey and remained there where he started labour work. In the past there were no brokers.

Since then there was first a steady evolution in the number of migrants, with a first step change after 1984 EC because people could see the positive effects of remittances on migrants' families and when they were coming back. These days in early 2012 there is huge migration; the 2000/1 EC drought prompted a very significant increase in the number of migrants in the last three years. There are many youth migrants from the neighbouring *tabias* but migration is highest in Harresaw. This was confirmed by *wereda* officials.

Most people migrate through illegal ways. The migration route has changed several times since 1977 EC, due to conflicts in or with different countries. Since 6 to 7 years the most used route is through Djibouti (Harresaw-Desse-Logia/Semera-Djibouti-Yemen-Saudi Arabia). Travel conditions are harsh:

They face long travel, hunger, thirst, sinking in seas and extremely hot weather. Women also experience rape on their way to Arab countries. (Tabia leaders)

Most people use buses or trucks to go to Desse, then Logia in Afar. Then they walk 16-20 days from Logia to Djibouti. Then they travel 4 hours on a small boat to Yemen. Then they walk for more than 20 days across Yemen to Saudi. (One male returnee)

Someone who wants to go has to collect around 4,000 *birr*. This includes payment of the brokers and the travel costs. There are brokers in Mekele and Desse. Most of them, although they are mostly Tigrayan, are in Desse. The cost is higher for women (5,000 *birr*). People find different ways of getting the money that is needed. Some use credit money that they manage to get for other stated purposes – though this is more difficult as more credit is given in kind these days, precisely to

prevent this. Others borrow from relatives, sell assets, get their parents to sell assets or rent their land. Those who have relatives abroad get money from them to travel. One militia sold his gun. To return, some migrants get caught by police and deported on purpose as it saves them the travel costs – but this may start by some time in jail.

Male migrants do farming, herding, trade, and labour work on construction sites. Women started to migrate two-three years ago, with the drought. They are mostly employed as domestic workers. Some male migrants are engaged in illegal activities such as selling alcohol, drugs and chat, which is very dangerous. Men can earn between 1,500 and 2,700 Real in a month (6,900 to 12,400 *birr*). The income is smaller for women. One respondent mentioned payments of 1,300 to 1,500 Real (6,000 to 7,000 *birr*)/month, for very long days (from 7.00 am to midnight).

The duration of migration varies and for women it is not yet clear as they have only recently started to migrate. Men usually stay up to 4-5 years when they are not caught and deported. Some stay longer. Many are said to go back several times as they do not want to stay and live in Harresaw. Those who return and stay in Ethiopia may go to live in towns, especially if they are landless. However, this is not the case for everyone – like this young woman who *got* back and has a capital of 20,000 *birr* which she wants to invest in opening a shop or drink house in Harresaw.

Everyone said that numbers are huge, but information is contradictory. One account is that 350 youth from Harresaw migrated, including 50 women – but it is not said over what period of time. *Tabia* officials said that 400 to 500 people go to Saudi every year. One returnee migrant said that in 2003 EC more than 120 people from Harresaw *kushet* were in Saudi. One female returnee (who had divorced and left her two children to her mother to migrate) went with a group of 350 women from Atsbi *wereda* and was deported back with 700 other Ethiopian women. Another returnee who came back in 2003 EC said there were about 400 people from Harresaw living in Ryad when he was there. That man explained that:

He went to Saudi three times (1986-7; 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 EC). He came back last time because he lost a son who died while trying to migrate (separately). He does no longer want to return. His initial objective was to pay a debt he had with DECSI. In the course of his trips he paid over 7,000 birr of debt of his own and 9,000 birr of his son's debt, saved 25,000 birr at the bank, sent 10,000 birr while he was away, and constructed a house in Harresaw. There are good job opportunities in Saudi, but no freedom. It is better to live at home rather than to be an illegal migrant.

There is a network of migrants in Ryad which is where most go and live. Many migrants once successfully settled there facilitate the trip of brothers and relatives.

Backgrounds of migrants

The migrants' age ranges from 15 to 50. However nowadays, most of the migrants are 18-35 year old males. Most of those who went recently completed Grade 10 and migrated because '*there is nothing to do in Harresaw*' or '*no job opportunity that is satisfactory for the youth*'. This is a huge issue: people spend a lot of money to teach their children up to Grade 10 as in the past there were jobs for these children, but nowadays this is not the case. Thus those days, most of the migrants are young, and not married. This is a change because just a few years back including just after the 2000/1 drought most migrants were married men with families staying in Harresaw.

According to *tabia* officials women represent approximately 5% of the migrants. Most migrants are poor but most people in Harresaw are poor. Most migrants are from Harresaw *kushet* because of the stronger links with the Afar.

Causes of migration

Repayment of outstanding debt has been and continues to be a major push factor, which became especially salient with the huge debt related to livestock losses due to the 2000/1 EC drought. In some families the husband and two male children went for several years. However as already noted earlier in many cases migrants stay to accumulate capital once their debt is paid. One of the

successful returnees who had gone initially to pay a debt spent 14 years in Saudi. He had just returned at the time of the fieldwork. He had bought land and built a house for a total of 70,000 *birr* in addition to bringing up his children and paying for their school costs. He now had rooms that he could rent and wanted to work in Harresaw in farming.

For the younger generation, failure to pass Grade 8 or 10 exam, or completing Grade 10 and sometimes Grade 12 with no opportunity to take this further or to find a job, and landlessness, are big push factors. All those interviewed on the topic agreed that the measures taken currently like land reallocation are insufficient. A few blamed the youth for their lack of patience (not wanting to wait for trees to grow to get an income and preferring to 'cut short'). As one respondent said: '*Many youth do not want to stay in Harresaw and do farming because they want to get more at once.*'

The pull factors are the job opportunities and good payment. People in Harresaw get information and also they can see the effects of getting a good income in Saudi Arabia in the improvements in the lives of the migrants' families. This attracts people from all ages and both sexes, and even rich people who go there to increase their wealth. Parents are said to be much interested in sending their children to Saudi Arabia even though they do not say it openly. It was said that, when pushed by debt, "*even the elders choose migration of their children*". As one man explained, youth aspirations are shifting too. Role models now are people who return from Saudi and involve in trade and do not want to do farming and labour works in the community.

Economic impact

Successful migration has a positive economic impact at household level when migrants send remittances, which most in Harresaw seem to be doing. The impact depends on migrants' earnings and how they manage it. Poor or indebted people, which many were after the drought in 2000/1 EC, use it to pay outstanding debt first. Once this is done and if migrants stay longer, which many do, they or their family at home invest, and also consume more and better. Migrants or their families buy or build houses in the community and in Atsbi and Wukro. Some migrants buy cars. Money is also used to buy livestock and farming implements or start a business in Harresaw or elsewhere. In this way migration reinforces the links between Harresaw and the outside world and urban areas in particular.

Many households with a migrant member or receiving remittances have clean beds, good clothing, enough food, good household furniture and good cooking utensils. They have better access to health services, unlike many people in the community who are prevented from seeking treatment due to lack of money. Their households have a better diet: they eat more vegetables, meat, eggs, honey and butter. Children have better school materials, and do not get in trouble if they lose a pen like in poor families. The adults have better mobile phones with music.

At community level the migrants bought generators for churches. This was organised by one migrant who collected contributions and brought them back. Three churches in Harresaw *kushet* have generators (for a cost of 70,000 *birr*) and there is an amount of 15,000 *birr* for the churches on a bank account. There is also a wider economic impact of the higher consumption and investment of the migrants' families.

Migrants also support families when there is a death, and their relatives who are poor. People said that all migrants paid not only their own debt, but that of their families and relatives. On the other hand people also stressed that as many youth were migrating, hard work in PSNP public works or in the community free labour was done with difficulty. In households there might be labour gaps and labourers might not do the work as well as husbands or sons.

People who fail are negatively affected and their families with them. Among those interviewed, a 23-year old man tried twice and lost more than ten thousand *birr* without any return. Another married man with four children found himself with more debt after having failed to get there and had nothing left but his land to rent. Deaths can be economically devastating in addition to the sorrow.

Social impact

As there are so many migrants these days, there is no longer the special respect that was there in the past for those who came from Saudi Arabia or their families. There is also no discrimination of any kind according to members of migrants' families.

Those with family members in Saudi Arabia or when they come back are said to make huge expenditures on weddings and death ceremonies. But some respondents explain that the other way round, youth migrate because it has become so expensive to establish one's household.

Most of those with family members in Saudi Arabia have mobile phones and they communicate with them so that they have better knowledge about life in Saudi Arabia. Some respondents thought there are no new ideas coming from migration. Others thought that exposure to other ways of living in Saudi Arabia and towns in Ethiopia were a major factor of change in Harresaw. *Tabia* officials noted a kind of snowballing effect as migration had led people to think of ways of improving their lives other than agricultural work.

Migration has effects on the community's informal social protection system. On the negative side people mentioned the labour gap which made more difficult the work for elders etc. and also bringing pregnant mothers to the health centre for deliveries. One respondent mentioned that some cultural ceremonies were no longer done because youth were few. Others said that while youth participation in the community's affairs was encouraged, the number of youth on the council etc. was decreasing. Positive effects were identified too and principally, that migrants were a sometimes very significant financial support for their families and relatives at home. On balance the positive seemed to win as one respondent said:

Grown-up children give support to their families better than anyone else. The change in the last ten years is that many youth migrate and some of them give better support to their families.

In early 2012 there were an increasing number of female-headed households no longer linked to war but to migration, with husbands in Saudi Arabia or having divorced, and some of them having died on the way or in migration. Most of them were found in *Harresaw kushet*. Young recently married wives lived with their parents while their husband was away to earn enough money to set up their household on a good basis. One respondent explained that he had envisaged divorcing because his wife and children did not want to migrate, but for the moment had decided against this as he had *got* land. Men divorcing to migrate was said to occur; there were also cases of women divorcing to migrate, or leaving several children to relatives in Harresaw. In an increasing number of cases children were orphans due to death of one of their parents in illegal migration to Saudi.

Effect of migration on community as a whole

Wereda officials depicted migration, especially youth migration, as a big issue. They mentioned that in one single incident 49 youth from one *tabia* died on the way. They planned to step up awareness-raising activities and wanted to show a documentary on the challenges and tragedies happening in migration to the community. In Harresaw, *tabia* officials and community members of different backgrounds explained that migration in Saudi Arabia was not all good and there were tragedies. But "*for the community it is the only solution*".

Tabia officials also highlighted that while the trigger factor for the recently observed large increase in number of migrants was the drought and associated debt, now almost all the youth were willing to migrate as an investment strategy. For instance in 2003 EC (a good year in terms of harvest), 50% of the community was still depending on food aid (including C/FFW). The other half was ok, thanks to their own activities and remittances from their children.

One long term negative effect of youth migration is on education, because '*most youth have a mind to stop learning and migrate*'. *Wereda* officials told that a teacher from the *wereda* had made a survey of students' aspirations and found that the vast majority wanted to migrate. Even teachers

migrate: according to staff from the Grade 1-8 school, in 2003 EC there were 37 teachers from the *wereda* who migrated, including the head teacher of that school.

Tabia officials explained that 50 out of the 396 students of the G/Kidan secondary school where Harresaw children go dropped out of school in 2003 EC, and most went to Saudi Arabia. One respondent said that even Grade 5-8 children migrate. The reason for this is that youth are hopeless. They see that educated people do not get jobs, and that some people who go to Saudi Arabia change their life regardless of their education status. One woman said that her son had completed Grade 12 with a score allowing him to attend a government university but as he did not have the financial capacity (transport costs etc.) he had migrated. She was deeply unhappy about this.

Several respondents said that the government should do something. It should build dams so that the youth will get involved in irrigation, like in Lima'et *kushet* where there is less migration than in Harresaw *kushet*; it should build factories and create employment and job opportunities; it should do more about livestock and honey production activities which are profitable in Harresaw. Some people think that the government should block the route to migration. *Tabia* officials said these kinds of things too, but at the same time thought that

In the coming ten years if migration continues like this the migrants will bring good changes individually and in the community. For the future it would be good if they go legally.

Re-settlement experiences

People who resettled forcibly under the Derg and returned and who were deported from Eritrea because of the Ethio-Eritrea war were given land as much as possible. More recently, six people from Harresaw went to Kafta-Humera in 1996 EC (there were 96 from the *wereda* as a whole), under the FSP resettlement programme of the Regional Government. One of them, a 46 year old man, was interviewed and explained that:

*(When they went) they were given 1,050 birr (to buy an ox), 2 hectares of land, 10*20 metres of land to construct a house, household items, farm equipment and sesame seed. Transport was organised by the government. The people were given the choice to live there. There was no risk or danger. As the people were able to produce well and sell better, their life was changed soon. Although there was malaria, the government was providing good treatment. The settlers were able to create smooth relationships with the native people there and were able to participate in all social activities. However, as his wife and children refused to go there, he decided to get back home after staying for two years. He went there because he had no land at that time; the government mobilised many landless people to do so; he had information that the land in Humera was very fertile; he had friends demobilised from the military like him, and relatives there. He said that life there would be better because the land is fertile, there is no drought and the community concentrates in working and not on disputing. But the people in Harresaw, he said, kill their time in disputing with each other and the land is affected by drought. He received farm land of 50*75 metres after he came back from resettlement... His wife has land which she received in 1983 EC. His livelihood depends on farming. But he would like to migrate to any other place where he can lead a better life because he knows many other places, from when he was in the military, which have better resources because he is not happy with his current life. The problem is that his wife and his children are not willing to migrate out of their village and it is difficult for him to live without them. He had an idea to divorce his wife and go alone to the resettlement two years back. But when he saw that the government was providing farming inputs and when he started to get better farm production, he decided to stay in the village.*

HTPs affecting livelihoods

Many respondents noted that the government pressure to reduce holidays and spend less on weddings and funeral and mourning ceremonies had decreased in the past five years.

In 1999 EC there was an agreement at the regional level and involving the religious leaders that in a month there would be only 3 Saint days and Saturdays and Sundays as holidays. *Tabia* leaders and community people explained that religious leaders did not always implement this and put pressure

on people to respect other days like those of the *tabots* of their respective *gots*. Yet, most of them said that the reduction of number of holidays had been beneficial. Two poor people thought that work should be done even on holidays while an elderly woman wanted people to also respect the *tabot* day. One respondent said that there were people working even on the recognised holidays.

Religious leaders were said to support reducing expenses on weddings. But many respondents highlighted that families of migrants were spending a lot and wedding costs had increased. One man explained there continued to be social pressure. He had arranged a low cost wedding for his son but he was blamed by relatives so now he was saying that he had not yet married his son and would invite them when he would do so. Others explained they had reduced expenditures but gave estimates of costs still in the several thousands of *birr*. Religious leaders were said to 'keep quiet' on reducing expenses on funeral and mourning ceremonies. They avoided taking position openly but opposed to it. People were also less inclined to reduce these expenses.

But teachings were less. Threats such as taking people off the PSNP if they were seen spending a lot on ceremonies were no longer used as it had been found that this was not democratic.

Theft and burglary

Most respondents noted that violent robbery or theft were not known in the community; and that youth, even un(der)employed as they were, did not develop bad habits like theft (or drinking). Many said that the community was generally safer than before; that house burglary had decreased or indeed was not known. This was generally attributed to the effectiveness of the militia and stricter enforcement of punishment when thieves were caught. For instance one year ago thieves who had stolen a motorbike had been sentenced to six years of prison.

However, there were also accounts of thefts of parts of irrigation pumps, and of irrigation vegetables which pushed farmers to continue to produce less valuable crops. A number of respondents mentioned that plastics for the ponds were being stolen too so people had to take them away which was making water harvesting less effective. One businessman often absent was robbed by people who broke the door of his house: he lost 14,470 *birr*, some gold and other household goods he had.

Several respondents mentioned that theft of mobile phones in Dera and Atsbi was on the increase. This happened especially to women who held their phone in unzipped pockets, and when people were charging their phone.

Human r e/production

Houses and household assets

There are a few 'modern houses' in Harresaw *tabia*, in the small town-like centre. This centre was established in 1990 EC when land was given to landless people for them to be able to build a house, and the administration moved from its previous location nearer to Dera town and the road but at one extremity of the *tabia*. In this centre people rent out/in rooms, including to run tea rooms and small shops. A few houses have been painted recently.

Elsewhere houses are mostly traditionally built: stone walls, '*hidmo*' roof, and usually several rooms forming a closed compound. The kitchen is often separate or outside the rooms where people live. These houses can last many decades. Some richer households use tin roof when they add rooms like the economically successful household interviewed. But not everyone does this: the woman heading a richer household rebuilt some parts of her house which had collapsed, added one room and made a new kitchen with a chimney but this is all *hidmo* roof.

Poorer households or households with little labour find it difficult to make the repairs that are needed. The woman head of a poor household explained that her house was deteriorated as she had used eucalyptus which was easily eaten by worms. She planned to rehabilitate the house if her son sends remittances. Sometimes the cost of rehabilitating damaged parts of the buildings put people

off as they have other priorities (like in the poor and middle wealth male-headed households).

Reportedly there are more household goods made outside of the community, like modern beds, chairs, kitchen utensils, plates, cups and glasses, and jerry cans for water. Key community informants explained that in spite of the big increase in the price of household goods, more people buy them.

Table 5: Increase in prices of selected household goods

Item	Price four years ago (<i>birr</i>)	Current price (<i>birr</i>)
Iron pot	24	85
Plastic bucket	15	35
Circular tray	22	35

However, some goods remain rarely seen. For instance, among the six households interviewed only the richer one had a modern metal bed since four years (they bought it for 400 *birr*). They also had two chairs. The use of factory-made kitchen utensils seemed more widespread.

Domestic technologies

With the provision of electricity in the centre of the *tabia* a few more grinding mills are available. However, some women would like more of these – and suggested that buying grinding mills would be a useful thing to do with the association membership fees.

Improved stoves are known and used by some women. The woman heading a poor household made one three years ago, at the same time as she made a kitchen cabinet and built a latrine. The wife in the middle wealth household said she bought one but is not using it. The wife in the politically important household uses a movable oven since three years. The wife in the economically successful household started using an improved oven three years ago.

Fuel and light

A few households use electricity for lighting. Among the households interviewed all six explained that they use torches as lamps because kerosene has become expensive and they want to reduce this expenditure. For instance in the poor household, children study at night with a torch. In another household children go and study in the houses of people who have electricity.

Most people use firewood for cooking. Cutting wood is not permitted but dried wood can be collected. Forests are far for some people so for instance, the woman heading a poor household also uses her eucalyptus trees as fuelwood, bean stems for baking, and coal that she gets by burning the wood (she does not buy coal). She also uses dung cakes, although not much because she does not have her own livestock. The woman heading a richer household uses the same fuel types but not bean stems. Wives in male-headed households all use wood and dung cakes. The middle-wealth household buys firewood because there is no one in the household to go and fetch it. The wife in the economically successful household explained that she does not use dung cakes much as they use dung in compost for their farm.

Drinking water

Harresaw is one of the WASH *tabias* in the *wereda*. Under this programme, the *wereda* digs hand dug wells and the Region shallow wells. The *wereda* also gets people to protect water points and establish water committees that can handle simple maintenance and manage water users' contributions; and it tests and treats water with chlorine in principle every six months. The big challenge at the *wereda* level is the lack of qualified contractors, and some water points dry up quickly. There may also be problems with latrines put too close from water points.

There are people saying that water becomes scarcer because of increased consumption in urban areas like Atsbi and also because the newly established Dera water factory pumps water.

Drinking water has become more easily available in some parts of the *tabia* but it remains a

headache for people living in Ekunta *got* and Harresaw *kushet* where any kind of water is scarce. *Tabia* officials mentioned 11 boreholes of which two were not functional. In addition there are 3 protected springs that are vital in places where there is no other water. There are 70 (hand dug) wells of which 12 are communal and the rest private. The water in these wells may not be to the required standards for human consumption. In Harresaw *kushet* a recent development is that thanks to the work on the Zereroha watershed it has been possible to develop a protected water point for human consumption on the rehabilitated stream, separate from livestock drinking point and from the place where people wash clothes. In addition to water scarcity, as explained earlier due to conflict around land water points are not all used as planned. Some water points do not hold water throughout the year and people have to use alternative sources of water.

It is widely recognised that bringing water in some parts of the *tabia* is beyond the capacity of even the *wereda*; people want the regional government to install pipes that would bring water from places where there is plenty. In Ekunta *got* people contributed 48,000 *birr* to get water service in this way but so far it has not been done as the government would need to add some money.

People getting water from a protected and maintained water point pay 2 *birr*/month for 2 jerry cans per day, regardless of the size of the jerry cans or other containers. There is no exemption for water use. Some people complain about the payment. The contributions are used to pay guards for the water point, and for minor repairs. Water committees also call plumbers for more serious problems.

The woman heading a poor household has a water point 15 minute walk from her house. She pays 2 *birr* monthly for this. The pump was once broken but a technician came from the *wereda* to fix it. The problem is that there are long queues to get the water because many people use the water point. In contrast the wife in the poor male-headed household fetches water from an unprotected water point, 30 minute walk from her house; the water is not very clean.

Households often use several sources depending on the time of the year. The woman heading a richer household uses water from a water point nearby between July and December, after which the water becomes bad. She fetches water from the water point found in the *tabia* centre the rest of the year or when her son can bring her water with a donkey. That water is better and there is water all year round but it is 45 minute of walk (and 2 *birr* of monthly payment). The middle wealth household uses water from three protected sources. The nearer one, 5 minute walk, dries up in the dry season. Sometimes the water get bad (worms etc.) and the water point is closed for one month after treatment.

The politically important household uses water from the Zereroha stream, which has been developed as the watershed was rehabilitated. There used to be a hand-pump water point not too far from their house but it stopped giving water after two years. There is no payment for the water she gets from the stream, but it is quite far. In her views this water is better than that coming from the dam and found at the *tabia* centre water pump point. The economically successful household has its own well but it does not have water throughout the year so they then use the new Zereroha water point as well. One poor woman living in Harresaw *kushet* explained that the closest point for her to get drinking water is a spring located 1 hour and a half walk from her house. She gets other water from a pond which is 30 minute walk.

All community respondents suggested that the provision of drinking water should be considerably improved. People are advised to boil water before drinking it when they do not have easy access to safe water.

Domestic work

Fetching wood and water, grinding grain, preparing food is still largely done by women and girls. Most of the women interviewed think that there is some change. In some households boys may help with water and wood fetching and the husband or sons may take the grain to the mill, or sons may pound the grain for their mother. In an elderly couple the husband is the one to go to the market for

shopping and to fetch water. In very few households sons may cook – like in the richer female-headed household where her 16-year old son cooks stew and prepares *tihilo*, but husbands do not cook. Students may cook too.

The two women heads of household are of the view that the changes occur because women and girls are more involved in activities outside of their house, and there is greater acceptance of this and the implications that this has for domestic work. The woman heading the poorer household said that those who have had exposure to towns accept to 'do women's work'. Or husbands and sons may prepare *tihilo* when there is no choice like when the woman is sick. The wife in the middle wealth household explained that husbands who are educated have better attitudes in helping their wives and changes are seen also mainly with the educated youth.

However, the wife in the politically important household believes that there is no or little change. She is doing all the work as she has only boys at home and they do not do any domestic chore. The wife of the economically successful household also said that she does not see much change and not in her household. Sometimes men heat what women have prepared and eat. But they do not clean or do other household chores. House cleaning is also still mostly women's and girls' work.

Women do not agree among themselves about the effect of girls' schooling and young women being more economically active. Some said that as a result mothers had more to do. Others said that daughters would still help after school.

Leisure and play

7-12 boys and girls are said to have more time to play as parents give them less work at home or on the farm. Later on, adolescent boys go out to recreate but this is less the case for adolescent girls as explained above (section on youth recreation).

In the *tabia* there is not much which is organised for leisure and play. There is a playground in the Gr 1-8 school. There is a corombula which (male) youth rent for playing. People can watch TV in one of the places which have one (in the *tabia* centre). Children, youth and men may do this; it is rarer for women. People also listen to radio programmes for entertainment. A recent trend is listening to music that people get on the more sophisticated mobile phones that the migrants in Saudi Arabia send or bring back.

Preventive health services

The preventive health packages

Tabia officials and health workers explained that there was a good change in several of the Health Extension Programme packages in the *tabia*. Development teams and 1-5 networks help a lot to disseminate the messages of the HEWs. They check on households' real achievements. The information is then relayed for discussions at the *tabia* Cabinet meetings, through the development team leaders meeting with the Cabinet member following up their group. In particular, the status of the *tabia* with regard to latrine construction and utilisation is a hot topic. *Wereda* officials explained that it is indeed part of the performance measurements for *tabia* administrators.

The Health Post

The health post is found in the *tabia* centre. It was built in 1997 EC with support from World Vision. The community also built houses for the HEWs. Most respondents said that the health post is nice and clean. It has water (hand pump and roof catchment system), a latrine, and electricity, although it does not have internal sockets and there are some issues with the electricity supply.

The Health Extension Workers

In early 2012 there were two HEWs as per the standard. The senior HEW said it would be better if they could be three: one for each *kushet*.

The HEWs have a huge workload. They teach house-to-house and in other occasions, have meetings with development team leaders to teach them or get their data, assist to take pregnant mothers to the health centre or assist deliveries when there is no time to transport the mother, treat simple cases at the health post, organise vaccination days and assist the nurse from the *wereda* bringing the vaccines, provide ANC and post-natal care services, train and organise the health promoters, and have meetings and trainings at the *wereda*. Several of these activities are scheduled at fixed dates in a month – like meeting the development teams, vaccination days and days to get the growth monitoring data. The HEWs were recently told to change the way of organising the balance between house-to-house visits and activities at the health post, and to do one week out of two of house-to-house visits. They have not yet implemented this. It may not be practical because of the meetings and trainings at the *wereda*.

The senior HEW is a 32-year old woman who is Grade 12+1. She was appointed in Harresaw *tabia* in 2001 EC. She explained that she works every day of the week and there is no schedule as she is called whenever there is a delivery, any time. She gets a salary of 772 *birr* per month (net). The community is cooperative but people lack time to implement all the packages as they go to PSNP public works and children go to school. Some people do not have the resources. Others are simply reluctant. Convincing people takes time. She would like to upgrade herself in the health profession and move on from being a health extension worker. The younger (22 year old) second HEW said that she usually works Monday to Friday and gets rest during the week-end but it depends on whether there is delivery. Her net salary is 696 *birr*. She was appointed in July 2011 GC after competing for the position. She is Grade 10+1 and had eight months training as a HEW. She also does want to upgrade and continue in the health sector but not as a HEW.

Both attended various training, particularly the senior HEW to be able to handle simple pneumonia cases, on TB treatment, and on delivery. They have supervision once or twice a week, but did not explain much about it. They get support from the *tabia* leaders to pass their messages. They also work with the elders and convince them first as if they are not convinced nothing gets done. The senior HEW is cabinet member and also leads the epidemic committee of the *tabia*.

Many community members highlighted that the HEWs had a good approach, respectful of their clients, and that this had been a major factor in their use of services like family planning and maternal and child health services.

Community Health Volunteers, the Health Development Army and Model Families

In the *tabia*, TBAs and health volunteers started in 1985 EC. Health extension workers came in 1994 EC. In early 2003 EC there were four TBAs in Harresaw *tabia*. As described below their role has changed as they cannot assist deliveries any longer. There were 35 health promoters in the *tabia*. They get no reward or salary except per diem when there is training.

Recently the government has started the 'development army'. There is no separate health army but the development army is all the development teams and their 1-5 networks. In Harresaw the health promoters are the secretaries of the 35 development teams. The development team leaders are five in each team: the chair (who is from the women association), the vice chairperson, the secretary who also follows up health activities, a water and education person, and a league representative who follows up the activities of party members. The health representatives of each team organise the implementation of the health packages in their team, monitor achievements, identify pregnant women and follow them up etc. The development team leaders and health promoters are organised by the HEWs with whom they meet twice a month.

The HEWs explained that much of the change in people's attitude towards various hygiene and sanitation, reproductive health and curative health issues arose from the working together of the health extension workers and the health volunteers. The establishment of the development teams and the 1-5 networks is very important. In this way all women are in the development army.

The health promoter interviewed was a 37 year old woman who started as the only health volunteer in the *tabia* in 1981 EC. At the time she was elected as an active member who was able to do different activities in the community. She is grade two. She is also *wereda* Councillor and PTA member. She is married and takes care of her husband and her children so she has to organise her schedule with all these activities. She likes what she is doing and wants to continue even though the job is difficult and sometimes frustrating. Recently she was following up a woman who had promised that she would deliver at the health centre and finally she delivered at home. She said that the community awareness is still low but with continuous work this is changing.

A number of women from the community explained that they had graduated from the health extension package programme because they had done everything that they were told to do by the HEW. Some of them said that they were model families and were given a certificate. Others who said they were graduated did not know whether they were model families or thought that they were not. The wife of the politically important farmer's household said that she did not know whether she was supposed to be a model but she was given a prize because she had accomplished everything she was told to do by the HEWs. The use of model families seemed to be less important than for model farmers in the livelihood field and than the role of the 'development army' in the health sector.

Hygiene and environmental sanitation

Generally community members were appreciative of the teachings in hygiene and sanitation. They said they benefited, and were usually well able to explain in some detail why, especially women. People had different opinions as to which of the packages were more and less useful.

Latrines

By early 2012 in Harresaw, 99% households had dug a latrine though only 89% used it. One challenge is that latrines collapse in the rainy season. There are cement slabs but they are not given for free. This problem is also there for the solid waste disposal system, which 82% households had and 75% used.

In early 2012 the community was being mobilised to dig latrines for elderly people, labour-poor households, mentally ill people and PLWHA. The work to dig their latrines was organised by the development teams or the *iddir*. The development teams were also going to organise the reconstruction of latrines that had collapsed.

There are latrines at the Abyi Dera school (separate for girls, boys and teachers) but not at the Harresaw school and also not at the Dera secondary school, which is very new. There are separate latrines for males and females at the health centre and there is a latrine at the health post. There is a latrine at the FTC and a clean latrine at the *tabia* office (although no water there). Some households build latrines that are very small and do not have a door, just a plastic sheet. Some households use their latrine to keep animals and put wood.

Among the households and community members interviewed two did not have latrines: a physically disabled woman living in a place where the rocky soil makes it very difficult to dig a latrine, which the *tabia* manager came to assess; and one recently divorced man. One middle wealth woman said she had two latrines, one in the compound for the night and one farther away for the day. She thought it would be good if the *tabia* could have a car to spray the waste from latrines on people's field. Another woman explained that they had one latrine and used it but not in the middle of the night as '*it is not usual*'. Several respondents noted that there was a new idea of having a latrine close enough from the house, preferably in the compound, so that it could be used during the night and by old people too.

Several community members mentioned that there was pressure to dig latrines. They were told that they would not get food aid or electricity would be disconnected. As noted earlier, *tabia* officials do not call this pressure but explain that they were sending people back home to dig their latrine before they could come and work on the PSNP public works. Having a latrine and supporting the

construction and use of latrines was associated with being a progressive in the community, as well as supporting the construction of the health post and the presence and use of good maternal and child health services at a health service provider.

Waste disposal

Tabia officials explained that 82% of households in Harresaw constructed waste disposals and 75% are using them. People disposing of their garbage in a safe way are protected from communicable disease that comes with poor sanitation. They said that there are fewer people with diarrhea – which they related to the various hygiene and sanitation packages including this one. Like with the latrines the problem with waste disposals is that as they are constructed from local materials like clay they collapse during the rainy season. Officials explained that people should follow up after the rainy season and close the waste disposal material with stone, not with clay.

Washing hands, bodies, clothes and dishes

There were only 64% households with a handwashing installation by the latrine and only 58% used it – which is much lower than the average in the *wereda*. People fear theft of the jerry can, and water is scarce and they do not want it to be spilled by children washing their hands.

Water purification

Water purification is a big issue: tablets were given only once because of budget constraints at the *wereda*. *Wereda* officials explained that in 2004 EC 99% of the health budget was for salaries and there was only 300,000 *birr* for all the drugs needed in the *wereda*. Also, when the water purification drug was given there was not enough to cover the *tabia* as a whole so priority was given to Harresaw *kushet* and Ekunta *got* which have the most acute problem with regard to drinking water.

Kitchen cupboards

All households had a kitchen cupboard although they did not all use it well and left dust get in the kitchen utensils.

Healthy home environment

Livestock in the house

Putting livestock in a separate compound is one of the two most problematic packages, together with water purification (see above). In Harresaw only 4.6% households had a separate compound for livestock. This is expensive, and keeping the livestock in the same compound as humans protects them from thieves. *Tabia* leaders explained that they will have to step up and show the example.

Smoke free houses

Having smoke-free houses is not an issue as in the area households traditionally have a separate kitchen with a chimney. The percentage of household who have smoke-free houses is 100%.

Pest control

The HEW admitted to the fact that not much work was done on pest control. Teachings are given to the community to maintain their houses clean and to use local painting to prevent the breeding of insects. A few community members use spray to kill insects. 96% of households in the community paint their houses with dung and clay, some of them with lime.

Illnesses and disease prevention and control

Illnesses

The data at the health centre shows that in 2003 EC the two most often recorded diseases were Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) and Intestinal Parasites (IP), both preventable. Malaria is not in the list of the top ten illnesses. Cases reported by community members in the interviews were all linked to people having been in Afar, including cases of malaria relapsing. There are *tabias* where it is quite

prevalent but in Harresaw it is only in some places. In 2002 EC there were 52 HIV/AIDS positive cases in the health centre catchment area, which covers four *tabias* including Harresaw where 12 people take Anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs. Cases of cured tuberculosis were also mentioned in the interviews of community members.

In 2002 EC there was an epidemic in Harresaw *kushet*, which killed about 20 people. The symptoms were vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and loss of appetite; people were bedridden for 3-7 days and eventually died. The distribution of the illness was dispersed. *Wereda* health officers came to assess the situation (with laboratory equipment). They did not give details but said that it was caused by poor hygiene and sanitation. They advised the community to improve hygiene and sanitation. They gave treatment to 45 patients and followed up for two months. There was no problem since then.

General prevention

There is a *tabia* epidemic committee comprising many of the cabinet members and members of different groups in the community. The senior health extension worker is the committee's secretary. Through the health promoters they continuously monitor if there is any unusual illness case. They report to the *wereda* health office.

In early 2012 vaccination was organised in the form of campaign every three months and of a regular outreach programme for mothers and infants coming monthly at the health post for the 'vaccination day'. There were various measures described below to prevent and treat malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Generally according to the HEWs the community was responsive to all programmes. Among the community members interviewed, often women in relation to health issues, there was a good awareness and understanding of the different disease prevention and control measures. Only one woman did not know that TB could be diagnosed and cured even though she knew that she should avoid sharing cups with other people.

The different methods used to raise awareness include public meetings, teachings by HEWs and health volunteers and in development team and 1-5 network meetings, and advice on various issues when people consult the health facilities.

There is no big issue with the supply of vaccines and drugs related to malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS because these come directly either from an NGO (UNICEF for the vaccines) or from the Regional health bureau. In government health facilities these are also all free services and drugs, regardless of the person's wealth status. There is an issue with transportation as in the *wereda* the motorbikes are in service since 11 years. Vaccines have to be transported using donkeys or even human labour.

Malaria

Even though malaria is not much prevalent in Harresaw bed nets were distributed to some households in areas where the risk is higher. However, there were not enough bednets to be used by all family members (1 bednet for 3 people). *Wereda* officials explained that this is because they do not get enough of them as the *wereda* is not considered to be malaria-prone. People in Harresaw were highly interested in bednets, explaining that they kept flies, fleas and other insects away.

House spraying was also done and people appreciated it, the more so that the new chemical was effective also for insects other than mosquitoes. But it was not done regularly. It could not be done in 2004 EC because the *wereda* had no budget for this.

Stagnant water was removed in the form of a campaign, reportedly as part of the PSNP PWs (though it might be part of the lighter work organised for the emergency food aid). As several respondents noted, there are areas in the *tabia* where there is not much stagnant water. A few people mentioned that the construction of the dam might have facilitated the breeding of mosquitoes.

Immunisation

Discussed under vaccination.

HIV and AIDS

Prevention - Different HIV/AIDS preventative services are provided in different types of facilities. At the Dera health centre there is PICT (provider initiated counselling and testing), PMTCT (prevention of mother-to-child transmission) and VCT (voluntary counselling and testing) services. One change is that now HEWs provide VCT services after they were trained by the Clinton Foundation at the *wereda* level. In 2002 EC more than a third of the VCTs in the *wereda* as a whole were done by HEWs. In one of the health centres of the *wereda* HEWs also provide PMTCT services but not yet in the health centre of Dera and Harresaw health post.

Wereda and *tabia* health workers explained that there are changes in the approach to prevent HIV/AIDS. Firstly, teachings are no longer only theoretical. PLWHA are being made to teach the community. Secondly, VCT is no longer done as a campaign, because it is expensive, and it should be people's own decision. Young people are advised to take a blood test before marrying. There are also community conversations which in principle incorporate elders, religious leaders, youths and others. *Tabia* officials explained that there were teachings at public meetings and also at the PSNP public works sites. They said that community awareness was increasing and stigma was not strong.

Community members mentioned the various services available and that they had been taught about the transmission mode. But one man who is HIV/AIDS positive said that stigma is there and that makes people not wanting to disclose their status.

One woman said that the teaching on HIV/AIDS made her not have sexual affairs as she would otherwise do. An older woman explained that she had been tested when she went to the health centre for another illness and agreed because she had been taught. The health people and also her children were teaching her. Her children were teaching her not to stigmatise others with HIV/AIDS. The woman heading a poor household explained that

Last year she attended an awareness raising session on HIV and she was tested on PSNP public work. And when she was at Dera health centre she was made to take an HIV test. Teaching was given in PSNP public works in meetings on how to prevent HIV. Her children will also have an HIV test at their school. There is behavioural change and knowledge increase among the household members.

The HEW said that the community has good awareness but many people have practices that expose them to HIV/AIDS. The young people interviewed did not talk much about HIV/AIDS other than to say that it was not known whether there were youth who were positive. There was an anti- HIV/AIDS club in the Abyidera Grade 1-8 school.

Treatment – In the *wereda* antiretroviral therapy (ART) is available only in Atsbi. The head of the health centre of Harresaw has asked for ARV drugs to be given at the health centre but so far this was not done. He explained that there is an issue with the provider initiated counselling and testing (PICT) because staff working at the health centre have too much workload and do not propose the service to patients coming for other things. This is linked to the acute lack of skilled staff at the health centre. *Wereda* officials raised the challenge that there was no longer any support for PLWHA beyond getting ARV drugs since World Vision had left the area. Previously PLWHA were connected with the World Vision food support programme. PLWHA have an association at the *wereda* level but it is not active in Harresaw.

Tabia officials explained that there were 12 people known to be living with HIV/AIDS in the community, all taking ART. Five of them disclosed their status to the community. They said that there was stigma although not very serious and that it was improving. The two persons living with HIV/AIDS who were interviewed did not agree with this and said that stigma was still there.

One is an ex-soldier. He explained that when he was at the army between 1990 and 1993 EC he was not well aware of the risks, and he had uncontrolled sexual intercourse. He was hearing about HIV/AIDS on the radio but did not pay attention. After 1993 EC there were different programmes such as dramas to raise the awareness of the military force about the disease. In 1999 EC he did VCT

after he had a cough and suspected that it could be TB and was referred to Atsbi. Then he was told that he was HIV positive. He was referred to Wukro for TB examination. He did a VCT again in Wukro and was confirmed HIV positive. He started to take ART immediately. The services he gets are free. The treatment is not a problem, and so far he has not suffered any side infection. But, he said:

His wife learned that he was HIV positive when her relatives told her. She went to the health centre to confirm that her husband took ART. She did VCT and was told that she was HIV negative. The health provider counselled her to divorce him. Then she divorced him. He thinks that this was out of the professional ethics because he was unwillingly divorced while he had seven children.

People tell each other not to eat together with him, not to wash clothes where he washed his clothes in the river. Due to HIV, his income and expenditure have been reduced, his marriage ended in divorce and his life has deteriorated. One of his children dropped out of school because she lost hope. But she was given counselling and now she is continuing her education.

The 35-year old female PLWHA interviewed had been diagnosed positive four months ago, after having tried to get rid of TB and taking the drug but not improving. She too did two tests. She started to take ARV drugs but she cannot yet see a big change in her life. She got the virus from her ex-husband, who took ART for a long time without telling her. She divorced seven years ago so she must have caught the virus more than seven years ago. She lost a child then too and did not realise it was to HIV/AIDS. For years her neighbours advised her to make a test when she was suffering for instance of repeated diarrhoea but she was refusing. But her health became worse and she finally took the test. Now she has disclosed her status because she wanted to help the government.

In Harresaw there is no NGO working with PLWHA any longer. The *tabia* helps them though the PSNP and emergency food aid and in providing labour for hard work.

Tuberculosis

There was a lot of progress made in awareness-raising and treating TB. With regard to awareness raising practically all community respondents interviewed about disease prevention knew that sharing cups had to be avoided. Most of them said they were doing this, for instance not even sharing cups with their husband and children and not allowing their children to share cups, and not sharing sticks to eat *tihilo* (*tihilo* is a traditional dish in this area of Tigray, which is eaten with sticks to dip small balls of cooked grain-based dough in a sauce). Most people knew that TB could be diagnosed, and that they should go and have a test if they were coughing for more than two weeks. They knew that it could be cured, and several mentioned cases of relatives having been cured. One man said that he was getting free TB treatment at the health centre but he also has diabetes and has to go to Mekelle for this in a private clinic, at a cost of 100 *birr*/month since four years.

Wereda officials explained that since 2001 EC the DOT ('directly observable treatment') programme had been extended to health posts. Under the DOT programme, once a patient has been diagnosed enough drugs for one month are kept with a health staff. The patient, who has to take the TB drug daily, comes to the health staff to take it. This is to make sure that patients do not forget or stop taking their drugs. But in reality people were stopping because the health centre was too far for them to come every day. Now patients can take their drug at the health posts. However, in Harresaw the HEW explained that this is not practised in this way. Instead, TB patients are given the drugs to take and so, there is little supervision as to whether they take them regularly.

First aid

First aid is supposed to be available at the health post. One rich woman who explained that the health post in Harresaw was very nice and clean also said that her son had benefited from first aid there. Women usually knew about the existence of the service at the health post (although not the woman heading the relatively successful female headed household). For one woman it was the second most important intervention among the preventive health packages; others gave it less importance. The wife in the middle wealth household explained that she had used the first aid

service when she had been injured by a stone thrown by people quarrelling with each other – but she went to the health centre in Dera immediately. One man did not know whether there was first aid at the health post but on the public works and free labour worksites there are health workers with bandages and alcohol, to treat people who might get injured in the work.

Food security, diet and malnutrition

Diet

Food security is discussed above. Thanks to the PSNP and emergency food aid there was no report of starvation and deaths of people in the last few years, including in the severe drought of 2001 EC.

Diet is improving thanks to irrigated vegetable production, the introduction of new grain crops and pulses, the provision of wheat as food aid – and under the influence of exposure to urban areas, easier access to markets and factory food etc. There is a difference between households depending on wealth and also the way they respond to market incentives. There are households which decrease their own consumption of certain products because of the good price that they get on the market. The dietary changes in the six households interviewed are presented in the box below.

Box 6: Dietary changes in households of different wealth in Harresaw

Poor FHH – More wheat (bread, injera, porridge) as she is producing it compared to the past when their only staple food was *tihilo* from barley. They consume less milk because she lost many sheep, fewer eggs because she sells them on the market and she also lost chickens, and less meat (they only eat chickens as women traditionally do not slaughter sheep and anyway she has fewer of them).

Richer FHH – She also consumes more wheat-based products as the household produces it. They also eat more vegetables of all sorts, that she produces or buys (she buys potatoes, tomatoes and green pepper). They also buy oranges, which is new, and consume lemons that one of the sons brings back from Afar. They drink milk and consume more butter and eggs than five years ago. They also eat pulses and beans which previously were uncommon and they now produce, in the form of *kik* and *shiro*. Like many people in the community (she said) they are eating more meat. Not by greediness but because they know it is making people to be healthy like milk and eggs too. She uses more spices (cumin, ginger and black spices) and more factory food which was totally unknown by the household five years ago (pasta, rice, biscuits and candy for the children).

Poor MHH – They consume barley and wheat and more injera than five years ago, and less porridge. They consume more vegetables – she buys potatoes, tomatoes, onions and garlic, though as she does not have enough money these are for her husband and children. They do not eat milk, butter, meat and eggs because of poverty and this has not improved in the past five years.

Middle wealth MHH – They eat injera, tiliho, roasted grain, porridge, stew, kita and bread and use wheat, which is new, in addition to barley. Injera is new for them since two years. They also eat more vegetables, and consume oranges and bananas which they did not do five years ago. But they drink less milk and consume less butter because they lost livestock. They eat more eggs because of their nutritional value. They also have come to like pulses (beans, lentils and peas) and consume a lot more of them. Like in the past they eat meat (sheep and chicken) on holy days. They sometimes eat pasta and macaroni, which is new.

Politically important MHH – The wife started using vegetables two years ago because they produce them and she buys some that they do not produce (green peppers and carrots). They have started eating corn when it grows – roasted and boiled. It is also used for kita, bread and injera when it gets dry. They eat more pulses (beans and lentils) but buying them from the market. Now they use beans to cook stew, no longer only for kita. They consume more meat and eggs because it makes people healthy although it is expensive. Milk and butter are less often consumed because the livestock is less productive due to the zero-grazing intervention. They also consume more oil.

Economically successful MHH – They still use more barley but also wheat as it is what the government provides. They prepare bread and injera while four years ago it was mainly *tihilo*. They also consume vegetables, which they were not doing, following government teachings about their

value. They buy them on the market in Dera (previously they were not available). They also eat more pulses in the form of stew instead of simply boiling them. They consume less milk and butter because they sold livestock. They eat more chicken meat but less sheep because she prefers selling them as they get a good price on the market. They also consume more oil.

A few community respondents mentioned the frequency at which they are eating in a day. For some of them eating three times a day had been current since a while. For three of them it is something that they started doing a few years ago only. Before this they were eating only once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Nutritional interventions

In the *wereda* as a whole there is a big push on nutrition. *Wereda* officials mentioned a biannual vitamin A and iodine supplement programme financed by UNICEF and administered by the *wereda* health office.

There is nutritional screening of lactating mothers with children below six months, pregnant mothers and children under 5 years. Mild malnutrition cases are given Fafa and oil for three months. This is financed by WFP and federal DPPC and implemented by the *wereda* health office. There is mass and individual counselling on nutrition. Children are provided with oil, sugar and balanced food. Mothers are also given lessons on how to prepare the food given to them.

Now development teams play a big role in nutritional screening of children. They categorise cases in three groups: those for whom they counsel mothers at home and make follow ups and refer them to the HEWs if needed; those more severe cases that they refer to the HEWs directly; HEWs then take measurements and put the child on OTP (outpatient therapeutic programme) if he or she has less than 11mm MUAC (middle upper arm circumference).

The big changes are that since 2002 EC nutritional screening is no longer done through EOS (extended outreach service) every six months but quarterly, and monthly on a pilot basis. Also now the OTP which used to be available only at health centres is given in the 16 health posts of the *wereda* – which is a lot easier for people. In the past TFUs (therapeutic feeding unit) were found only at Sinkata, Adigrat and Mekelle, all far from the *wereda*. In 2001 EC a TFU was opened in Atsbi.

In the *wereda* the number of children affected by malnourishment has been decreasing over time, thanks to health education on nutrition, opening of OTPs in health posts and close nutritional follow up, PSNP and the increase in farmers' production. Children no longer die of malnutrition. There still is an awareness problem among the community as the mothers share the food given for themselves or the malnourished children with other family members in the house. *Wereda* officials believe that there needs to be more nutrition education, and 'accidental monitoring' through house visits to check that households do not finish in a week what has been given for three months for instance.

Out of the 48 schools that are found in the *wereda* 16 have school feeding programmes. The number of schools with a school feeding programme has decreased in the past few years. The food prepared for the students is Fafa porridge. Sometimes students are provided with *temir* (dates). The programme is run by WFP. According to *wereda* officials the programme has helped to reduce the number of school dropouts during drought and has enhanced the interest of the children to come to school. But some children have dropped out right after the programme stopped in some schools. '*It has developed a sort of dependency among the community*'. So, it is not a sustainable solution and the community should be made to understand this.

In Harresaw *tabia* there has been nutritional screening for a long time. The HEWs explained that this is now done at the health post level. Mothers and their children are made to come by the health promoters, development teams etc. There is plumpynut at the health post. More severe cases are referred to Atsbi. There is nutrition education in group during EPI (extended programme on immunisation) days once a month and community health days (CHD) every three months, at the health post. CHD have started in 2003 EC and replace the screening by EOS which used to be carried

out once every six months. Nutrition education is also given during house-to-house visits by health extension workers. Group education on nutrition is also given by community based nutrition (CBN) volunteers – who are the health representatives on the leadership of each of the 35 women development teams.

There is a new approach to monitor children's growth. Starting in early 2012, the CBN volunteers have been trained in community-based nutrition do growth monitoring by weighing children. Whenever they find a child to be normal they thank the mother and tell her to keep up with it. For underweight children they follow a three-step procedure. First, they investigate about the child's nutrition background and the household's feeding and hygiene practices. The CBN volunteers ask the mother and make their own observations in the house. After investigating they identify what caused malnourishment. They discuss this with the mother. On that basis they advise a solution to improve the nutritional status of the child. They give nutritional advice by demonstrating how to prepare nutritious food. They appoint the mother and come back to observe and ask the mother if she is doing things based on the advice given to her.

Children who are more severely affected by malnourishment are given supplementary food. They are detected through the quarterly CHD when MUAC measurements are made at the health post or by the CBN when they decide that a case must be referred to the HEW. Severely malnourished children are provided with 25kg of FAFA and 3 litres of oil for three months. The supplementary food FAFA and oil used to be given at the health centre but it is now going to be given at the health post as the *tabia* administrator has provided a store to keep the supplementary food. They are also given OTP (outpatient therapeutic programme) that is, Plumpynut, folic acid and vitamin A. This is stopped when the child returns to normal weight.

Children who do not accept the Plumpynut are referred to a TFU (therapeutic feeding unit) at the *wereda* level. Mothers can select a place where they have relatives or friends so they can choose Atsbi, Wukro or Mekelle. When mothers get supplementary food they are also advised how to use it: there is demonstration of how they should prepare the porridge. Pregnant and lactating mothers also get nutritional support when they are found to be malnourished using the MUAC measurement.

The result of these efforts is visible. The HEWs explained that over time the number of malnourished pregnant and lactating women and children under five has decreased from up to 260 in the community, to around 90. Cases of severe malnourishment have decreased to 2, from 9 previously. There still are problems with this activity as mothers share the food. This will be addressed by more house visits and also, giving only monthly rations instead of three months at a time.

Nutritional supplements are given as follows:

- Vitamin A to lactating mothers less than 45 days after delivery and to children 6-59 months
- Iron supplement to pregnant and lactating women (lactating women take iron supplement for 3 consecutive months)
- Iodine capsules to children aged 6-23 months, pregnant mothers and lactating women less than 6 months after delivery.

These supplements are given at the health post and the health centre in the *tabia*, on community health days and on a routine basis. The provision of iodine has started most recently (in 2004 EC).

Women from the community all found nutritional education useful although one poor woman explained that for those who cannot afford better food, education brings no change. One rich man mentioned deworming. Several women mentioned that they were given iodine when lactating and others mentioned that they were given iron, including a woman who explained that she had had severe bleeding and so this was most important.

A poor man explained that his wife and daughter get nutritional support and it was important for his wife as she had surgery when she delivered and this was helping her to recover more rapidly. Several people interviewed had had children who were given supplements or had *got* supplements

themselves when they were pregnant or lactating, and found that it was effective. The woman heading a relatively successful female-headed household recognised that she had used the oil to cook for the whole family and she had shared some of the food with the child's sister. Another poor woman explained that in her case she had used the food as main food for her and her two children. She said that it was not effective as for the households for whom it was additional food, but it had helped to fill the household's food gap.

There was no allegation of bias in the way this support is given in Harresaw, including none by any of the respondents in families where no one had been assisted in this way.

HTPs affecting health

Circumcision

In the area there is no female circumcision; male circumcision is done on the 7th day after birth at home and there are risks of HIV AIDS and infection. There are teachings so that male circumcision should be done at health facilities only. However, some respondents said that medical circumcision was only possible in Wukro or Mekelle which is very costly. A few wanted the service to be available at the health post. Most community members continue to practice at home. The teachings have succeeded in making them aware of the need to use sterilised instruments and they do this. Only one of all respondents talking about this said that she took her son to the health centre in Dera and this was good because health staff were able to avoid excessive bleeding, which can be dangerous. According to *tabia* officials the policy should be implemented more vigorously. But some community members explained that '*the teachings are not very strong*'. Reportedly, the HEW said to one woman that it was ok at home if done with sterilised instruments. The woman had bought a new razor and boiled it and she had circumcised her baby boy.

Traditional medical practices

The Harmful Traditional Practices affecting health are; cutting children's uvula at home or not in a health facility, done to supposedly avoid children to get throat illnesses and also because children with their uvula are said to be always thirsty; burning gums when babies get teething diarrhoea because people believe that diarrhoea is caused by a small white worm in the gum (which is the emerging tooth) and lips are being burnt at the same time; making people bleed with a glass or horn, to take what is said to be excess blood causing a muscle problem (*mahigoma*); getting tattoos and scares on various parts of the body – for instance on children's eyelids when they get sick in the eyes.

There are teachings to stop these practices. They are successful with regard to the *mahigoma*, which is said to have practically disappeared in Harresaw *tabia* and the *wereda* as a whole. The traditional practitioner interviewed confirmed and explained that people like him feared to do it because it was banned (see below). In the community tattoos and scars are also no longer common and are found only on adult people. Burning gums continue to be practised but it is decreasing. But cutting uvula is said to continue, although a few among the respondents said they had not let their children have their uvula cut.

Reproductive health and services

Infertility

Infertility is not much known or talked about. There were no more than two women and one man affected by infertility, according to the HEW. She explained that if it was the man who was infertile, often his wife would commit adultery to have a child to save their marriage, because not having a child causes divorce.

Contraception

Different means of **contraception** were being used. The HEWs talked about good progress. In the *wereda* as a whole though, the plan was to raise the proportion of women using contraceptives to

67% but the achievement was only 21.8%. In Harresaw the HEWs showed that in 2003 EC 25 women were taking pills, 279 women were using the 3 month injection and 74 women were using implants lasting for three or five years. In addition 334 women were reportedly using abstinence, and 1,153 women had received general advice on family planning. One step forward was that since 2003 EC HEWs could implant contraceptives – though to remove them women would have to go to the health centre. All contraceptives are provided free of charge.

Reproductive health education is given in Grade 1-8 schools and secondary schools. Students in the anti-HIV/AIDS club invite *tabia* officials and the HEWs to give them information on the different contraception means. The HEW explained that there were students coming to the health post for contraceptives though these were rare cases. For adults, teachings on family planning and contraception are done like the others, in public meetings and gatherings like PSNP public works, when women come with children for the vaccination, through the development teams etc. There are no dedicated teachings on adolescent reproductive health.

According to the HEWs, men prefer their wife to use the three-month injection. They dislike the pill because it is easily forgotten and the long-term implant because it has side effects on their wife's health. Adult men do not like condoms but young men have a better attitude and use them. Women too prefer the three-month injection. Implants are used by women planning to migrate in Saudi Arabia. But they are said to weaken women so that they would not be able to work on PSNP, and swell their body so they do not like this.

Community members highlighted different reasons for using contraceptives, which also underlie their preferences. Women wanting to delay or space births might take the three-month injection – among other to avoid the unpleasant side effect of the implant. But one woman explained that she wanted to stop giving birth altogether as she had five children already, and had placed a five-year implant. All those interviewed appreciated that the service was now available at the health post.

The young men and women interviewed all mentioned that nowadays young couples did not want to have many children. This was because it is better for both the mother and the children, and also they want to be able to raise their children well. Some said that young couples delayed having children as they wanted to become economically strong first; others said that often the woman was taking contraceptives but after having a first child soon after the marriage. The young (mid-20s/30s) women highlighted that now adolescent girls could go individually to get contraceptives. In their time they had to go in a group. They also had to go to Dera whereas now the service is available at the health post.

Abortion

There was also not a high known demand for **abortion**. Officials and *tabia* health workers said that women did not use traditional means because there was a good service in Atsbi. The HEWs explained that cases were often women whose husband was in Saudi. They would not take contraceptives as this would be seen as a sign that they planned to have an affair, and if they fell pregnant they would abort. The law says that a woman who is raped, or underage, or who has conceived from a relative, can abort and that the mother should be trusted. So, any smart woman has easily access to an abortion if she wishes to. One 17-year young woman mentioned that there were a few cases of unwanted pregnancies though they were becoming rare because contraception was widespread. When this happened the woman would go to Atsbi or Mekelle but this was not openly talked about because abortion is not acceptable to the community.

Mother and child services

In 2003 EC the mother and child services given at both the health post and the health centre were: TT vaccination for pregnant women, provision of vitamin A, iron and iodine, ante- and post-natal care and general advice, infant and children vaccination, and nutritional screening. Mother and child services were usually appreciated by the community.

Ante-natal care

ANC and vaccination started in 1993 EC. All women were said to attend ANC – though some might skip some visits. Vaccination, ANC and post-natal care were organised following a schedule. The HEWs explained that people's attitude had changed in the last ten years but the big change was in the past five years. The health extension workers, health volunteers and now the development teams and 1-5 networks played a big role in this change. The TBAs follow up pregnant mothers, making them go to the ANC and advising them. The *tabia* health workers stressed that the development groups were very helpful in identifying the pregnant women and making them go for ANC, and reminding women about their various appointments. Since their establishment, the coverage of ANC was 100% in the *tabia* (and in the *wereda* as a whole). As a result of the teachings in public meetings and other gatherings of the community, men had better knowledge of the services too, and most had a good attitude.

Vaccinations

Vaccination was also 100% achieved. Young women said that vaccination of children was very important. One of them, in her 30s, remembered an epidemic in 1980 EC that had killed 80 children of her age, because at that time there was no vaccination.

Delivery

The big changes were that: since 2002 EC Trained Birth Attendants (TBA) could no longer assist deliveries; and since 2003 EC health extension workers could no longer assist deliveries either, except when a woman did not have the time to be transported to the health centre. All deliveries had to be assisted by skilled personnel at the health centre (skilled delivery). The TBAs call the HEW when women are in labour. The HEW must be called to accompany the woman to the health centre. Before this change, HEWs could deliver at the health post (safe and clean delivery) and a couch was provided by UNICEF although according to the HEW, it was never used (see picture). The health centre staff explained that making women to deliver at the health centre is one criterion in the ranking of the effectiveness of the 'development army' (development teams and networks).

There is a big problem with the skilled delivery policy: few women deliver at the health centre. In 2003 EC, on a total of 76 deliveries in Harresaw *tabia* only 24 women delivered at the health centre. Another 40 delivered with the help of the HEW, and 12 deliveries were assisted by a TBA when the HEW could not be present for one reason or another. Delivery at the Dera health centre started a long time ago but is now handled in a new separate block since 2003 EC. Women with complications would be referred to Atsbi.

Both the health centre head and health workers in the *tabia* said that the situation was improving. However, *tabia* health workers in particular recognised that there were real practical issues in implementing the policy. In some parts of the *tabia* there is no network and no roads so the woman in labour has to be transported on a traditional ambulance (able-bodied young men carrying the woman on stretchers). In areas where the ambulance can reach, the service is available to bring women only if they get referred or choose to go to Atsbi. The ambulance does not bring women to the health centre in Dera. But if they go to Atsbi there is an issue of cost, especially for poor women, because the ambulance does not bring them back home and they have to pay for this.

As for the traditional ambulance, many youth migrated, poor women do not get support, it is hard to get support when labour starts during the night etc. Generally women do not want to be transported in these uncomfortable conditions and if the ANC visits did not detect anything abnormal, they simply prefer to stay at home. However as one poor man said, the good thing about the ANC service is that if a woman is detected as likely to have a difficult delivery, she will be advised to go to the health centre on time. Indeed one of the women interviewed had been given this advice by the HEW and her life was saved as she had heavy bleeding during her delivery. Since 2011 the health extension workers started giving Mesoprostal to stop bleeding during delivery.

Many times women would call the HEW late so it would also be too late to transport them. The HEW also said that generally young women and educated people have a better attitude towards maternal and child services generally, and skilled delivery too.

The women and men interviewed on the topic were all aware of the new policy. Generally they said that they were planning to have delivery at the health centre or had planned to do so. Some women delivered at the health centre after other deliveries at home because their previous delivery was complicated or they had bleeding and they wanted a better assisted delivery this time. Others simply seemed to think that it was better and safer, and their husband agreed. The HEW explained that men understand the benefit but still, they do not organise things accordingly.

In families with students they can influence things. Other factors that influence the women and men interviewed include: advice from the development group, the good attitude of the health extension workers when they go for follow up at the health post, advice from a relative like her mother-in-law for one young woman. One man who is cabinet member and whose wife is TBA and health volunteer said he was reading materials she brought home and that had helped convince him – though his wife had delivered at home 22 days earlier as she had not had the time to be transported.

Infant care

The HEWs, health promoter interviewed and several women mentioned improvements in the way infants are being taken care of. Infants are no longer washed immediately after birth. Mothers are taught to start breastfeeding immediately although as noted earlier it seems that giving butter or water with sugar for a few days is still practised by some. They are taught about keeping the infant in a hygienic way. Babies are taken to vaccination and mothers are now reminded about the schedule through the proximity follow up role of the development team and 1-5 network structures. Generally mothers are taught to be more attentive to their children's health and seek health care and many people said that the community's practices in this regard had indeed improved a lot.

Fistula

There was only one known case of **fistula** in Harresaw and *wereda* officials confirmed that it was uncommon in the *wereda* as a whole. In Harresaw the woman had medical treatment in Mekelle with the help of REST, but she was not doing well in spite of repeated treatment because she did not take the care that she should have.

Other reproductive health

Not mentioned.

Curative health services

Government services

Generally

The health post in Harresaw gives first aid services. The curative services available at the health post include: treatment of wounds, malaria and simple illnesses like headaches etc.; since very recently (end 2003 EC) health extension workers are allowed to treat mild pneumonia, after having been trained by an NGO called Pathfinder.

Drugs that should be available at the health post are: Amoxaline (an antibiotic); folic acid (for the treatment of malnourished under five children; Bactrim and Cotrimozazole (for simple pneumonia treatment); Chloroquine and Quartem (for malaria); ORS (for diarrhoea treatment); Paracetamol (anti pain) including syrup for children; Mesprostol (given 30 minutes after delivery to facilitate the coming of placenta, for uterus contraction and to stop blood); TTC ointment (eye ointment mostly used to drop on newly born infants to protect them from eye disease if the mother is infected with an STI). Health posts also get TB drugs for identified TB patients under the DOT programme.

At both the health post and the health centre there is a big issue of shortage for all the drugs that are not coming directly from the Regional bureau like malaria and TB drugs. At the health centre they did not get any drug for scabies for the last two years even though it is the fourth most prevalent illness in the area. Also tests for gastritis and typhoid are not available. Some health staff members explained that this is due to the new health care financing system (which is described in the box below); others that it is due to budget constraints at the *wereda* level.

Box 7: Health care financing system in Atsbi

As explained by *wereda* officials and the *tabia* health staff, in the new health care financing policy of the federal ministry, health facilities are supposed to be managed by boards which involve representatives from different groups in the community. Drug supply is financed by the cash received from the sale of drugs and other health services. Funds are kept at the health facility and managed by the board instead of being sent and pooled at the *wereda* level as was the case previously. This was started in Atsbi *wereda* in 2003 EC. The health centre boards are not yet strong and the *wereda* still gives a budget. In 2004 EC the total budget allocated for drugs in the *wereda* was 300,000 *birr*.

One big issue is that the budget to cover health charge exemptions (about 30,000 *birr*) is not sufficient to cover the real number of exemptions. Those are: the ex-fighters who have a card from the national defence office; the PLWHA for opportunistic infections and pneumonia drugs; the poor who get a letter from the *tabia* and a certificate from the *wereda*. At the same time, the HEW in Harresaw explained that the quota of exemptions for poor people was very small.

There is no payment for TB drugs, ART and maternal health services, regardless of the wealth status of the patient.

With the new health financing system some drugs for the health post are no longer given freely. For this reason, in Harresaw health post the TTC was no longer available. Other shortages are made worse when the drug also lacks on the market, as was the case for ORS for the past one year at the time of the fieldwork.

Financial wealth is a determinant factor in the way people in Harresaw seek treatment. For instance, migrant families are said to have better access to health services with payment whereas others who want to seek treatment often stop due to lack of money.

So, at one extreme is this rich man, who was referred to Mekelle by the health centre in Dera (which he appreciated because it showed that health workers know when a case is beyond their capacity). He paid 1,000 *birr* to be treated at the university hospital. He still had to return for check-up. Before going to the health centre and being referred to what is the most modern health service available in the Region, he had gone to holy water and sacrificed a sheep bought for 600 *birr*. He decided to go to the health centre because he saw no improvement.

At the other extreme is a 37 year old mentally ill man who has been ill since he is 7 year old. He lives with his brother's family. The family is poor because the head could not engage in certain activities because he has to constantly look after his brother who is dangerous. The family could not go anywhere else than at the local health service facilities for lack of financial means. Some wealthy people of Harresaw go to Wukro where there are private clinics.

Respondents who were exempted from charges were all ex-soldiers. One of them said that in the health centre of Dera he had fast and full treatment even though he was a patient with exemption. In other places he said that health workers treated those patients badly.

Among the community members interviewed, many had positive experiences in seeking treatment, mostly in government facilities. This includes a (rich) young man in his mid-20s, with a heart defect, who went to Dera and was successively referred to Atsbi, Wukro and Mekelle where he was treated. Others had less positive stories. But all those who gave an opinion on the health staff they had encountered were positive.

Several respondents also mentioned that since two years there was an ambulance service, thanks to the improved roads and the possibility of calling the ambulance by phone. This was most useful for emergencies and deliveries. In one family two members of the household had their life saved thanks to the ambulance. The husband's brother was transported to Mekelle for an operation, and the couple's daughter who had complications during her delivery was transported to Atsbi. However, the HEW explained that sometimes the ambulance was not available or not in service like when she called and the ambulance could not come because it had no front lights working.

Health centre

There is one health centre in the *tabia*, in Abyidera, called Midere. It is one of the four health centres in the *wereda*. Sometimes the Midere health centre refers patients to the Atsbi health centre. Also, ART is not available in Midere; it is available only in Atsbi. The health centre has older and new blocks, including a separate room for deliveries since 2003 EC. It lacks a TB clinic, a store for drugs, a nurse station, and a place for minor operations. There is water (from a hand pump and roof catchment system) and electricity. The electric installation is faulty and this creates problems for the fridges. There are separate latrines for men and women and a handwashing installation. It is quite busy and receives about 40 patients a day. The busiest days are Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Tuesday is very busy because it is market day in Dera.

At the health centre, drugs that should be available are all antibiotics, anti-hypertension drugs, all anti-malaria drugs, TB drugs, and drugs for advanced treatment of pneumonia. But as discussed above there is a big issue with drug availability at the health centre and generally in the *wereda*.

One big issue at the health centre is staff shortages. It has only 26% of the personnel that it should have according to the federal ministry's standards. The constraint is the *wereda* budget – though *wereda* officials explained that 99% of the health budget was already for health salaries. There is high turnover as well. The health centre head explained that health staff is attracted by higher salaries and other benefits of jobs with NGOs. In contrast there was no problem in staffing the health posts.

The good thing is that the health centre head is a Health Officer. He was a nurse but he upgraded his education which is BSc (Grade 12 + 4). He was appointed in 2002 EC. He explained that he has a heavy workload. He works every day of the week, often 14 hours a day. At week-ends he is writing reports. He works an average of 80 hours in a week. He is paid 3,414 *birr* per month. When there is a budget for this he gets some extra payment for working night time but the budget is very small. He is unhappy because the standards of the health centre are low. He wants to be able to use what he has learned but there is no lab, no technology, and he cannot get research work and has no access to education. If he could fulfil his aspirations he would stay as he has no problem with the place. But if not, then he wants to move somewhere else.

Hospitals

When people are referred to hospital they have to go to Wukro or Mekelle. In Mekelle there is a new good hospital run by the university, called Ayder hospital. People who went there found that it had good services. The problem is the cost of transportation.

Private clinics and pharmacies

In early 2012 there was no private clinic and no private pharmacy in the *wereda* as a whole. There were three drug sellers in Atsbi, regulated by the *wereda* health office. People from Harresaw *tabia* who can afford go to Wukro where there is a pharmacy to find drugs that are sometimes prescribed but not available at the health centre and in Atsbi. A few respondents mentioned going to private health providers in Wukro or Mekelle.

Traditional practices

In the *wereda* as a whole there are six traditional practitioners that have *got* approval from the *wereda* health regulation services. These are people involved in the treatment of herpes simplex

which is locally known as '*almaz bale chira*', and bone setting, and others who use herbal medicine to treat various diseases. Traditional practitioners who are banned include those burning milk teeth, removing uvula and practising *mahigoma* (traditional healing that involves taking out blood of the patient using a glass or horn). Traditional practitioners are known to be able to treat illness that cannot be treated by modern medicine, like epilepsy and possession by evil spirits. One issue is that, because the *wereda* regulation officers do not know herbs and plants very well, they focus only on checking that traditional practitioners do not use sharp and blade tools – this is to avoid blood transmission problems. HEWs are supposed to also inspect the activities of traditional practitioners in their *tabias* and to report to the *wereda* health office whenever there is an issue.

Tabia officials explained that community members' health seeking behaviour had significantly changed. Many people are going to modern medicine, leaving the use of traditional medicine. When people cannot afford to go to the health centre and when the illness is simple they may use home treatment and herbs that they know. But this has decreased in the last ten years and many people go to a health service provider. Some people use bone setters but many prefer to go to the health centre, a change which also came in the last ten years. This is as a result of better access to health service providers and health education.

Tabia officials said that many community members use holy water but this depends on the type of illness people face. For infections or some other similar cases people go to health centres. Whenever it is possession by devil or unknown supernatural force the community members still prefer the use of holy water. There are two holy water points in the *tabia*. The HEWs and health promoters check that the water is clean. There are no spiritual healers in the *tabia*.

A few of the respondents talking about health issues reported self-treatment, like this mother who gave *Michele* leaf to her son who was vomiting while he was being transported to the health centre, but she said that she preferred modern medicine because it is more effective. Among the respondents quite a few explained or mentioned in the conversation that they had gone to the holy water. Sometimes they did this first then went to modern health facilities if there was no improvement, like the man mentioned earlier. In other cases people reported that they had been cured by both modern medicine and holy water.

The traditional health practitioner interviewed was a 61 year old man, a farmer who learned the skill from his father many years ago. He explained that he had no relation with the government and to his knowledge there was no regulation. But he knew that *mahigoma* was prohibited by the government and therefore he was reluctant to do it and was doing it only for very close relatives. According to this man, cutting uvula is popular. The services he offers are cutting uvula, bone setting (but not when the flesh is thorn), treating adults' teeth problems, and he gives herbs for problems that cannot be cured by modern medicine like epilepsy and evil eye. He said his custom was decreasing and he was not practising more than one or twice in a year. He gives free services for the poor but charges up to 100 *birr* for the others.

Child-rearing practices and changes

According to the women interviewed on this, there have been a lot of changes in child-rearing practices over the past five years. This is true for all age ranges: infants, babies, toddlers, 3-6 year-old, 7-12 year old and adolescent males and females. The wife in the economically successful household explained that this was possible because nowadays there is birth spacing whereas in the past there was '*overlap of children*' and it was difficult to give them adequate care.

All women mentioned better food, hygiene and clothing, and generally more attention by parents to avoiding harm.

Specifically, infants and babies are taken for vaccination. Babies are made to go to bed. Children of all ages are taken to the health facilities when they are unwell. Parents (women in particular) better keep the personal hygiene of infants, babies and children. Infants are no longer washed immediately

after birth. But infants, babies and children are washed regularly and their clothes are washed regularly too. They are taught to keep away from the fire and bad things, and to avoid playing with waste, metal and dirty things. They are protected by clothes. More parents buy shoes early – even for toddlers. When they are 7 children begin to take care of their hygiene themselves like washing hands etc. Girls start taking care of themselves earlier than boys according to the poor woman heading her household.

Several women explained that mothers now were breastfeeding immediately after birth as they were taught by the health extension workers and health workers at the health centre, and avoided giving butter or water with sugar for a few days as was the custom in the past. But the wife in the politically important household said that the practice of giving butter or water with sugar had continued and most women did not start breastfeeding immediately. Women were also taught to start providing additional food after 4 or 5 months and were doing this. Babies are given porridge, fenugreek (woman heading a poor household) and milk (wife in middle wealth household), biscuits and eggs (wife in politically important household). When they are 3 year-old children start eating the same things as adults. Parents may also buy them biscuits and oranges.

7-12 children are sent to school. Some parents send their 5-6 year old children to pre-school though this is very recent in the *tabia*. When children reach that age expenses on them start to increase (wife in the middle wealth household), as parents buy clothes and school materials. Most of the women explained that parents pay attention to let children enough time to play and study and less work is given to them. However, the wife in the middlewealth household said that when they are around 7 year old children start to carry out various activities depending on their age.

Women also all explained that parents are less authoritarian with their children. There is less beating, *'no ordering but making discussion and agreement'* and more advice. Parents start to advise their children when they are 10. Once they are 12 boys and girls begin to take care of themselves and there is less care from parents. *'The role of parents at this age is in advising, guiding and fulfilling their children's basic needs'*. Girls and boys of that age are made to go to school but they also are active in the household. Girls *'become busy with household chores and boys on farming and herding activities'* (poor woman heading her household) – though according to the wife in the poor household herding is less common these days (elsewhere people say that there is less herding because of the zero-grazing policy which is being rolled out in the *tabia*).

At this age (12-16) the differences between sexes, which have started to be important in their lives for the 7-12 age group, become more important. Girls stay more at home (when they are not at school) whereas boys start spending some time outside of their home. Boys get pocket money but not the girls (wife in the poor household). Boys and girls are told to have good friends at school.

People say that when they reach 16-17 children start to think and work like adults. At that age the parents' role is *'not about caring as for children but about fulfilling basic needs... In the last ten years their needs have increased'* (woman heading a richer household). Children are old enough to decide for themselves and according to some of the women this also holds for adolescent girls of that age. The difference (according to the woman heading a poor household) is that young men will tend to worry more about getting an income. Young women do too but less. The young women and their parents start thinking about marriage. But according to the woman heading a richer household, parents nowadays do not push their children to marry, even their girls, because they want them to continue with their education. Most women noted that there is greater collaboration between parents and children of that age. They may decide to migrate to support their family. In other cases parents try to fulfil all basic needs of their children to prevent them from migrating.

Education

General

The most important changes in relation to education in the *tabia* include: the opening of a new Gr1-4

primary school in Harresaw *kushet* and of a new secondary Gr9-10 school in Dera. There still is only one preparatory school in the *wereda*, in Atsbi, and no other post-Grade 10 option in the *wereda*. A number of families have students accepted in government universities (27 in 2004 EC) and 20 students from Harresaw graduated from university in the past few years. At the same time, illegal migration in the Gulf lures many, so school staff, officials and members of the community explained that dropout in higher grades is increasing.

In Harresaw the cultural conversion of valuing education (including as way out of farming) is well under way but at the same time children and their parents are increasingly aware of the many obstacles on the way (poor education quality, high number of students failing at grade 8 or grade 10 exams, cost of higher education opportunities, no guarantee of getting a job for those educated children/youth). This is said to lead to 'hopelessness' – and at the same time migrants give examples of fast income-raising strategies which do not require education.

Pre-school

There are two types of pre-school education in Harresaw *tabia*. The child-to-child programme and the 0-grade programme have both started very recently.

The **child-to-child programme** started in 2002 EC in the *wereda* but 2003 EC in Harresaw *tabia*. It is for very young kids and is given by clever Grade 5-8 students after their classes in centres chosen to be in central locations for groups of children, based on the development teams. These centres can be private houses. The student-teachers have been trained for two days. They are coordinated by primary school teachers, also trained. The training was given with the help of UNICEF. The teacher interviewed was not motivated as his role in the child-to-child programme represented an additional workload without incentive, and he had already a heavy workload in leading the primary school teacher development programme. *Tabia* officials said that in 2003 EC there were 24 centres, 26 student-teachers (13 male and 13 female), 364 students, 2 coordinators and 4 primary schools teachers trained to supervise the programme.

The **0-grade programme** was started in the two primary schools of the *tabia* and there were 86 and 70 students respectively, in the Abyi Dera and Harresaw schools. The programme objective is to prepare students to enter more easily in grade 1 and make them have a positive attitude towards education. Teachers are Grade 10 complete; they were trained for 28 days in Adwa. There is a proposal for a separate 0-grade class to be constructed for a cost of 86,000 *birr* and the *tabia* administration promised to contribute 30,000 *birr*.

In both programmes the main challenge was that parents were not that interested. It was also not a high priority for the development teams and *tabia* administration so they were not very active in mobilising the community. A number of interviewed parents of children of the concerned age had not sent their children. They said that the places were too far (some centres had stopped). One rich man explained that the household needed their 6-year old daughter to look out for the birds coming to eat their grain.

However, those who had sent their children seemed happy with it. Children were taught about hygiene, made to be active in playing and singing, made to like school and social life with other children, and it was good that they could acquire the basics before getting in grade 1. There were challenges like distance and that there were no proper classes.

Alternative basic education

There was an attempt to start ABE but it failed in the *wereda* as a whole. The objective was to get overage children to attend school and catch up and get into formal school later on. In Harresaw there was a plan to start in 2003 EC with 60 children aged 8-14 but it did not happen. Parents did not send them, thinking it was too late for them to start school. *Tabia* officials said that parents instead were sending the children to look after the livestock (which in principle should not happen with the zero-grazing policy). Teachers lacked commitment to undertake this in addition to their tasks. It was

planned again for 2004 EC but at the time of the fieldwork that there was no activity at all.

Primary education

The primary schools

Three primary schools are important for the children of Harresaw. Two are found in the *tabia*, in Abyi Dera *got* and in Harresaw *kushet* respectively. The oldest and best established, in Abyi Dera near Dera, teaches Grade 1 to 8. It was founded under Haile Selassie. The Harresaw school was founded in 1997 EC. It teaches Grade 1 to 4. Many children from Harresaw also go to Agewo school in Ruba Feleg *tabia*, because it is nearer their home. It also attracts many children because there is a school feeding programme. *Wereda* officials explained that the school feeding programme is supported by WFP and was covering more schools until a few years ago.

In **Abyi Dera school** in 2003 EC there were 1,706 students (1,735 in 2004 EC) and 33 school staff including one full time director and one full time deputy director who in principle do not teach. 17 teachers were women, 12 were men. The director and deputy were men. Among the students there were more girls than boys (905 girls and 801 boys in 2003 EC). The school has old and new blocks but there is still a shortage of blocks. There are shortages of latrines, chairs, blackboards, teacher reference books and student books for some topics. There is electricity (a computer lab is being installed, see picture) and water but it is insufficient. There is no librarian and no secretary.

The PTR used to be 70:1 but it was going to decrease as new teachers had been assigned. Teachers teach four periods in a day but they participate to clubs, networks, departments tutorial classes, labs, question and answer sessions etc. so they work over 8 hours in a day. Tutorial classes are given to girl students and weak students. Since 2003 EC students and teachers are also supposed to help each other through small networks. The school is a cluster centre although there is no assigned school supervisor and the head teacher substitutes.

Challenges included: the various shortages just mentioned, absenteeism on market days (though this was not more than 4 students in a class and it was the same in all schools of Harresaw), lack of follow up by parents, and school dropouts, as students migrate to Saudi Arabia when they are 16.

In **Harresaw school** in 2004 EC there were 290 students of which 122 were girl students, and 6 teachers (only one woman). Since 2002 EC there is water from a roof catchment system with a tanker and a hand pump. But one parent said that there was no water and no latrine; poor sanitation was a big issue. There is no electricity. The school lacks desks and chairs – though it is better than when the school started and all children were sitting on stones. It lacks a fence. One parent explained that the school excludes children who do not bring a contribution for the fence as there is no government budget, which she was not happy with.

Both schools apply automatic promotion in grade 1 and 2, but in grade 3 and 4 there is screening and it is strict. There is self-contained teaching in grade 1 to 4, and a shift system in the two schools.

The **Agewo school** has one good thing which is the school feeding programme. Children are given porridge in the morning or in the afternoon. Parents explained that it was not much and they could not take it home, but for poor households and students going to school without eating, it was important. Getting something to eat motivates children to go to school and enable them to better attend the lessons. Children bring wood to cook the food. But one parent said that it stopped recently because 6,000 *birr* were stolen.

The Agewo school teachers ask students to bring water for them, and sand and stones for constructing new blocks. Parents were unhappy with the latter. Sometimes children are asked to water plants or clean the latrines and come back home late which parents found inconvenient, especially for the girls. Some parents said that teachers in Agewo school were beating students a lot, and if students were telling their parents they were beating them again. One of these parents explained that her child was harmed, she complained but nothing was done because she is a woman.

But other parents contradicted this and said that teachers were good, advising students and helping them to return to school by giving them school materials when they were dropping out.

The parents interviewed all said that they were paying the schooling costs for their children. However, other interviews suggest that in some families children were raising some small income to contribute, like the boy who was stitching book covers for other students. The largest cost is the uniform (60 *birr*) which is compulsory from grade 5 onwards. The formal school contribution is not very high (5 to 10 *birr*) but children are asked to contribute for other things throughout the year. There are also the costs of school materials: a grade 7 student needs ten notebooks (60 *birr*).

School management and staff

There is a **tabia Education Committee**. It is led by the *tabia* manager since he was recruited in this position in 2000 EC. The members are from the schools' PTA and education and training board and the teacher association and the school directors. Its main task is to let schools prepare their annual plans, follow up implementation of the planned activities, help schools to get internal source of income, supervise and support schools to ensure quality of education, ensure that schools gather statistical information about the *tabia* education and disseminate the information to the concerned bodies, etc. As a result the two schools in the *tabia* were able to get an income by selling grass and renting land. Each school has its PTA and an education and training board.

Parent Teacher Associations of the schools differ in strength. In Agewo the PTA includes only parents from that *tabia*. In Abyi Dera the community decided that parents would meet monthly and absent parents were fined 10 *birr*, which reportedly was proposed by the community itself. This is to help stronger parents' involvement in their children's education. In Harresaw school this should be the same but parents admitted to not following up regularly and going to the school only once or twice a year. The PTA was said to be weak and unable to resolve the school issues. But it was working to rent land for an income.

The work of the PTA is managing the budget and materials sent from the *wereda*, deciding about what to purchase, collecting proformas and procure the items and give them to the store keeper. Some parents members of the PTA feel uncomfortable with this because they cannot read and fear that money could be misused without them being able to check as they cannot read what they sign.

The PTA also work to bring absentees or dropouts, telling parents that they will be excluded from the food aid if children do not come. They call parents of students who have problems, evaluate teachers' performance, give warnings and decide about punishments. In Abyi Dera according to the PTA leader they are very powerful. For example, the PTA punished one teacher found stealing a bottle of *Areki* during a school event, by making him pay a month's salary.

School contributions were said to be decided by parents at the annual and mid-year meetings.

Head teachers are supposed to supervise the teaching-learning process, seek solution for any problem at the school, plan, report and communicate with external stakeholders. In Abyi Dera school the head teacher is a 28 year old man appointed in 2003 EC after he applied for the vacancy. He gets a salary of 2,570 *birr* (2,034 *birr* net). He is a degree holder. He is member of the *tabia* cabinet and secretary of the education and training board. He wants to continue his education if he gets an opportunity, or to seek another job and resign. But he will continue until he gets a better job.

One 26 year old primary school teacher who is unit leader of a shift and teaches English and Civics to grade 7 students gets a gross salary of 1,570 *birr* (1,312 *birr* net). He suggested that there might be problems with the way staff performance appraisal is done. He was appointed in 1999 EC as a Grade 10+3 teacher but he attended summer school and upgraded to degree. Sometimes he works replacing the director. In the future, he plans to compete for vacancies of school director, or shift to other areas of work.

One 24 year old woman teaching in Harresaw school started with Grade 10+1. She learnt in a teacher

training institute. She teaches in self-contained system for 20 hours a week and one shift so she is free half of the day. She get a net salary of 840 *birr* per month. For the future she wants to upgrade her educational status into diploma and then BSc level. She would like to teach Mathematics. She does not want to continue in her current position teaching self-contained.

Experiences of primary school

In the economically successful household, the six adult children have left the house (including three who are in Saudi Arabia). The wife explained that her 18-year old son dropped out from school five years ago because he had to help his father on the farm. Her daughter is continuing with her education. She likes it although last year she ran away with a friend and went to Adigrat. Her father made her to come back and she has joined school again. She is now in 7th grade instead of 8th grade which she should have been. The quality of the teaching is good but teachers punish students who are late and so she gets in trouble as the school is far from their home.

In the politically important household (one adult child is a teacher while another migrated to Saudi, much to the chagrin of his mother), two children attend primary school. The 7th grade child goes to the Dera school. She likes it, teachers are good, they do not beat students and explain them well. It is a bit expensive: 10 *birr* for registration, 35 *birr* for uniform, at least 65 *birr* for notebooks and pens, and there are additional contributions in the course of the year. The younger one in 4th grade goes to Harresaw school which is nearer to their house. He may be absent when he is sick. In that school teachers beat students a lot and one student even was harmed at the hand. His mother appealed but she was not listened to. The school director tries to address the issue but students say that teachers beat them more if they say something. The registration fee is 8 *birr* and 50 *birr* for notebooks. There is no uniform.

In the middle wealth household, of the three daughters still living with them the youngest has a hearing impairment. She goes to preschool but she cannot learn well. The two others are at school in Dera in 7th and 9th grades respectively. Both of them like it. The 9th grade girl is a clever student. There are tutorials for girls but not enough books. The wife explained that learning by plasma is good because students '*learn things by watching*'. Parents pay for all the costs.

In the poor household, their oldest son passed the 12th grade exam which had asked a lot of sacrifices from his parents. He was clever but the costs to continue were too high so he has now migrated. In the household they have three children at school, including their grand-daughter, and one son working on the farm. Of the three at school one son who was 7th grade dropped out this year because of ill health. They like going to school, though it is hard for the family to be able to cover the costs. The wife said that she did not have a lot of information on the quality of the education that her children get.

In the relatively successful female-headed household four children were at primary school in the past four years: two of the woman's grand-children and two of her children. These two stopped school now, her daughter in her 6th grade as she *got* married (she is now 23 according to her mother, and lives in the household), and her son after he reached 8th grade. He stopped because he was beaten by a teacher. She wants him to return to school in 9th grade next year. The two grand-daughters are in 3rd and 5th grades, in Agewo and Dera schools respectively. They like school and attend regularly. She thinks that both schools are of good quality. They give school materials to support poor students, which is good. In Dera school teachers are good, and there are enough books. The problem is the distance.

In the poorer female-headed household two children were studying in 7th and 8th grades in Agewo. They liked it and attended regularly. The quality of teaching is good, according to their mother: teachers follow up regularly, there are tutorials for girls, and there are enough teachers. The problem is shortage of textbooks so students have to borrow from each other.

Several community respondents mentioned that schools support students who might otherwise drop

out because they could not afford school materials. Parents also liked the Agewo school feeding programme. They found it convenient when the school was easily reached, with no ups and downs and no forest areas on the way, especially for girls. Shorter distances also made it easier for younger children especially in the very cold and frosty mornings.

Among the 16-17 year old girls interviewed, the poorer girl had never been to school. She lived in a household where the father had never been at home as it was not a marriage relationship with her mother. The middle wealth girl had dropped out in 6th grade because of economic problems in the household. She wished that she could return but this would only be possible if things were getting better. The girl from a richer household was in 7th grade. Her intention was to go to 12th grade and beyond. Her mother was supporting her and this was very important for her. The poor woman in her mid-20s had reached 10th grade but did not have the score needed to continue in a government school and she could not afford to go to a private school so she had to stop.

The other young women interviewed had much shorter or no education at all. The other two in their mid-20s dropped out after one semester and in Grade 3 respectively, both of them because they were absent at some point due to an illness of their mother and the school had dismissed them. The one who dropped out in grade 3 explained that it was her fault: she was not serious even though her father was keen for her to continue. She could still count very well. Among the three young women in their mid-30s, two had never been to schools. One had gone up to 4th grade but then was made to stop by her parents '*to take care of children and herd animals*'.

All the young women and young men interviewed highlighted how much things had changed and that children and youth nowadays had much better opportunities to go to school.

Among the nine young men interviewed, one in his mid-30s and from a poor family had never gone to formal school because his parents made him start his religious education and told him he could not attend both. Another mid-30s deacon attended both his religious education and formal schooling up to 8th grade. He was and is keen to continue but his parents and now his wife are not happy with this. The mid-30s richer young man stopped school early because he had to help his parents on the farm and as he was not attending regularly teachers dismissed him even though he liked school. But his parents were not supportive. Another slightly younger man stopped in grade 2 because he remained the only male member of the household after his older brother left for the war in Eritrea. He can count and this is useful to calculate his expenses and profits and register credits – as he is living as a businessman.

The five other mid-20s and late teens' young men all went up to 8th or even 10th grade – even though they all started rather late (one of them started when he was 14, another 12, the others when they were 9). But two of them failed the Grade 8 exam. One of the two is now planning to register privately and is encouraged by his parents and his uncle who is a teacher; the other does not intend to continue himself but to help his siblings to go to school. Two others failed the grade 10 exam. One of them also tried TVET but failed that. He is now 25 year-old, at home, and trying to find a way to help himself and his parents. The other is 24: he plans to try again but in the meantime is working as the PSNP secretary. They all said that they could not afford the cost of private education. The last one, from a poor household and in his mid-20s, actually passed the grade 8 exam but he was forced to drop out and help his grandparents with whom he lives since he was 2 year-old and who have no one else to support them.

Secondary education

There is a general secondary education school in Dera (Grade 9-10) since 2002 EC. This is very near the Abyi Dera primary school and although it is not in Harresaw *tabia*, it is the same distance for students. This is the school for which the community contributed from the food aid grain. The presence of the school has helped a lot those families who previously had to send Grade 9 children to Atsbi and pay for house rent, transport and food. Students from Harresaw learning there do not have costs other than 65 *birr* for uniforms, 5 *birr* of school contribution and school materials. In 2003 EC

out of the 396 students in the Dera school 60 were from Harresaw: 35 boys and 25 girls.

According to *tabia* officials there are a number of challenges with the Grade 9-10 school in Dera. As it is new it still lacks many facilities and materials, and teachers. In early 2102 there was no library, no laboratory, no toilet and water service, no fence and playing field. Many students were absent at peak agricultural times. As said earlier migration to Saudi Arabia was also a huge challenge.

Parents who had students at the Dera school all mentioned the advantages of it being nearby. Several did not seem too concerned by the various issues raised above. Others mentioned them and said it should be improved. One poor woman explained that for those who can afford 30 *birr*, teachers offer additional English teaching.

Parents still have to send students to Atsbi, which is costly, for students who pass the Grade 10 exam and continue onward. The challenge is that the school in Atsbi, which has Grade 9 to 12, has become very large and is difficult to manage. It would be better to split it into two: one general secondary school and one preparatory school. But there is no budget for this.

Post-secondary education

Government TVET

There is no TVET in the *wereda* and according to *wereda* officials no plan to build one. Students wanting to pursue in TVET have to go to Wukro, Mekelle, Maychew, Adigrat or Aksum. This is a huge challenge for many economically constrained students.

Government universities

Students who score for government universities are assigned by the government all over the country. *Tabia* officials estimated that in 2003 EC there were 23 university students from Harresaw; 6 more students from the *tabia* had joined university in 2004 EC. Up until end 2003 EC about 20 students from the *tabia* had graduated from various universities.

The parents of students at university were concerned in some cases, happy in others. One rich man whose daughter graduated from Bahr Dar last year did not get a job and was sitting idle at home. In some cases parents heard from their children that the university was poor (like Semera which was new and unfinished); the very hot weather was a challenge (in Semera again); they were sick because of bad food (Semera, Debre Berhan). One woman's son was studying engineering in Mekelle (a five year programme) and enjoying it. One poor woman head of household had a brother studying in Arbaminch and things were good there too, but transport was very expensive (up to 1,500 *birr* for one trip). He is a very clever student; she is helping and covers a lot of the costs.

Private colleges

There is no private college in the *wereda* and students who would want to study in a private institution because they do not have the score to enter a government TVET or university, have to leave the *wereda*. As the stories of the young men told above show and as indicated by most community respondents, for many students from Harresaw private education is not affordable.

Distance learning

One of the young women interviewed, running a shop, was a 3rd year diploma student on distance education. She paid the costs of her distance education with the benefits of her shop. Her plan is to continue until she completes her education, then she will look for a government job. Several of the government employees attended or had attended distance education too, privately.

Other training

Wereda and *tabia* officials explained that a functional adult literacy programme was started in 2003 EC. In Harresaw there were about 210 students, age 15 to 35. The topics were home economics, environmental sciences and mathematics. There were hired teachers. Courses were given at the

tabia centre. *Tabia* officials said that a significant number of youth participated but there was a problem as many thought they knew already the lessons and went absent. *Tabia* officials and religious leaders had to mobilise them and also play a role model by attending themselves. None of the respondents mentioned this programme.

Other training programmes were all related to development interventions. They were given at the *tabia* FTC, or sometimes elsewhere when the topic was more specialised – like a two day training on maternal and child care or on family planning in Atsbi for women (health volunteers); or an in-depth training on beekeeping in Hayki Meshal, including experience sharing. These were appreciated.

Attitudes to education

Many of the respondents of all backgrounds highlighted a big change in parents' attitude towards sending children to school and keeping them there. This is true too with regard to girls' education.

Attending school

This shift in parents' general attitude toward education is relatively recent. This is illustrated by the fact that for instance the 30-year old and mid-20-year old women interviewed had no or very little formal education, except one of the six who had completed Grade 10. One had never been because *'there was no good awareness at that time. Her mother did not send her and her father died when she was a child.'* Others explained that they stopped early (Grade 4) because parents made them care for children and herd animals; or parents told them not to go; or they had to stop due to one parent's sickness and had not been readmitted – not being very serious about re-joining anyway.

The ban and teachings on underage marriage were said to be a big help for girls' education. School staff is working with women's associations and women's affairs to communicate with the parents if there is suspicion that they might put pressure on girls. One young girl explained that she told her teacher when her mother wanted to force her to marry. Her mother was stopped, and she now continues with her education and wants to join university. Other measures include: girls clubs, tutorial classes for girls and government affirmative policy including in allocating the few local jobs to women in priority. Young mothers, both educated and those who did not get a chance like some of the young 20-30s women just mentioned, all wanted their children to go to schools – including their daughters.

Men of the mid-20/30s generations made fewer mentions of formal education but those who did also did not have much. In their case, helping parents on the farm was a major cause for not continuing. For instance the rich young man in his 30s started but stopped very soon to help his parents on the farm, even though he liked school and missed it a lot (he later on attended adult education for one year to *'keep in mind what he had already learnt'*). This was the case too for an oldest son in the successful farmer's household. Those in their late 30-40s, interviewed in relation to various occupations, generally had less than grade 6. The older generation had no formal education but several men had attended adult education under the Derg or the TPLF. Some of them had kept it functional and it was very helpful – among others in fulfilling various community management roles.

All the parents interviewed as parents wanted their children to continue. The household heads and spouses interviewed in their majority had expectations that their younger children would continue their education and get a good life/job. However, male heads in general also mentioned the trade-off with children's labour. For instance, the politically important household head explained that:

Although the expansion of education has reduced the labour in his household as children go to school, he accepted the fact that they have to learn so that they can have better living status than him. He remembered when he was in a position and was replaced by educated people because he is not an educated man.

The woman heading a poor household highlighted that her children's schooling prevented her from having enough labour to be able to expand her sheep fattening activity. One woman who had a debt

and was in trouble was happy that her Grade 10 son had decided to stop and migrate to help her.

Teachers mentioned absenteeism on market days and at peak agricultural times. Children and youth wanting to or having to earn an income was mentioned in many interviews: children/youth participate to the safety net public works to assist their parents; girls and boys are involved in retailing or irrigation activities, children go and herd in Afar, a son is helping his father in construction sites. Some parents said this was after school or in school breaks but even so it may compete with children getting enough time for their education.

Education and economic problems

Poverty and shocks are still major causes for absenteeism for long periods and dropouts due to inability to continue one's schooling, even at primary education level. This was true in particular for more vulnerable groups in the community.

Poverty - The school feeding programme in Agewo school is a major incentive for parents to send their children there. One of the 16-17-year old adolescent girls had stopped in 6th grade because of economic problems in her household; she hoped the situation would improve as she wanted to return to school. Another of about the same age had never been to school because of economic problems. Yet another 17-year old girl from a poor family (the father died) stopped when she was 12 to start working.

Poverty and vulnerability - One of the children of a poor widow had to stop; similarly one of the two PLWHA interviewed made her daughter stop because she needed help in her day-to-day life and had no one else. One poor divorcee found it hard to keep her children to school because her children compare their tattered clothes with the other children and also feel bad for not living with their father. Similarly, one of the children in the other PLWHA household wanted to stop because she 'had lost hope'. She was given counselling and re-joined.

One young man explained that he started to look after the cattle when he was 9 year old. He went to school at 10 but had to stop because of economic problems and had to assist his parents. Then they both died, his father in the Ethio-Eritrea war and his mother when she was having surgery. He went to work as a paid shepherd in Afar when he was 16. He is now back and lives with his sister. He thinks that education is very important if one can afford it economically.

The problem of economic capacity is more acute when children would have to live elsewhere to continue studying. At these levels, another critical obstacle is the reportedly large number of children failing the grade 8 and in particular the grade 10 exams. For them the only opportunity to continue would be in a private institution, that most cannot afford. For instance, one of the mid-20-year old women completed Grade 10 and scored enough to attend private education, but she could not continue due to lack of economic capacity. Other examples given above illustrate that many cannot continue and for those who do, this represents a considerable investment on the side of those supporting them to do so.

Expectations, disillusion and implications

In earlier years parents and students had hopes that education meant a better life. Now in early 2012 they see that for those who stop after Grade 8 or 10, or even Grade 12, their education does not help them to '*lead another life*'. Getting a job even when one is graduated is far from being guaranteed – which many identified as a significant change.

For these reasons several people spoke of 'hopelessness'. People invest in their children's education but fear that they cannot continue to secondary education. When they fail and sit idle at home they feel they wasted their money. Moreover, young and older generations see that people without education can do very well in migrating to Saudi Arabia, as discussed earlier.

Still, young people had varying attitudes. Some of those interviewed wanted to continue or resume their education, and some were finding ways of doing this like the young woman running her shop

and attending distance education. But many respondents mentioned that youth and children were becoming hopeless too. There was a fear that the ever larger number of migrants, together with the stories of success and in spite of the stories of tragedies, would snowball and influence ever growing numbers of more male and female youth 'to have in mind to stop and migrate'.

Community management

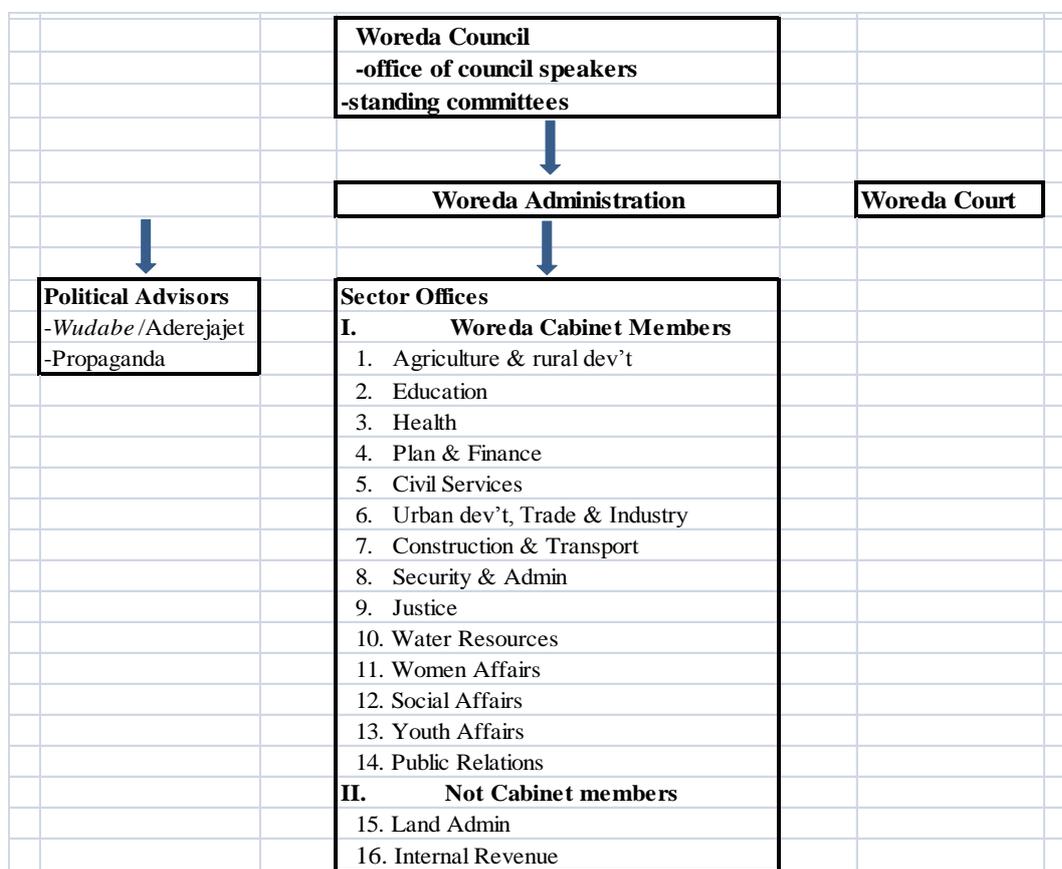
Wereda

Wereda structure

Atsbi Womberta is one of the 9 weredas of the Eastern zone of Tigray (7 rural and 2 urban). It has various potentials (natural resources/forests, some water, livestock rearing, honey production, climate conducive for olive tree), unevenly distributed across the *tabias*. It is known to be drought prone. There are resource-related conflicts with the Afar. The wereda used to be ranked first in the zone in terms of development achievements (in particular, NRM, irrigation and potable water coverage) but drought and conflicts are hampering efforts and it now is second. There are not many NGOs active in the wereda. World Vision had interventions in many sectors (health, education, roads, social protection etc.) but it phased out. They left two cars and an office block to the wereda.

The wereda administration is organised as showed in the first diagram below. Wereda officials highlighted that the structure was appropriate for monitoring whether the annual plans approved by the council are implemented correctly by the executive bodies. The court is an independent entity making decisions without any pressure from any government structure. Sector office heads and their deputies are Cabinet members, which enhances the administration leadership capacity. The only problem is that some sectors face overload, such as in the agriculture and rural development office.

Figure 1: Atsbi Womberta Wereda structures in 2004 EC



The *wereda* administration has undergone the BPR process and offices are now structured in 'work processes' with 'process owners' under the office heads and deputy heads.

The town of Atsbi, the *wereda* centre, was administered for a few years as a separate *tabia* with its administration and Council. *Wereda* officials explained that this was an obstacle to the town's development, to which community members from all *tabias* pay much attention. The *wereda* council discussed and decided in 2003 EC that Atsbi town should be administered under the *wereda* council. This has helped the town to get financial support from all other *tabias* in the *wereda*. For example, an ambulance was bought with community contributions from all *tabias*. It was decided to charge a tax for livestock that come in town for the market. The *wereda* Council has promised to construct a stadium, a bus station and a gas station.

Wereda Administration and the party

Wereda officials explained that at the *wereda* level (and other levels under the *wereda*) there is regularly *gimgema*, which is a common way of assessing the performance of various government interventions. There are more than 12 *gimgemas* annually, with intensive ones at the beginning of the year. There is *gimgema* at Cabinet level, sector level, *tabia* level, and with community members to monitor and evaluate interventions. '*Gimgema is very good for discussing how things are going on. It has a great role for the improvement of performance in implementing developmental activities*'. They explained that it also works with party members.

Wereda officials explained that the heads of office at *wereda* level are appointed by the *wereda* administrator. To be head of office formal qualifications do not matter so much. It is political leadership which matters.

Key community informants from Harresaw mentioned that all leaders and *wereda* sector heads are party members – as is also the case for leaders at *tabia* level and at the level of the development teams and 1-5 network groups. But they did not think that all employees are party members.

Justice and security

The justice bodies at *wereda* level are the court and the law prosecutor. In addition, in the *wereda* militia office there are conflict resolution and community appeal hearing 'work processes'. An attempt to establish a 40-member community forum failed due to budget constraints.

In the views of *wereda* officials, the court performs better. It passes strong decisions against criminal deeds, especially human trafficking (to Saudi Arabia). In contrast, the law prosecutor often understates the criminality of certain actions/behaviour. There is lax treatment of certain offences associated with robbery, and weak efforts to enforce the law and punish offenders. The regular *gimgema* process has helped to address what was a gap between police and law prosecutor so that quicker decisions are made when people are 'suspended'. One issue is that the court chairperson does not call his staff for *gimgema* and other bodies of the justice sector do not dare to call an evaluation meeting because they do not want to violate the independence of the court.

In 2001 EC the investigation department was shifted from the police department to be under the prosecutor's department; and the police traffic was shifted to be under the roads and transport authority at *wereda* as well as regional level. Now, they have gone back to the previous positions. This is because there were problems in investigating police cases when the investigation and justice were together. This has improved now but the justice sector is still affected by limitations. *Wereda* officials explained that there are suspicions of cases of corruption among the court staff – and that this needs further investigation. They said that it is important to address these issues and strengthen the integrity of the justice and security bodies of the *wereda*; it is important to provide fair justice to the community as this has a great role to ensure good governance.

People from Harresaw do indeed not have a good opinion of the *wereda* justice and security bodies. The court in particular was said to be corrupt by several people who had a personal experience of it

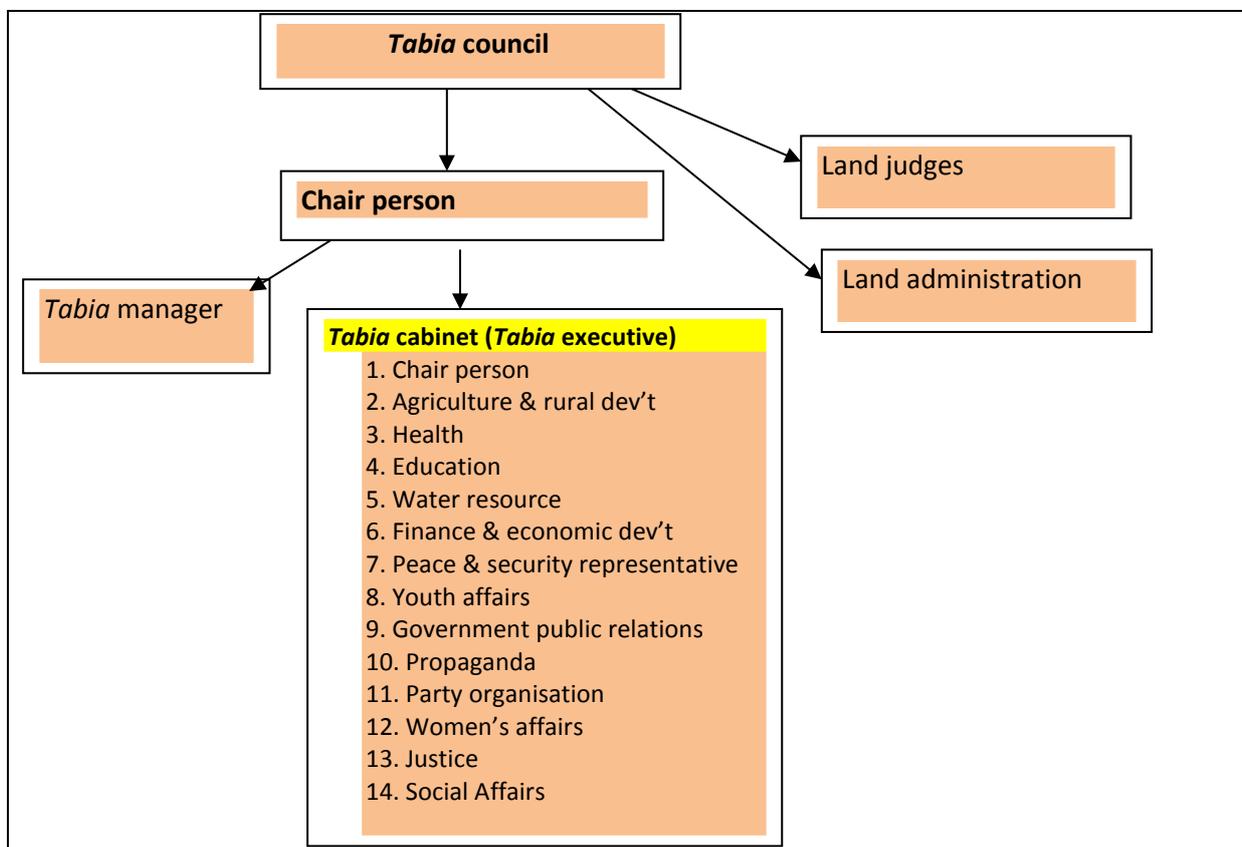
(see below).

Tabia and party structures

Recent changes to the *tabia* structures

The main structures as found in Harresaw *tabia* are presented in the diagram below. *Tabia* officials confirmed the various changes mentioned by the *wereda* officials. Notable changes were the establishment of the land administration and land judges in 1999 EC and the abolition of the *kushet* and *got* administrative structures and the creation of the development teams and 1-5 networks in 2003 EC. In addition to the committees the development groups and 1-5 networks have been introduced in 2003 EC to facilitate implementation of all development activities. These committees and structures are led by model farmers and have a great contribution to bringing the needed change in the villages. At the same time the previous structure called *kushet/sub-tabia* administration was dissolved, so that activities are directly passed onto the development groups and 1-5 networks.

Figure 2: Harresaw *tabia* structures in 2004 EC



Tabia officials were of the opinion that the overall structure needed to be ‘condensed’. They thought that *wudabe* (party organiser) and propaganda have similar functions and should be merged; the peace structure was unnecessary because the police should manage it; water resource was not necessary; and public relations and social affairs should be merged together with health. They also thought that there were far too many committees. This is boring for the government employees participating in many committees and problematic for the community members for whom the many meetings have a negative effect on their livelihood activities.

There were indeed many respondents with positions in various structures who said that they wanted to stop because their livelihood was negatively affected. But there is pressure for them to continue.

Usually women were keener to continue with the community management/development activities in

which they were involved. For instance, one woman *wereda* Councillor said she wanted to continue as the role was expanding her capacity. The WA leader said that her participation in different meetings enhanced her knowledge on different issues. In contrast the tax collector, a woman, did want to stop – as this was a very large demand on her time. *Tabia* officials explained that women's participation in political and administrative leadership positions widened their understanding of different development activities and made them know about their rights. But many did not like such appointments because they were too busy with domestic chores. Their husbands also do not allow them to spend time in meetings and leaving their domestic responsibilities.

The *Tabia* Council

Wereda officials explained that in Harresaw like in all *tabias* of the *wereda*, the current *tabia* Council was elected in 2002 EC. The number of women candidates during the election and elected on the Councils is equal to the number of men. However, their participation in meetings is limited.

The *tabia* Council has 222 *tabia* council members (111 women and 111 men). It meets usually on 29th of each month. It makes decisions that are “beyond the *tabia* cabinet”, including on overall developmental activities; replacing those who do not actively implement development activities; decisions on the *tabia* annual budget; and monitoring how the budget and plan are implemented. The Council oversees the performance of the *tabia* administration. For instance, it took the decision of removing *tabia* administration members who created problems in the land reallocation process. It decides where and how PSNP works will be done; how to develop peaceful relations with other *tabias*; which students who cannot afford to go to school should be helped; about free community work, health, irrigation and the use of water; and the protection of grazing areas.

Topics at the last Council meeting were preparation for irrigation, paving canals, preparing the request for the community's needs in fertiliser and improved seeds, paying debt among the community, appointment to the post for youth affairs, issue of illegal migration of youths, and the use of local elders to solve conflicts.

The Council speaker was appointed in 2003 EC when the former speaker resigned because he had too much workload. The speaker used to be a vice-chairman at *kushet* level. He was trained two days at the *wereda* level on his role and responsibilities. He is a Grade 5 completer and spent time in the military. He said that he was willing to serve the community with the current position he has as long as the community likes him.

Tabia officials said that delays and absenteeism were a problem; attendance was of about 95%. Women's participation needed strengthening. Sometimes also the reports on activities do not come timely to the Council. Council members need to know better the role and responsibilities of the *tabia* council. One woman Council member (and also Cabinet member) said that the members thought the issues of the community were their own; they felt responsible; they did not undermine each other's comments; they knew they are those who make final decisions. But in some occasions they rejected good things as bad.

One poor man said that discussions in Council were very important because the community will not collaborate if issues are not discussed with them first. The last meeting discussed contributions for the Abay Dam and the Council agreed that the community would contribute like the *tabia* Cabinet had suggested. But it would be better, he said, if discussions were held at the Council first, before the Cabinet.

The *tabia* Cabinet

The number of *tabia* Cabinet members has increased. For instance since 2003 EC, youth affairs and social affairs offices have separate representation in the *tabia* Cabinet. This larger number of people in the executive body is aimed to facilitate activities.

The *tabia* Cabinet has 14 members including the chairman. They are 11 men and 3 women. The

Cabinet includes representatives from all important sectors (see diagram above). Among the Cabinet members, the education, health and agriculture/rural development representatives are paid government officers in their respective sectors. There is a weekly meeting every Friday, except when there are other meetings at the *wereda* level or elsewhere. Attendance is very good.

The cabinet makes various decisions like on appeals from community members and issues related to PSNP. They propose and decide on the budget and pass it to the *tabia* council for final decision. In the same way they propose where to do PSNP works; and in some cases whether people should be removed because they transgress rules or show biases. For instance, in a recent case land was given to someone transgressing the rule and there was bribery behind this; the Cabinet proposed and the Council agreed that two *tabia* and four *kushet* land administrators had to be removed. Cabinet members who do not work properly are also removed from their position.

Topics at the last meeting were preparation for irrigation, preparing seedlings in the FTC, community mobilisation, study on where to do the free community work, use of new technology, new beehives, informing the community to repay loans, and prevention of malaria using insecticide treated nets in some places. Other topics mentioned by members of the community were: latrine construction, and collecting associations and leagues' fees.

The Cabinet directly oversees the work of the development teams. Each Cabinet member follows up two male development teams and meets their leaders before Cabinet meetings to get their information. (Cabinet oversees directly only the work of the male development teams, while female development teams are overseen by the Women's Association). At these meetings they evaluate progress in latrines, weeding in groups, education, work of the 1-5 networks etc. They compile data which is then presented to the Cabinet. The Cabinet also decides who in the development team leadership may need to be replaced because of weak performance.

Several community members said that women's participation in *tabia* Cabinet was good but not equal to men's. Women are given the opportunity but they have less capacity in terms of education and leadership experience, and are burdened with domestic chores. They should be given training so that more women take positions at Cabinet level as this is good to get women's issues addressed. *Wereda* officials noted that the *tabia* Cabinet and Council in Harresaw were good because they had youth in leadership position.

The *tabia* chairman

One change is that the one to be *tabia* chairman must be a model man and rich farmer. The *tabia* chairmen have been trying to play a role model by getting graduated from the safety net programme voluntarily and by paying their debts on time.

In Harresaw, the *tabia* chairperson has been in the post since 2005 GC. He is a very active man. He attends almost all meetings. He is the one who makes all the decisions together with council or cabinet members. As he participates in many political and developmental activities and is not paid a salary, he was said to be negatively affected economically. One person said that it would be better if he was getting a salary. The chairman is a better-off farmer who graduated voluntarily then was identified for graduation by the DAs in 2003 EC. Although he is willing to serve the community, his general aspiration for the future is to quit the work as chairman. He explained that he asked twice the *tabia* council and the community to release him but they refused. "So he will wait until they are willing to let him go." He has relatives who have positions in the *tabia* administration, including the vice-chair who is also party leader and is his cousin, and the *tabia* manager.

The *tabia* vice-chairman

The job of the *tabia* vice-chair is to work closely in all aspects of the *tabia* work with the chairperson. In the absence of the chairperson he works in the chairperson's place in development activities and leading meetings. He works closely with the chairperson on leading the development teams, credit repayments, getting farmers to take fertiliser and the PSNP public works. He manages meetings of

the Cabinet and other general meetings. He is also the local party leader in the *tabia* and the propaganda officer. Counting all his responsibilities he works an average of 35 hours per week and all seven days of the week for no reward or salary.

There is not much problem but sometimes some people refuse development interventions. In these cases he tries to convince people and make them participate. His livelihood activities are also negatively affected as he spends so much time on his government and party duties. He is 30, with grade 8 education; he was appointed then elected by the community in 1999 EC. At the time he refused first but then he was made to accept. At the *wereda* level he has connections with the vice administrator and the administrator and asks them clarifications before explaining things to the community. At the *tabia* level he works with all the *tabia* Cabinet members and the development team leaders as well as other community leaders like the irrigation committee leader.

Tabia manager

In the *wereda tabia* managers have started working in 2000 EC. This has helped communities to get *tabia* services throughout the working days of the week and the *tabia* chairmen to have time to do their own work. In some *tabias* there are disagreements between the chairman and the manager in coordinating tasks.

The *tabia* manager in Harresaw is a 25 young man from the community. He always attends Cabinet meetings but he is not Cabinet member. However, as he is from the community he is a *tabia* Council member. A Cabinet meetings he does not have a role in decision-making but he has the right to give ideas. One of his responsibilities is to give identity cards to community members. *Tabia* officials suggested that this should be left with the police because giving ID card is directly related with peace and security. The manager also receives appeals from the community and presents them to the *tabia* Cabinet. He writes plans and organises reports that come from different sectors.

The *tabia* manager works on the five working days from 8 am to 12:30 pm and from 2:00 pm to 6:30 pm. When there are meetings he also works on weekends. He is paid a net salary of 1,128 *birr* per month. He was selected by the community and was appointed in 2000 EC. He has a diploma in management. In addition to being *tabia* manager and Council member he is leading the education committee of the *tabia*. The *tabia* chairman and vice-chairman are his relatives. For the future he wants to move to another place if he gets a better job and a better salary. He also wants to upgrade his education in the field of management. He does not want to continue working as *tabia* manager.

He said that the problem in doing his job is that in appeals people expect to be given immediate solutions. This can be improved by increasing the awareness of the community. He explained that he is working with all Cabinet members. Sometimes he communicates with the community elders, like for instance when he asks them to pass the message about the contribution for the *tabia* hall.

One member of the community said there is no problem with him and he is clever.

Committees

General

There should be four 'standing committees' at the *tabia* level:

1. Development committee – in Harresaw, led by the NRM DA
2. Education committee - in Harresaw, led by the *tabia* manager
3. Health committee – in principle, led by the senior health extension worker
4. Justice and security committee - led by the justice and security Cabinet member.

Tabia officials explained that each comprises 5 people and is led by one Cabinet member. All chairs are men except for health. The committees normally meet every Wednesday. Topics at their last meeting were the preparation of reports for 2003 EC and annual plans of the different sectors, and orientation to tackle issues within the committees without bringing them to the *tabia* Cabinet. The

people leading the committees are paid employees. But the other members are farmers, who are not paid. They may not bring much because they are occupied with their own livelihood activities.

Development committee

The role of the **development committee** is to carry out all development activities of the *tabia*, monitor implementation and solve problems in implementation. It includes the *tabia* water resource and youth affairs' Cabinet members, one Council member, and the head of land administration. Recently, they discussed land and water resource use because there are farmers who do not use their land properly. It was said that they needed to be warned that their land would be taken away. The NRM DA explained that *"this is just to frighten the community and make them use their land properly. It is to make them get credit and improve themselves."* The development committee was said to be successful as all farmers with irrigable land had taken fertiliser.

Education committee

The role of the **education committee** is described in section 4.3.

Health committee

The senior HEW did not mention the health standing committee. She explained that there is a (larger) **epidemic committee** with ten members who are: the *tabia* chairperson, the HEW, representatives from the three mass associations, one of the DAs, the school head, one Councillor, two religious leaders, and the water resource Cabinet member. The role of the epidemics committee is described in section 4.3.

Justice and security committee

The **justice and security committee** has five members, the three militia commanders (one for each *kushet*), the policeman and the security head Cabinet member. The militia leader also said that out of the 124 militia, fifteen are members of the *tabia* security committee. In addition there is an **elder committee** which comprises nine elders, three from each *kushet* among the elders who have been involved in conflict resolution since a long time; a Peace Committee called **Community Forum**; the Social Court; and as mentioned earlier, a separate **land administration and land judges** since 2000 EC. The role of these different structures is described later in this section.

Food aid committee

The role of the **Food Security Task Force** has been described in section 4.2. Its 12 members are: the *tabia* chairman, the three DAs (3), the chairpersons of the three mass associations (3), the justice and security, propaganda, and party organiser Cabinet members (3), one religious leader and one elder.

Natural resources committee

In addition to the *tabia* Cabinet and its development committee, there is a Soil and Water Conservation committee. Its role is mainly to decide where to invest the resources available from the PSNP PWs and the community free labour. It is linked to government as it is chaired by the NRM DA. There is no community-initiated NRM management structure.

Drinking water committee(s)

There does not seem to be an overall water committee. There is an irrigation committee (see section 4.2) and there are drinking water management committees for the different water points (see section 4.3). This is mandatory under the WASH programme which the *tabia* is part of. Each committee has five members which should include women. They manage the users' contributions, pay the guard, ensure the water point maintenance etc.

Community respondents mentioned the committees for the water points that they are using. The leader of one was interviewed. They seemed to be in place but to be less directly connected with the *tabia* administration than the other committees mentioned above. The water management

committee leader interviewed did not mention any particular link with the *tabia* Cabinet member supposed to be in charge of the water resources (see diagram above).

Other committees

There is a **Monitoring Committee** – the role of which was not described, but which was mentioned by the DA for NRM.

Mass Associations, Leagues and Federations

There are three **mass organisations**: the youth association for young men, the women association for women of all ages from 18, and the farmers' associations. Several community members mentioned that there was pressure on them to be members. Non-members of the YA would not get land in the reallocation process; people were threatened not to get FFW if they were not paying the membership fees. Some people were unhappy about this as there is nothing known about how the fees are being used. Others said that the local structures have no resources as all fees are sent to the *wereda*.

In recent years, women and youth Leagues and Federations were established. *Wereda* and *tabia* officials explained that the leagues are "*the same as the associations, but ... support the TPLF*". The role of the Federations was not explained.

These **women and youth** structures are described in section 3 above. In early 2012 the WA had 982 members, a fair number for about 1,200 to 1,300 households (see above on inconsistent data on number of households likely linked to different definitions for different purposes). The YA was smaller (290 male members) and apparently less influential. Its leaders were unconvinced by the recent policy meaning that young women were now joining the WA. For both associations a good number of members said that there is not much benefit from being a member. The WA also is the umbrella for the female development teams and 1-5s described below. All development team leaders are members of the WA (and of the party). At the same time they also work very closely with the League. In all teams there is a representative of the League.

In 2003 EC the **Farmers' Associations** had 321 members. Most adult men interviewed in various roles mentioned that they were members (including for instance the *delala*), but none of them dwelled further on this.

Sub-*tabia* structures, development groups and one-to-fives

The *kushet* and *got* were dismantled as formal sub-*tabia* administrative and governance structures at the same time as the development teams and 1-5 networks were established, in 2003 EC. The development teams replaced the '*mengistawi budin*' (government teams). The networks, which are sub-groups of the development teams, were presented by the *tabia* leaders as building on the success of the same kind of structure during the election period. There remains '*informal kushet coordinators*' facilitating the communication flow between the development teams and the Cabinet.

The other big change was the separation of men and women in these grassroots level structures. This was done, reportedly, because in the previous mixed structures women were getting no chance to speak and discuss their issues. In early 2012 there were more women development teams (35) than men's (21) in Harresaw, reportedly because men are more often busy outside of the *tabia*. There are also a lot more male migrants than women. Leaders of the development teams, male and female, were trained in Dera for six days by a *wereda* official in 2003 EC.

The development teams consist of 30 households. Networks consist of 5 households living close to each other. These are small structures so that the households belonging to one network can easily communicate and discuss issues like debt payment, contributions etc., and check each other's achievements in various fields (agricultural production and use of inputs, health packages etc.).

The leadership of a development team has five members. The networks have one leader. All leaders

of the development teams and 1-5 networks are party members – One woman explained that this was a ‘*TPLF law*’. Members are not necessarily party members. As presented by the *tabia* leadership and development team leaders, the 1-5 networks and the development teams have developmental roles. However, the explanations of many respondents (leaders and simple members) suggested that the party’s and the government’s development agendas are the same.

The development teams are said to direct programmes from the *tabia* to the leaders of the 1-5 networks who in turn relay these to their members. This is said to be more effective and faster than large and often unfocused public meetings. The other way round, information right from the grassroots level now easily reaches the *tabia* Cabinet. Members of these structures are expected to help each other in activities like weeding and collecting harvest. They also should help poor or elderly people in providing them labour. Leaders of the 1-5 networks follow up on the network members’ activities and monitor whether what they report to the network is the truth.

Messages and discussions and teachings in meetings focused on maternal health, delivery in health centres, health packages, sending children to school and avoiding drop-outs, doubling production, preventing diseases etc. With the establishment of the development groups there was also some activity to try and establish *iddir* and *equb* – which are not customary in Tigray and were not previously found in Harresaw. This is very new and reportedly, most of the *iddir* did not really take off, except one.

The network leaders report to the development teams. The male development teams report to the *tabia* Cabinet. The women’s development teams report to the Women Association. In principle Cabinet members meet with all development team leaders the day before every Cabinet meeting. Networks are supposed to meet twice a month and ‘*prepare the data*’ for the development team leaders. However, one of the male 1-5 network leaders explained that he had not been able to participate to the meetings in the month before (which was harvest time).

Tabia official explained that the new structures have both good and less good sides. The good side according is that these grassroots structures easily reach out everyone in the community. The less good side is that in the absence of the *kushets*, following up the development teams makes *tabia* Cabinet members very busy. They each follow up two of the teams.

One 30-year young man who has been deputy leader of a *mengistawi budin* is now leader of a successful development team. He explained that one major role of the development team leaders is to create peaceful relationships among members, because conflicts hinder them from helping each other and from benefiting from their collective effort. He mentioned achievements although he also sounded somewhat frustrated, as explained in the section concerning livelihood interventions. He is a member of the party, member of the *tabia* council and chairman of the YA at sub-*tabia* level. He has cousins at the land administration and *tabia* information office. In addition to regular contacts with Cabinet members, he also consults the community leaders and members of the party in doing his work. For instance, he asked the community elders to resolve a case where two members of his team refused to help each other because they had a personal conflict.

EPRDF party structures and membership

The only party in the community is the Tigrean People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) which people call ‘the ruling party’. There is one *tabia* political party organisation (called the ‘base organisation’), and cells below that, going down to community level. All members of the *tabia* Cabinet are party members – although among the government employees on the Cabinet, only the livestock DA and the *tabia* manager mentioned their membership. According to *tabia* officials the *wereda* leaders are party members too, but the *tabia* party chair did not know if this applied to *wereda* employees.

There is generally a large overlap between the leadership of the structures of the party and that of the development/ community mobilisation structures. This is not left to chance. *Wereda* officials explained that there is a “TPLF law” which says that development teams should be led by TPLF party

members. They added that the creation of the development teams made it possible to identify those who were not involved in the party early on, so that it has been *“easy to organise them under the party”*. As a result, party membership had increased significantly in the *wereda*.

In Harresaw about one quarter of the eligible community members are party members. The large party/government overlap was abundantly illustrated. To start with, the chair of the *tabia* party organisation is the vice chair in the *tabia* administration. He works to enlarge party membership in the development groups. He explained that *“his working time as chair of the tabia political structure overlaps with his work as vice chair of the tabia”*.

Ex-soldiers and ex-fighters of the TPLF consider that they now serve the country through the party. Several of these ex-soldier party members have leadership positions in the *tabia* government structures. Actually all of the people interviewed as leaders in government structures were party members. In addition to the *tabia* Cabinet which is *“leading in terms of party membership”*, all five land judges were party members. Were also party members the leader of the elders’ committee (who is a priest); the leader of one of the influential lineages; the *wereda* Councillors; the *tabia* Council speaker who is an ex-fighter; the chairperson of the WA; the militia leader; the chairman of the irrigation committee who is also social court judge; the chairman of the cooperative.

There is also a strong overlap in aims, and both government and party structures are used with a view to pursuing these converging aims. Developmental team leaders, as party members, work to increase the party membership of the members, including in female development teams. The other way round, party structures are said to play a big role in disseminating messages on development activities to the community. Party members are supposed to play role models especially when they are strong opinion leaders. The party *gimgema* focuses on its members’ performance and can act when members perform below what is expected from them: recently a man was dismissed because of this. But then also, the leader of the irrigation association explained that if people talk about problems of frost with their crops when they sow early as the DAs want, the *tabia* administration and others consider this as opposition and relate this to politics.

One young woman explained that at the last party and cabinet meetings the topics were the same. Party members meet every two months. The last party meeting was held with more than 360 party members. People were given the chance to present ideas on livestock, farming, education, health and underage marriage. They discussed modern ambulance and family planning. The leaders of development teams presented their achievements. Generally, party meetings discuss the things coming from the *wereda*, like irrigation, networks, health extension package implementation and the collection of membership fees.

The *tabia* is well ranked in terms of governance by *wereda* officials, who explained that the *tabia* administration and Council have strong political commitment.

At the same time at the membership level, a few people in the community expressed disillusion or unhappiness with the way things were happening in the party. One man said that the political aspiration of the youth was to keep away from participating in political activities and instead, focus on improving their life. He did not blame them, adding that *“those who are engaged in politics waste their time for no economic benefit.”* The politically important household head said that there was less discussion among party members due to their much larger number. Another indeed said that

... the party is focusing on the number of members and not the quality of the members. In the past, members were strong and keep the secrets of the party. There was a meeting of party members who were reading the Woyin newspaper and discussed issues. Now, they are not. In the past, members were actively participating in meetings and they were given blankets at lower prices, and fafa and fino/furno flour for free. (Poor man)

And yet another explained that:

... the members of the party were respected in the past because they were called for trainings at the

wereda and were getting benefits. Now, they are only contributing money. Now, there is no respect for members and members are called only when there is some problem and they kill their time in meetings for nothing. Members have got bored due to the meetings and most are not participating actively. Most people become members without discussion and they can't keep secrets of the party. (Successful farmer)

Tabia officials indeed noted that the party had stopped providing training every six months to its members.

The multiplication of meetings was raised as a big issue by many – explaining the attitude of the youth mentioned above. There was also unhappiness as the membership fee had doubled this year, from 6 *birr* to 12 *birr*. An elderly woman who used to be in the *tabia* party leadership said that she had applied to quit because of her age but party officials had insisted that she should stay and pay. This unhappiness was not generalised: other members of the community explained that most were happy to pay. One woman explained that she was paying the fee and supporting the party out of what the government was giving her as food aid.

Views on whether or not there were benefits in being a party member were similar. There was no direct benefit of any kind, but for some, the party remained important. Both community members and *tabia* officials explained that there was no relation between being a party member and being PSNP beneficiaries. In three of the four male-headed households interviewed the husband was the only party member of the household. The wife of the politically important farmer was a party member but she said she was not very active – comparing with a few very active women. The women heads of households were not party members and no one from their household was.

BPR

There were very few mentions of the BPR process and all the *wereda* level.

Governance interventions

The *wereda* council

As explained by the male *wereda* Councilor from Harresaw, the main work of the *wereda* Council is to evaluate the sector activities when reported during the four meetings in a year, and raise questions based on the reports; they evaluate the weaknesses and make decisions. For example, Atsbi town was administered by a separate Council and leadership which was an obstacle to its development. In 2003 EC the *wereda* Council discussed and decided that the town should be administered directly under the *wereda* Council. This has helped the town to get financial support from all other *tabia* in the *wereda*. For example, an ambulance has been bought with community contributions from all *tabias*. It has been decided to charge a tax for the livestock that come into the town and with this the intention is to construct a stadium, bus station and gas station. This is fine because all people in the *wereda* even those from rural *tabias* are keen to see the town develop. It is important for their livelihood activities too.

The woman *wereda* Councillor from Harresaw added that at the Council meetings Councillors get orientation on the development activities undertaken by the government and they transfer the information to the *tabia*. Usually to do this the four *wereda* Councillors from the *tabia* meet when they come back from the *wereda* Council meeting

Accountability

In early 2012 **gimgema** was the main accountability means at all levels: it was done at weekly Cabinet meetings, two-weekly development group meetings, monthly party meetings and Council meetings. It was done each time there was monitoring of development interventions. *Wereda* officials explained that they also went to the different *tabias* to carry out **gimgema** – although this was not mentioned by *tabia* officials or community members from Harresaw. When there is **gimgema** people can make self-criticism. When performance is evaluated through monitoring and reporting, there is

also ranking. Those lagging behind are told to address their performance gap.

Gingema was described as a way “for those who have weaknesses to be evaluated to be improved, and those who are repeatedly evaluated but cannot improve are dismissed from their positions and replaced by others.” Both *tabia* officials and community members said that gingema was effective. They gave examples of dismissals of government employees (two in 2003 EC, including the NRM DA who was spending all his time in town) and of community members in positions of responsibility and having been found wrong. This included the case of corruption of the land judges who had been removed in 2003 EC after evaluation by the party and on approval of the party’s decision by the Council. Another case was a foreman who had been found tampering with people’s PSNP rations.

Community members can raise issues in the gingema sessions. The woman heading the poor household and whose ex-husband died recently explained that she criticised the administration because there was no timely support for orphan children, using her case as an example. She did not say whether something had happened because of her complaint. She also explained that she had voted to dismiss the land administration leadership when they were found corrupt. But one man said that when the community tried to raise the issue of the fertiliser that people had been forced to take, he was told that there was no time to discuss this.

There were rare cases of appeals about decisions taken in gingema – including one in which the *tabia* council had overturned the decision taken by the community regarding a *kushet* land administrator. A number of respondents also said that gingema created conflict when evaluation was done and performance was found to be weak. Several respondents also were unsure about the effects of self-criticism. Self-criticism was said to be better than being accused by others but people having made self-criticism could still be investigated and removed if the case was serious.

There was a **suggestion box** at the *tabia* office and it had been used in occasions. It was not yet very common. *Tabia* officials said that this was due to the fact that most of the adult population in the *tabia* was illiterate. Also people did not need it as “they could express themselves freely in the public meetings”.

Indeed one woman said that people could use the suggestion box when they did not want to be known. In two of the cases mentioned by community members using the suggestion box had had some effect. The land-related corruption case which led to the dismissal of the land administration leadership had been raised through a note found in the suggestion box. One man said that he had put suggestions concerning problems at the health centre. These had been raised at a meeting and the concerned bodies had been told to address the problems. However another man said that he had put suggestions to the effect that there should be supervision for the *tabia*’s properties and receipts should be used for the *tabia*’s income and expenditure but he had seen no change. He said he would not use the suggestion box again.

There was no practice of **posting the *tabia* budget**, although it was announced to the community at a general meeting and also mid-year. *Tabia* officials said that there was a plan to post the budget but it was not yet implemented. At *wereda* level the budget of the *wereda* was posted once it had been prepared, discussed by the Cabinet, adjusted based on their comments, and presented and approved by the *wereda* Council. *Wereda* officials explained that the Council could change the budget but community members were not supposed to give comments on the budget once posted.

In Harresaw several community members said that it would be desirable that the budget of the *tabia* be posted. Many people noted various lacks of transparency related to the *tabia* budget – and in relation to mass associations’ membership fees. Most often the remarks on the *tabia* budget were linked to the contributions in grain from the PSNP and emergency food aid that people were making through deduction from their ration. On that issue, *wereda* officials admitted to the fact that

... the reduction of payments for reasons of local, regional and national development projects, have been causing complaints in the community. There are community members who request auditing of

how much the grain reduced from each beneficiary has been sold in the market. Thus, it is suggested that although the decisions are made by majority vote at the council and the community, these complaints should be recognised and it is better to leave the contributions as individual responsibilities so that people contribute what they need instead of taxing collectively from the aid.

In male-headed households the wives did not participate to gimgema sessions and did not use or know any of the other accountability means.

Thus, the data shows that there are ways of demanding accountability in Harresaw and in a number of cases these ways were effective. However at the same time, there is lack of consultation and even enforcement on some issues (e.g. taking fertiliser, participating to the free community labour, digging a latrine), and some community members were deeply unhappy with the current approach of making the community doing things. As one rich man explained:

... any work related to the community should be done by creating common understanding and things can be done successfully only through discussion and not by direct rule. For example, the need of the community should first be assessed, and no one should be forced to take fertiliser. The tabia administration creates fear among the community members who refuse to take fertiliser by saying that they will be excluded from the FFW programmes because they have improved their life. The tabia does this because it wants to show its performance competing with other tabias.

In these cases of enforcement the accountability of the *tabia* officials to the *wereda*, where they want to be seen performing well, makes them to be unaccountable to their community.

Planning and consultation

Different respondents have different stories with regard to the planning process in the *tabia*. *Tabia* officials explained that the community participates in planning for all development activities, through various channels (the party organisation, mass associations, development groups and networks). Moreover before any activity is started the plan is presented to the *tabia* council for approval.

According to some community members there is a planning process which works as follows:

The types of activities that should be done are demanded by the kushet first and sent to the tabia. Then, the tabia administration discusses the activities that have to be given priority with the community, such as roads, water resources, and natural resources, and the community divides the work. This is assessed by the DAs and agriculture cadres. The good thing is that the tabia discuss with the community.

The tabia experts prepare a plan based on the interest of the community about what kind of activities should be done and send the plan to the wereda. Then, the wereda gives the approved plan for implementation. This includes prevention of crime, about migration, about traffic accidents, and rent seeking/collecting, irrigation, keeping beehives, fertiliser, fattening, productivity by using the farm inputs, the amount of production to be produced by the development groups, the amount of land to be irrigated, the time when to graduate from safety net, etc. These are decided and then sent to the networks and household level.

However, other (mostly female) respondents said that there was no consultation in planning. But whenever there was an issue the *tabia* leader discussed with the community.

There were changes in relation to planning for the public works of the PSNP (and de facto, for the community free labour works as activities were the same in the past few years). *Wereda* and *tabia* officials explained that until 2000 EC plans about what communities would do were coming down from the regional and *wereda* level. In 2000 EC this changed, and activities were prioritised by “the community”. However, the plans also had to accommodate priorities coming from decisions taken higher up as well, like work on irrigation and water development. But even so, *wereda* officials explained that it is important that all activities are “*decided with the participation of the community and approval of the tabia council.*”

Members of the community in Harresaw have a different story. Most of them explained that some

years ago activities were chosen by the community. Whereas in the past few years, they were studied and decided by the *tabia* experts (DAs) with the *tabia* administration, and the community was informed about what was going to be done. It was also presented at council and public meetings. One man who is a *tabia* Council member explained that the plans also included the government's points of focus. There was some consultation about the appropriate timing for the public works. Most people added that this decision-making process was not problematic as the activities were for the benefit of the community, like the Zereroha watershed. One woman disagreed and said that there were works done against the community's preferences.

All planning, consultation or information activities take place in meetings – although some information is also relayed through messages in churches. Women heading households cannot easily attend all the meetings because they are too busy. When people get older they stop going as well. Several respondents highlighted that public meetings were too many as they were held at different levels (public meetings, council meetings, development group meetings, party meetings) and moreover, they had the same topics. Some meetings had to be postponed because not enough people attended so those who had come were sent back home and appointed another time. In short, these too frequent meetings consumed too much time and that caused poverty – while the topics were all about improving one's life.

Wereda officials had some reservations about bottom-up planning, because in their views the community chose activities of limited profitability. They thought that more discussion with *wereda* experts would be desirable.

Security and policing

Security and policing in Harresaw *tabia* involves the peace and security standing committee of the Cabinet, the militia, the *tabia* policeman and the recently created Community Forum. The justice bodies are also involved, as well as the elders who play a great role in keeping peace and security. They do so by participating in resolving conflicts among community members, *gots/hamlets*, *kushets/sub-tabias*, and *tabias*, such as conflicts between husbands and wives and conflicts occurring at different levels associated with grass land and farm land. In Harresaw the respective roles of the formal and informal institutions in conflict resolution were researched as a site-specific topic. The main findings are presented in the next section on justice.

The **peace and security committee**, more often called the security committee, is led by the security Cabinet member, who is an ex-army colonel. It includes the three militia commanders (one for each *kushet*), and the *tabia* policeman. Its main role is to prevent crime before it happens and take criminals before law when crime is committed; and to safeguard government properties. The committee meets every two weeks. The leader communicates by phone or by going to the *wereda*, with the *wereda* security and administration. At *tabia* level he works with the chairman, the vice-chair and the manager, and also with the social court.

The **militia** used to be 180 men. In early 2012 they were only 124, with 122 of them well armed. They are selected by the community because they have a good conduct: a militia man should not quarrel, be patient, and not drink much. The number is decreasing because they want to do their own work as they do not get any salary or incentive. Some militia have migrated. They are organised by three militia commanders who are accountable to the security committee head and to the *wereda* militia office.

There are 15 permanently mobilised militiamen who do patrols. They get paid as if they were participating to the PSNP PWs. The others keep the security in their area and are called for campaigns when it is necessary. They play a big role in resolving quarrels and fighting in married couples and between youths and neighbours. They call for support by shooting in their air when there is a security problem. They are sent to bring disputants or offenders to the legal bodies. When the case is beyond them, for instance when offenders refuse to obey, the community police has power over these people. The militia also works with the Community Forum. The militia investigate

thoroughly all areas in the community twice a year, and more often if need be for instance when there are elections or reports of trouble by community members.

The **Community Forum** was formed in 2000 EC. It has 41 members from among religious elders, business people, trade people, and includes representatives from cooperatives, the agriculture and rural development sector, the mass associations and the *tabia* administration. It is about preventing crimes and so, they first try to solve the problems, and if they do not succeed they send the problem to the security committee. But the leader of the Community Forum (who is also a priest and the cooperative chairman) explained that the forum is actually dysfunctional. It initially carried out some reconciliation activities. But its members become discouraged and angry when their work was reported at the *wereda* level as being the work of the policeman, who *got* rewarded whereas they did not get anything. Moreover, the forum is too large. Its membership should be decreased.

The **policeman** was appointed late 2011 GC in Harresaw. He had worked about two years in another *tabia* of the *wereda*. His role is to keep peace and ensure good governance. He works with the militia to keep security, prevent crimes, assess the government sectors, etc. Moreover, he participates in different activities of crime prevention; he does community awareness raising activities through the development groups and meheber, and is involved in reconciliation and conflict resolution activities. He is mobilised for public meetings, public holiday ceremonies and national Grade 8 and Grade 10 examinations. He is a member of the community forum. His main contacts are the justice and security office of the *tabia* and *wereda*. The community policeman also has close contacts with community leaders and religious leaders.

He noted that sometimes there is conflict between the security workers (himself and the militia) and the community because some people want to hide criminal cases. This should be improved. But cases that can be resolved by the community should be left to the community. He thought that it would be good if there could be a place at the *tabia* where suspected individuals could stay for 24 hours. This is because when crime is committed at night, the policeman has to take the suspect to Atsbi in the night which creates its own problems.

The community policeman is a 23 year old man. He was hired as policeman after he failed the grade ten national examinations and applied in response to an announcement to get police training. He was trained at the police training centre for 6 months. He was also trained about BPR for 3 months. He works five working days of the week and 8 hours/day (like any government employee), but many of his activities are done beyond this schedule. He is paid a monthly gross salary of 945 *birr* (720 *birr* net), and he knows that in principle he has a medical allowance if he presents medical receipts but he never used this yet.

Community members interviewed on peace and security generally thought that it had improved in the past five years. Violent fights had decreased, as well as robberies with violence – although people from other *kushets* mentioned that they had heard cases of quarrels and violence due to alcohol in the drink houses of the *tabia* centre. Recently one man was found dead after a dispute in a *siwa* house (local alcohol). Reportedly, he had not been harmed by anyone but had fallen in trying to jump by the window and died of this. There were thefts and house burglaries but this too had decreased. There was greater security for women, and cases of sexual attacks against women and girls had decreased. They attributed these improvements to the fact that the law was getting tighter. Several people mentioned the strong follow-up by the militia and the policeman.

Conflicts with neighbouring communities and in particular, the Afar, were still there. But most people said it too had decreased. There was a special committee with elders from the two sides who was helping much with this.

Respondents from the community did not mention the community forum and a few of them did not know about it (for instance, the wives in the male-headed households). Opinions on the effectiveness of the militia and the policeman varied. Most people were broadly satisfied with the militia, saying that most militiamen were honest and they had a big role in achieving greater peace and security in

the community. But several had some reservations and a few were rather negative altogether. Some people said that the militia were sometimes not willing to bring disputants or offenders because they did not want to get in trouble, so they would say that they could not find the person even though they had seen him or her. A few said that some militia could be biased when bribed, or they would favour their relatives. One man had a land case with a militia, but he said that generally the militia was useful.

One person said the policeman was less biased than the militia, but another said that he was not interested in serving the community well and the *wereda* police was the same. The policeman had been involved in a dispute with one of the DAs. But elders said that this was because both men had drunk, and they had resolved this peacefully.

Justice

General

In early 2012 the formal and informal institutions and organisations involved in justice at the community level included the social court and the *tabia* prosecutor, the peace committee or community forum, the police, the community elders, the land administration and land judges. They were all under the justice and security office of the *tabia*. *Tabia* officials explained that this enabled them to work in coordination, and they meet monthly to that effect. They report to different structures at the *wereda* level. At community level, other informal dispute resolution means include lineage meetings, advice and intervention by close family members or neighbours or by development teams, or by the Meskel feast organisation committees.

In the male-headed households interviewed, wives had very little involvement with justice processes, formal or informal.

Social court

The **social court** looks at the civil code (including family law cases) and simple offences. It sits twice a week to see cases. The most frequent cases in Harresaw were: marriage-related, property cases (but not land since 1999/2000 EC), insults and quarrels, appeals in debt cases (up to 3,000 *birr*). It punishes people who transgressed the community bylaws on grass land and forest management, and people who refuse to participate in development activities. Big crimes and cases which involve punishment above 1,500 *birr* should be taken to the *wereda* court.

The social court judges are five, three active (one woman and two men) and two reserves (one man and one woman). They were nominated by the *tabia* Cabinet and approved by the *tabia* Council. They get a per diem but it is paid irregularly and with delay. *Tabia* officials thought that the judges should get a salary like other sectors' government employees. *Tabia* officials and social court judges support the fact that cases should be seen first by elders and frequently ask parties bringing cases to them to do this. When a case brought to them is beyond their capacity they refer it to the *wereda* court. They are in contact with the *wereda* court to get advice and guidance and through meetings.

The community members interviewed on justice cases and on the performance of justice bodies were in general satisfied with the social court. They appreciated the fact that it was nearby and of easy access. Some of them noted that the social court should be given a greater role. One woman said that the judges were honest, not biased towards relatives, and worked based on evidence. She said that there were very rare cases of bribes by people who wanted their land or house back.

Land administration

The ***tabia* land administration and judges** were established as separate structures and started to work in 2002 EC. They see only land cases. Sometimes it is not clear whether a case should be seen by the social court or by the land judges, and parties in conflict may disagree over this depending on their preference. The land structure has five members, two women and three men. They were

nominated by the *tabia* administration and approved by the *tabia* Council. According to the leader, they were chosen because they were seen as honest and willing to serve the community. All five are party members, two are members of the Council and two are ex-soldiers.

In the community some people said that the establishment of the separate land structures was good for solving land cases better than when it was done through the *tabia* administration and social court. Others suggested that there was an issue because land judges were biased. Indeed in 2003 EC the previous leaders were removed on grounds of corruption.

The new leader, who was a member previously, was appointed because, he said, “*he had no hand in the corruption and he was opposing the actions of the former leaders*”. He thought they were doing well: for instance they were able to allocated land in 2003 EC and have plans to continue with other land which was already identified. In his opinion they should be given more power, like the social court. That is because, if an offender refuses the land judges’ decision, there is nothing that the land judges or administration can do. The plaintiff’s only option is to appeal. Whereas the social court can decide that the offender must be brought to the police.

There were also differences in opinions about the land administration and judges. The corruption of the previous leadership was still remembered. In Harresaw land cases are many and extremely varied, involving gots, neighbours, relatives, spouses, siblings, and even parents and children when the children claim to share land from their parents’ holding. They can be very complex and protracted, as the examples below show.

Box 8: Examples of land cases and how they were handled in Harresaw

One rich man was accused by the *tabia* prosecutor but it was based on a neighbour’s complaint. He was accused of having taken land used as a path while he was saying that the land was his own. The land judges were not yet established so the case was seen by the social court. The court gave contradictory decisions, telling each party that they were right. The man appealed to the *wereda* court, which cleared the case in the man’s favour. Then the new land administration was established. His neighbour opened the case again. They decided against him in his absence. He appealed again. The *wereda* judged in his favour but the *tabia* land judges refused to recognise the *wereda*’s decision. The case was still outstanding at the time of the fieldwork.

One poor woman accused her brother of taking her land as his own. She went to the land judges. She had been given this land in 1983 EC and a certificate in 1996 EC. Those who had demarcated the land were her witnesses. She also could show the land certificate. She won the case but it took three years, during which her brother was using the land and she had nothing. She was not compensated.

One 30 year woman had a case with her stepmother and her younger brother (this woman’s son), about land that she should inherit from her father who had passed away. They were denying her share. The young woman went to the land judges who suggested seeing the elders first. They did and the elders decided that the land had to be shared. Previously she had had a similar case with her father’s livestock. It was solved by the elders but her stepmother did not implement the elders’ decision, so the young woman had to take it to the social court. The court also decided that the livestock had to be shared. She was happy with the elders’ judgment in the land case, but she trusted the formal institutions more because of her experience with the livestock case.

Land is managed by the *tabia* land administration and land cases are seen by the land judges since 1999 EC. This and the various processes that these structures managed in the past few years have been described earlier (land reallocation, zero-grazing policy and establishment of the communal protected forest areas etc.). Across land and NRM management, there are a number of irrigation committees in the *tabia*. The largest irrigation committee is that put in place for the land irrigated by the dam. It is linked to government and DAs work closely with the committee leadership and the farmers, though it is not a government structure. The smaller irrigation committees have been established more informally. There is no other community-initiated land use management structure.

Elders and dispute resolution

It is customary in the *tabia* to resolve conflict and justice cases through **elders**. This has recently been recognised as a good thing, and organised so that formal and informal institutions work together. Elders traditionally handled marriage conflicts, robberies, conflicts among *gots*, *kushets* and *tabias* regarding grass land and boundaries, conflicts and disputes between neighbours etc. The law now encourages such cases to be handled by the elders and often, formal institutions ask the parties involved to first try and resolve their cases through elders' mediation.

The elders of Harresaw's elder committee are people who used to be involved in conflict resolution in the past and have good acceptance from the community. They were trained at the *wereda* by a judge from the zone who told them among others that they could not handle cases of rape, death and other crimes. They handle cases of marriage disputes, land disputes and disputes between neighbours. But they can take cases back from the social court or even the *wereda* court, if this is agreed by all and if they think that the case can be better handled by them. When they are given a case or are asked to intervene, they decide on a day to see the case and meet with the parties. They report the cases to the *tabia* justice and security office and often work with the office in handling the case. They spend a lot of time seeing cases and get no benefit except the respect of the community.

In Harresaw, the formal and informal institutions work in complementarity. The way in which this is working is described in the box below, with the advantages and disadvantages of the different alternatives as people from Harresaw saw them.

Box 9: The role of formal and informal conflict resolution institutions in Harresaw in early 2012

People who feel aggrieved and want to bring a case to justice have three options. They can decide to go directly only through the informal institution (elders). This is less costly and faster. Elders work based on the principle of reconciliation, not punishment which often leads to feelings of hatred and revenge. In this way, the resolution is '*more sustainable*'. However, if the reconciliation fails or if one party breaches the agreement reached, there is no possible enforcement. The aggrieved party has to bring the case to the formal institutions if it wishes to pursue the case.

The plaintiff can open a file at the social court or at the land judgment. This has costs (3 *birr* for the social court and 10 *birr* for the land judgment). These institutions can advise them to seek reconciliation with elders. If both parties agree then the case is seen and can be resolved by the elders, and the elders' decision is validated in writing by the formal institution. The costs will be borne by the party found to be wrong. The advantage is that the elders' decision validated by the formal institution is binding, so enforcement is possible. The process is still based on reconciliation.

The process can start in the same way and if one of the parties refuses that the case is seen by elders, it is handled by the formal structures throughout. Costs of the plaintiff are refunded by the other party if the other party is found to be wrong. Enforcement is of course possible. The formal process is said to be based on evidence, but the logic is one of punishment. This does not 'cool down' the situation, unlike the reconciliation logic of the process handled by the elders.

Most people were happy with the process of reconciliation through elders. But in some cases people refused that their case be seen by elders. The elders were said to be possibly biased when one party was a relative. The woman heading a poor household said that there were cases of women who brought their case to the elders even though they thought that there would be bias, because they did not have the financial capacity to go through the formal structures.

Peace committee

The community forum (also called peace committee sometimes) was formed in 2000 EC. It has 41 members who are drawn from among religious leaders, businessmen, people engaged in petty trade, cooperatives, agriculture experts, mass associations and the administration. Its aim is to keep peace and security and to resolve disputes by the elders and by reconciliation. The Committee was somewhat active initially but has since ceased to exist as it does not do anything. It was a too large

body. Also there were recriminations because work which according to the forum leader had been done by the forum was attributed to the community police who *got* a reward from the *wereda*, so the members of the forum complained for not getting rewards for them too.

Wereda court

People from Harresaw take cases to the *wereda* court and higher up when they think that this is required and they have the financial means. At the *wereda* level one big improvement is that a mobile court is held in Dera every Tuesday (the market day) by the judges, law prosecutor and police that come from the *wereda*. This has helped the community to get legal decisions more easily. *Wereda* officials explained that there were also improvements higher up in the system. The zone had been able to organise mobile zonal courts one year but this had not been continued. There is a place in Wukro where people could go to attend their cases judged in Mekele through distance connection and plasma screen. These developments are all recent (2002 EC).

One man said that he trusted the *wereda* court better as judges there were not biased towards relatives as they were not from the community. But several others were a lot more negative saying that the *wereda* court was accepting bribes, which was '*shameless*'. *Wereda* officials indeed acknowledged that there was an issue which had to be further investigated.

NGOs

There are few NGOs directly involved in the *wereda* as a whole and in Harresaw *tabia*. Most donor-financed and sometimes NGO-supported programmes are implemented by the *wereda* and *tabia* structures. Talking about NGOs supporting PLWHA but the argument was made more generally too, *wereda* officials explained that usually NGOs follow their own interest and are found along the good roads; so there are many found working in Wukro but few in Atsbi.

Two NGOs were active in *tabia* Harresaw up to 2003 EC. The first one, Adonay, is a faith-based charity organisation which is based in Asira Metira monastery. Their main target groups were orphans, people living with HIV, and poor and vulnerable people generally. It has stopped operating in the *tabia* since 2003 EC. The other NGO which was operating intensively in the *tabia* was World Vision. It was working on cattle rearing, selected seeds, nutritional support to under-5 children, support to orphans and PLWHAs in livelihood activities. It also worked with farmers on irrigation and introduced the production of potatoes in the *tabia*. World Vision has also stopped operating in the *tabia* at the same time as in the *wereda* as a whole.

Tabia officials were generally relatively positive about their previous activities though they said it was not fully successful and not sustainable as they phased out and nothing took over what they were doing (see section 3). A few community respondents mentioned them occasionally.

Community structures involved in implementation of government policies

General

In Harresaw there are relatively few types of community structures, and only the elders and the churches have a community-wide role in community management.

Elders involvement in implementation of government policies

Elders play a very important role in conflict resolution. This role is now intertwined with the work of the formal/government security and justice organisations, as described earlier. At *wereda* level some officials expressed some reservations as '*there are some (elders) who do not understand things in a good way*'. But as noted earlier in general the community much appreciates the role of elders in conflict resolution. Elders are also members of government structures like the Community Forum. They are consulted informally by people like the *tabia* chairman and the DA NRM. They were asked to mobilise the community to contribute for the *tabia* hall.

***Iddir* involvement in implementation of government policies**

According to community members, in early 2012 there were only two or three recently established *iddir*. Apart from one they were not functioning well. One member of a dysfunctional *iddir* said that it had collapsed because members disagreed with each other and had asked to get back their contributions. *Tabia* notables explained that *iddir* had been established to “give information about government development, to support each other during mournings and illness of members”. But as they were new they had not yet started assisting in development activities.

The one successful *iddir*, established for a little more than a year, had 51 members by early 2012. They contributed 2 *birr*/month and additional contributions were raised for deaths of members (5 *birr*/member) and illnesses of members that required the person to seek medical treatment (10 *birr*/member). They also helped with labour and in-kind support in death and illness cases and provided labour to weak and elderly persons for tasks like weeding and constructing latrines. Finally, the *iddir* was providing credit to its members out of the regular contributions, with an interest rate of 4%/month. There were rules approved by the social court and the *tabia* administration, including fines of 2 *birr* for latecomers and absentees, and 5 *birr* for late credit repayment.

The leader stressed the role of *iddir* in mutual support and that this required members to resolve their conflicts. So, conflict resolution was an important part of his work and he had called on the elders to help in one particular instance. He mentioned as achievements of the *iddir* so far: support to one family after a death, construction of three latrines, help to one patient to be taken to Atsbi, and to 23 people for weeding. The *iddir* had provided credit to many of its members already.

In Harresaw a few *equb* have been recently established also in connection with the government drive to make people help each other in various ways to accelerate everyone’s development. See below for their importance in relation to the community’s social re/pro/duction. Among the few existing *equb* some have started being active including in providing small credits to their members.

Church involvement in implementation of government policies

Priests of the Orthodox Church, which is the almost unique religion found in Harresaw as further described below, can occupy administrative or political leadership positions. In Harresaw this is not the case for the moment but the *tabia* church leader used to be *tabia* chairman for thirteen years before the current one. Now he has stepped down but he is the *tabia* cooperative chairman.

In the *tabia* it is common for government messages to be passed at the churches (for instance, on development activities, livestock vaccination campaign or HIV/AIDS prevention) and for church messages to be passed at *tabia* public meetings or other government meetings. So as the lead priest explained, the relationship between the *tabia* church and the *tabia* administration is very strong. Religious leaders are also often consulted on community management issues. This can be informal or formal – like for instance, their participation in the PSNP Food Security Task Force and in the Community Forum.

Religious leaders are supposed to have a very active role in combating Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) alongside the government structures – in relation to reducing the religious holidays, combating underage marriage and reducing expenses on weddings and mournings and funerals. Community members explained that generally, teachings on holidays have decreased and some priests push followers to actually increase the number of holidays by advocating people not to work during local saints’ day. They also explained that while religious leaders were active against underage marriage and big expenses on weddings, they kept quiet on expenses on mournings.

Several members of the community noted that there was a risk that some churches would have to be closed, because too many deacons migrated. At the same time women and men in their mid-20s and 30s reported that there was an increase in church attendance among adolescent girls and boys and youth of both sexes. One of them explained that this was influenced by the towns.

Community contributions for the implementation of government policies

Tax

Tabia officials explained that over 90% of the community were land tax payers. The community had a positive attitude to tax paying, as *“the duty to pay land tax to the government comes with the right to produce on the land”*. The community is also reminded that it has to use the land productively which means using the needed inputs; it has to protect the land for the new generations. The community is made to understand that trade or land tax must be paid timely. At every event they are reminded that *“those who do not pay tax and do not generally carry out their duties will be accused and it may go to the extent that their trade licence or land ownership rights can be taken away”*. People who have not paid their tax are accused and punished.

In 2003 EC the number of land tax payers in Harresaw was 1,022. The **tax rate** depends on the land size and varies from 20 to 40 *birr*. It is decided at the regional level. The current rate was decided four years ago. The amount collected was 38,896 *birr*. *Tabia* officials collecting tax are permitted to keep 2% of what they collect as an incentive. All tax payments are receipted and this is recorded by the **tax collector**, who brings the vouchers from the *wereda* once a year. The tax collector is a woman – who also collects tax herself in one of the *kushets*. She wants to quit the job as it keeps her very busy, but she was proposed by the *wereda* and the *tabia* council agreed because it was thought that a woman would do better with tax collection.

Land tax – *“It is law to pay the land tax”*. The land tax was generally seen as harmless and even beneficial because *“it makes one’s the owner of the land”* as one woman put it. Most respondents were content paying it. However, there were a few complaints about the system being not fair to some people. One woman household head said that a couple and a single person owning the same amount of land were expected to pay the same amount, while the FHH has less work available. One poor man explained that a couple owning 2 *timads* and a single person owning 1 *timad* were paying the same amount which was also not fair. One rich woman said that the tax was too high for those who sharecropped, or had non-productive land, or who had no livestock to sell.

Other contributions in cash and kind

Fees to the mass associations – In most cases respondents explained that they paid but saw no benefit and this was not proper. Several mentioned that there was no choice, paying the membership fee was a must. One man said the farmers’ association needed to do useful things like establishing cooperatives. One woman wanted their association to undertake to organise women in spinning or handicraft production as it is doing in other places. One youth said that the members’ contributions were serving just as salaries for the YA leaders – who unlike the other associations are indeed permitted to keep a small sum for themselves as an incentive. There were complaints that the contributions were now multiplied (with the leagues) for nothing more.

Party fees – Party fees are paid only by the party members. In general respondents said that they did not see direct benefit (the regular training that the party used to give to its members in the past had stopped), but there was more of a sense that the party was important anyway. *“It is ours’ and it keeps us in peace”* as one poor man put it.

Contribution from grain - Since 2000 EC much has been contributed from the PSNP and emergency aid grain. The contribution is 1 kg/month/beneficiary with no exemption. *Tabia* officials described this system as very convenient as the contributions are deducted from the support and do not have to be taken from people. And as everyone or almost has been getting some form of support since 2000/1 EC because of the drought, the system is also fair as everyone contributes, from PSNP or emergency aid. In their opinion as these deductions were undertaken based on a community decision, the contributions are voluntary.

As discussed in detail earlier, overall there was not much controversy about the usefulness of this contribution and the projects, but there were complaints on the lack of transparency on how much is

collected, how it is used exactly, and for instance in the case of the newly decided contribution for the Abay Dam, how long is it going to take for the community to contribute and what is the total amount which is expected. Several respondents said Harresaw was expected to contribute 50,000 *birr* but it was not clear whether this was for one year or in total. The system was described by one respondent as “policy coming down from the wereda”. As put by one woman: “As it is deducted from the grain before we get it, it is compulsory and voluntary”. Another person explained that it had been decided once, and now it was staying like this.

The community also contributed occasionally 3,700 *birr* to the Red Cross to buy an ambulance. The money was collected through the Red Cross membership cards which cost 5 *birr*. Not all members could contribute because there were not enough cards.

In 2003 EC the Woman Association collected 6,360 *birr* from 1,060 members (6 *birr*/year). The youth association had 265 members who contributed in total 1,060 *birr* (4 *birr*/year). The farmers’ association had 321 members who contributed in total 1,926 *birr* (6 *birr*/year). There were 450 party members who contributed 6 *birr* each/year; in total 2,700 *birr*.

In addition in the same year, the community contributed the equivalent of 38,000 *birr* for projects such as construction of *tabia* offices and providing the Dera high school with materials. This was from PSNP grain. Able-bodied adults (above 18) had also contributed 20 days of free community labour like every year. These are half days. In addition there was 5 days for the *Hayelom* campaign. (this was a campaign organised to the memory of Hayelom a late TPLF hero who was major-general when he passed away). *Tabia* officials explained that 40 days was done only in 2002 EC. Sometimes the *tabia* Council could decide that people should work full days in which case it was 10 days only.

Various other contributions were mentioned, though not all of them for 2003 EC. These included: children being asked to contribute to the school fence; an exceptional contribution in 2001 EC for the construction of a water point (by the people of Ekunta *got* as the pump would have been for them) which amounted to 40,000 *birr* (7 *birr*/person) but could not be used as it is not possible to find water so it was saved at the bank; contributions for orphaned children and high school or university students from poor families; 1 *birr* or 2 *birr* for PLWHA (or grain).

Examples of how much taxes and contributions different households pay are given in the matrix below.

Wereda officials clarified that raising community contribution (in addition to tax) was in line with the government policy. It is expected that each community member contributes to local development programmes. This can be in labour; in cash which is collected by the development teams and people are given receipts like for the tax; or in grain which is deducted before it is distributed and people are told the quantity. In the past few years the community in the *wereda* contributed for *tabia* level projects (like the *tabia* hall in Harresaw, see picture), *wereda* projects (like several high schools and some *wereda* offices), regional project (like the Tigray Stadium), and now the Abay Dam. Atsbi *wereda* has been given a quota and must collect 29 million *birr* over four years for the dam. This was divided among the *tabias* based on their population.

Wereda officials mentioned that in each *tabia* there is a Community Care Coalition (CCC), whereby the community contribute and pool resources to help its weaker and poorer members (the elderly, orphan and poor children, disabled people, PLWHA and sex workers). They said that this had existed since a long time but had been given a legal status in 2002 EC.

The CCC was not mentioned as such by anyone in Harresaw although some of the contributions that people mentioned seemed to follow the logic of the CCC. For instance, there were contributions to support PLWHAs collected by the female development teams; and contributions for orphans and students which were decided by the *tabia* administration and paid by the aid grain deductions. In relation to the other taxes and contributions, people’s opinions varied depending on whether they found it fair or not, and whether they saw benefits or not.

Roads are paved and maintained by the community, paid through the PSNP public works or unpaid through community free labour. Planning for these activities is done at the same time as the general planning for the *tabia* and the PSNP public works described earlier. With regard to electricity there is a person organising the payments for the existing meters. Drinking water is managed through water committees established for each drinking water point. The committees normally include someone who has been trained to maintain the installation and carry out basic repairs. When it is beyond the capacity of the committee they call *wereda* experts. This maintenance is paid through the contributions of the water users. The system and its problems have been discussed earlier.

Table 6: What do different households pay in Harresaw?

Household composition	Land tax	Mass associations	Party membership	Grain contribution	Red Cross	Free labour	Other
Poor FHH with four young children	20	No or not mentioned	No or not mentioned	Yes, 5 kgs/month	No	20 (no FFW if not doing this)	2 birrs for PLWHA
Richer FHH with 2 grown-up children, one school age children and 3 grand-children	40	Stopped as she is old; 26 old son pays YA	Nobody is member	Not mentioned	No or not mentioned	Her two adult children did 20 days each	He daughter was fined 50 days because absent 3 days of works
Middle wealth farmer, 3 daughters at home, 2 at school and one not yet	35	6 (FA)	6 now 12	1 kg/month/person	5	20 + 5	24 for Church; 12 for development team; 20 voluntary; 30 (in grain) for Meskel
Politically important farmer, disabled veteran, with 3 boys at home, all at school	70	5 (FA)	12	1 kg/month/person		Participates in mobilising people to pay debt	15.5 disabled association
Poor farmer, married, 3 daughters (2 at school) and 2 sons (working) at home; older daughter (30) mentally sick and with an 11 daughter	35	5 (FA)	12	1 kg/month/person	5	No (does not say why)	24 for Church
Rich farmer, married and two children at home including one daughter at school, son herding	35	5 for his son's YA	6	1 kg/month/person	5	No	4 for mehaber; 24 for Church; 100 generator for church
Landless sharecropping man	No	5 (YA) + 5 League	12	1 kg/month/person	No or not mentioned	20 + 2	Tax on sewing machine 14
Destitute disabled married man	Not yet	6 (YA) and wife 7 (WA)	No or not mentioned	1 kg/month/person or 5 birr when cash	No or not mentioned	No; his wife works	
Desitute woman	20	No	No	Does not know how much		No as she cannot work	1 collected by HEW not knowing why
Poor widow	20	WA	No	5 kgs/month when grain		20	
Poor divorcée	35	7 (WA)	No	1 kg/month/person		No, she was sick with sorrow	

Voluntary public works

Community free labour – This was variably appreciated. Many people said that the works done were useful. But one man raised the fact that as most works were about SWC activities, the landless youth were not benefiting. He said that they should be exempted, or paid. On the contrary, people who do not show up are fined 30 *birr*/day, which can reach 150 *birr* if people are repeatedly absent. One respondent said that if people do not come after having been warned by the development team

leaders the militia is sent. Several others mentioned threats made that people who would not participate to the free labour would not get their PSNP or aid ration.

Elderly and disabled people are exempt from the free labour. Sick persons can be but this may be difficult as they are asked to bring a medical certificate. Poor people and FHH are not exempted. Pregnant women are exempted like for the PSNP. But for lactating mothers the policy is different: they are exempted for 40 days if it is a baby boy and 80 days if it is a baby girl, corresponding to the dates for the child's baptism which differ for baby boys and girls. Several women said that the exemption had to be the same as for PSNP, where it is for 6 months.

Generally, mentally ill people are exempted from association fees and other contributions.

Other forms of contributions are government-initiated such as the support of development teams and *iddir* to their members.

Social re/production

Social institutions and organisations

Religions

The Harresaw community is almost 100% Orthodox Christian. There are a few people who converted to Islam but they live in Afar and return from time to time to visit relatives in the *tabia*.

There are nine churches in the *tabia*. About sixty people in total serve the churches. There are 5 priests who administer the churches in the *gots* (one priest for each *got*). One of them is considered as the *tabia* church leader. Priests are not paid. They get 300 *birr*/ year from the contributions of church members, and church members bring food when there is a ceremony. The churches do not have financial capacity according to the lead priest, so they do not have any project of their own.

Religious leaders are important people and can be formally and informally involved in implementing government policies as described earlier.

More broadly, the Orthodox Christian religion is a very important social institution in Harresaw. As noted earlier migrants continue to be active members of their church and support it from afar.

One change reported by most community members from the younger generations and others is that young people and adolescents of both sexes participate more than before to the religious life of the community. In the past in rural areas like Harresaw going to church regularly was associated to adulthood; adults did not like the presence of young people at the church. There is a saying that '*if you pray at an early age it means begging to die early*'. This attitude has changed, a trend which some people link to the adoption of more urbanised mores: young people now take the habit of going to church when for instance they live in towns for their education.

However, usually younger people and farmers and their wives busy with their activities may attend only once a week, or they go for a short prayer. Going to church more regularly and for longer prayer is seen as something one does when one gets older, like this woman head of a successful household who explains that:

She is a very active participant in the church... She attends full prayer session. She takes her grandchildren whenever there are holidays. The benefit of church participation is to make and keep her children safe. It is good to get blessings. You will not lack something. She prays for her daughter in Saudi to be successful. Church participation has no other benefit than religious. In the last five years she has increased going to church. In the past she was giving attention to economic activities, now she has realised that she has to go to church to pray for her children's safety and success, and for peaceful relationships with neighbours.

At the same time, there are a number of trends that key community respondents are concerned by. They explained that as priests serve for free, nowadays they are saying '*we will work outside and we*

will get an income'. Many deacons migrated to Saudi Arabia, and this trend increased since 2002 EC; and there is a fear that churches may be closed if the trend continues like this. There is big threat especially in one of the neighbouring *tabia* for instance.

Holidays

As explained earlier there was a reduction in the number of holy days some five years back, according to an agreement discussed at regional level between the government and the Orthodox Church. This is now relatively well established although some religious leaders still try to influence followers to add other days – for instance the day of the local church's saint.

Community members are of different views and have different practices regarding the way they work or not during holy days. Most still respect the agreed holy days, but some have started working even during those. Normally work which is not permitted during holy days includes any farming activity, cutting of grass, and also PSNP PWs. It is said that not respecting holy days brings frost, floods and drought although from the people interviewed, apart from older women it is not clear that many people still believe in this.

Holy days are important opportunities to visit relatives and friends or host them. One woman whose husband is a successful migrant explained that previously she could not do this as she could not afford the costs of being the host or taking food stuff to the people visited, but now she is able to do this thanks to the remittances her husband is sending and she is happy of this social change. The woman head of a poor household explained that

Two days before the interview she celebrated a holiday with her relatives and friends. Siwa, tihilo, injera and bread were prepared for the holiday. She was the host for the celebration. She spent about 150-200 birr for the celebration. The cost has increased because she got introduced to many more people so more cost is needed to invite them. The government says to spend less on feasts but she did not follow this.

Meskel is an important annual holy day which is celebrated to commemorate the finding of the true cross by Queen Helena. Most people celebrate Meskel in groups although there are also some who celebrate Meskel individually. When celebrating in groups people contribute money to buy and slaughter an animal. There are some Meskel feasts which stay up to three days. People slaughter an ox, sheep or hen depending on their wealth status. Some people also celebrate Meskel in their lineage members. The change in the last ten years in Meskel celebrations is that there is a huge increase in the price of livestock so that most people cannot afford to buy an ox or a cow like in the previous times. Currently groups slaughter a sheep and individual households slaughter a hen.

When people celebrate Meskel in a group only men go to the feast. Married women do not go. There are rare cases of women heads of households going, and also a woman who has *silit* (who promised to give something on that day if something gets fulfilled) can go to the feast to give what she has promised. There is a ceremony called *Mi-equak* which takes place the day before Meskel, in which cows before they get milked and children go to the same place and the children are given milk and are anointed with butter. After this a sheep or a goat is slaughtered and the blood is sprinkled on the cattle. It is said to protect cattle and children.

Marriage, divorce, widowhood

There are three types of marriages in Harresaw. In the **traditional** marriage elders are sent to the girl's house and ask the girl's parents to give their daughter in marriage. After they get acceptance the priest gets the partners to make a promise which is locally known as *Kalkidan* and the two spouses sign on paper. This type of marriage is legal before the law. A second type of marriage is made **without signatures**, just by the verbal agreement of the spouses-to-be who then start to live together. This marriage becomes legal if the spouses stay together for 3 years, after which they are supposed to share their properties equally if divorce comes. The third type is **civil marriage** by which the partners go to concerned government office and make a signed marriage agreement. This service

is given at the *wereda* centre, Atsbi. The most prevalent marriage type in *tabia* Harresaw is the traditional one – although there were several cases of civil marriages among the interviewees.

Most marriages in the *tabia* entail **customary wedding ceremonies**, the size and cost of which vary depending on the economic status of the partners or their parents but also on their outlook on this. Normally local food called *tihilo* and local alcoholic drink called *siwa* are prepared and animals are slaughtered for the invitees. The well-to-do may slaughter an ox and the poor slaughter a sheep. There are elaborated gift-giving traditions and the whole process from promise to wedding and to the new spouses finally establishing their own household can last for years – as described below.

Box 10: Wedding process in Harresaw

The groom is given money by his family (*mendi-e*). He buys gifts for the bride (*shilimat*) depending on his wealth and based on his expectation of what the bride's family might give him. This includes clothes, shoes and jewellery.

The wedding process usually starts in the bride's house. Both the groom and the bride perform *telhit* and they are given money by their family. The money given from the bride's family is also called *mendi-e*, and the amount depends on what the groom spent to buy gifts for the bride. Some parents give more than the groom's expenditure on the bride's gift. For example, if the gift from the groom to the bride is estimated to be 6000 *birr* they add 2000 *birr* and give him a total of 8000 *birr*. After the wedding party at the bride's house there is also a wedding ceremony at the groom's house.

After the wedding ceremonies on both sides the bride and the groom spend 3-4 days at the bride's house until a ceremony called *mikila-e* (this literally means unveiling or disclosing). The groom brings a sheep to slaughter, perfume that is sprayed on everyone, and areki for the ceremony. The groom is given money from the bride's closer family and friends, from 400 *birr* to 2000 *birr* – which is less than at the wedding itself. The main purpose of the *mikila-e* is to give the groom this money and make him like any other family member. After this ceremony he leaves the bride behind at her family's house and comes back on the third day and brings coffee and sugar with him.

After such kind of comings and goings he finally takes the bride to live with him. This can happen 4-12 months after the wedding day. Sometimes he can also leave her with his parents and go for work to an Arab country or other places. Whenever the groom wants to take the bride as his wife forever he asks again for this. When the bride goes to the groom's house 'for good' she takes bread with her, and sometimes areki. The groom takes the bride on a mule's back. The bride's mother follows her daughter and takes dishes, cooking pot, jebena (clay pot used to boil coffee), cups, traditional handicrafts made with grass, ground pepper, shiro (powder used to make stew which is prepared from roasted beans and peas) and other things.

Community respondents explained that **wedding expenses** by the couple's families had increased significantly in the last ten years. Jewelry given to the bride and which used to be made of silver or bronze is now gold – although those who give only gold for their bride are very rare. Those who have worked for some time in Saudi Arabia buy gold as a gift for their bride. The number of dresses given to the bride has also increased a lot in the past ten years. The cost of customary wedding ranges between 10,000 and 30,000 *birr* – both because expectations of what needs to be available have increased and because of the increase in living costs. There is support from family members and friends invited (they may contribute 5-10 *birr* each), which is included in what is given to the couple.

People who are less well-off borrow. But generally people's income increased significantly because of the high market prices of their agricultural products. Families from migrants or the migrants themselves when they return are said to spend more on weddings – e.g. they buy gold as gift etc. But there are also some who do not have a wedding ceremony to avoid the expenses. This, or making a small wedding with only 20 people invited from among close relatives, was the case for several respondents. A young degree holder from a poor household refused a costly wedding; even wealthier households may not have expensive weddings, although parents admit to being blamed by the community when they do not invite many people.

The relatively successful household head explained that she married her daughter and her son in the past five years. It was more expensive for her son because prices had gone up. She spent 3,000 *birr* on food stuff; he bought gifts for 5,000 *birr*; but he *got* 8,000 *birr* from his parents-in-law. The successful farmer explained that he married his son in 2000 EC with less expense than he would have done in the past because he wanted to save for the future. He had spent 3,500 *birr* on food and drink, 1,500 as bride's gifts and he gave an ox to the couple; he *got* 450 *birr* as contributions.

The **age of marriage** has also shifted, from 15 to 18 years for girls and from 18 to average 22 years for boys, as a result of several trends. First, the law now bans **underage marriage** and the minimum legal age is 18. *Wereda* officials explained that underage marriage used to be a quite big issue especially in the *tabias* bordering the Afar Region and including Harresaw but it has significantly decreased – due to government teachings and enforcement by the authorities (e.g. fines of 800 *birr* and threat of 6 years imprisonment for the girl's parents). When *tabia* officials suspect an underage marriage they try and talk to parents, and can demand that the girl's age is checked in Mekelle- This was reportedly done in the *wereda* but not mentioned in Harresaw.

The work to stop underage marriage is done in collaboration by the women affairs' office, police and justice bodies, and the administration. There are teachings in schools, and girls themselves know where to go to resist pressure. Most people in the community said that the community was collaborating with this policy. Women in their 30s note that banning underage marriage is a very good thing as in their time they *got* married when they knew nothing about sex, and had children when they themselves were still children. The girls' interest in education and parents' better attitude with regard to keeping girls in school are also contributing to this shift.

Moreover, there is said to be a general **trend toward marrying later** because of the difficulties for young people to establish an independent household – linked to land scarcity and lack of job opportunities. Both young men and young women are said to want to earn an income before getting married. Migration is one of the ways to do this although sometimes the young partners get married then the husband migrates while his wife stays with her parents.

One accompanying trend is that nowadays once they marry young couples establish their household more rapidly than in the past, whereas in the past they might have stayed several years in their respective parents' houses. This had been the case for most of the young mid-20s and early 30s' women interviewed. For instance one middle wealth mid-20s woman explained that in her case she stayed two years with her parents after being married; her husband was working as foreman on small construction works, he was coming regularly to visit her and they finally *got* established when he had earned enough. This practice has not completely disappeared. Several young women reported living with their parents while their husband was on migration in Saudi; one young woman and her baby boy were living with her parents while her husband is studying at university.

There are still cases of pressure on girls to get married. Especially when women are alone (widows or divorcees) they want their daughter to marry to have some protection and assistance. But the trend for this to become rarer goes together with other trends like the fact that it is now more common for **partners to choose each other**. This is more the feat of young men, but girls and young women can now resist marrying someone not of their liking and there is a law to support them in this. Again this is confirmed by the mid-20s and early 30s' women interviewed who contrasted the choice nowadays with their own marriages which were arranged by their parents – although in several cases they said that they did not dislike the husband chosen for them.

In the same vein, it is said to be more common for 17-20 year old youth male and female to openly tell their parents about their girlfriend or boyfriend. For instance one woman explained that she knew a girl whose father was planning to marry but she refused and told her father that she had a boyfriend, and the father married her based on her choice. Others also confirmed that the choice of young women is now respected, about whether to marry or not, when and with whom. Some people also explained that young men's aspirations are changing. They want to marry an '*active and smart*

lady... who can work and improve their life as a spouse... and has attained a better education level', a change compared to the past when the choice of boys was based on 'counting the number of sheep and other wealth (of the bride's family)'.

Abduction is said not to be an issue any longer. There are cases of elopement. The girl's parents may then accuse the boy of abduction but if this is denied by the girl who says that she was willing parents have to accept and get reconciled. **Polygyny**, widow's inheritance or marrying one's dead sister's husband have never been practised in Harresaw. But it is very common for men to have a wife at home and one or several **concubines**. *Wereda* officials explained that out of the 2,000 households of Harresaw there are 800 female-headed households with women who have had children from several men. (The data on household numbers does not tally other data from *tabia* officials but the trend is striking even if these are orders of magnitude). It is not unusual for women who for one reason or another cannot get married – like the case of one deaf woman - to accept to be one man's concubine just for bearing children.

Divorces are said to be on the decrease in the community, because there is said to be better understanding among spouses and because couples want to improve their livelihoods rather than getting involved in divorce. But it is not uncommon to have household disputes when a man takes a mistress and his wife dislikes this. Two of the early 30s' women, married at a young age by their parents, *got* divorced after some years. One of them remarried her first husband after a couple of years. The other never remarried; she has three children including one from her husband before she divorced, and two from another man. Another woman who had followed her husband in his community and *got* divorced returned to Harresaw with her child; she then had a second child from a man who is also not from Harresaw; they all three live with her mother. Another case of divorce was the man living with HIV/AIDS, although his ex-wife was still taking care of him.

When there is divorce, according to *wereda* officials there may be issues because elders tend to favour the man who can invite them and drink *sewa* with them. But *tabia* officials denied this and explained that elders have better knowledge and women themselves are much better aware of their rights in cases of divorce. There may be difficulties because sometimes the husband hides what he has. Especially migrants can have savings in cash that they do not disclose and which are seen afterwards as they get married to another woman and are able to buy her expensive gifts.

Women's rights in case of widowhood and divorce have been in place for a long time but are better enforced – at least if the marriage is recognised legally (see above). There have been changes in land inheritance with the new land law (see above) but these hold for both men/boys and women/girls i.e. the gender equity has been upheld. In case of **divorce** the couple is supposed to share all properties that can be sold and that they owned jointly in three parts if they have children: 1/3rd each for the man, the woman and the children. This applies to land as well. Some people say that children usually stay with their mother; others say that this is the case for young children under five, after which the children can choose with whom they stay. A **widow** can keep all her husband's properties if she has children from him: half is for her and the other half for the children. Otherwise she has to give half of the properties to her husband's relatives. This sometimes creates conflict. There may also be conflict when a man dies and he had children from women other than his wife, who then claim a part of his properties.

There is no sign or report of social exclusion attached to the status of divorcee male or female. Widows, widowers and divorcees male and female are members of various organisations like anyone else. The same is true for the women having never been married and heading households with children. However, these types of households may face more difficulties with regard to their livelihood as described earlier in this report. In several divorce cases, men were said to support their children or ex-wife if she had the children living with her. But this does not seem to be generalised and some women said that they were the ones to meet most of the children's expenses. Sometimes there are compensating arrangements, e.g. one woman explained that she met most of her children upbringing's costs but her ex-husband had left to her and her children the house in which they used

to live together.

Craft workers are said to be able to intermarry with other members of the community except those who are known to work metal (*ketkach* or *buda*) – who are only two in the *tabia*.

Generally the above suggests that in the community there are a quite large number of households diverging from the household ideal-type, as said earlier in this report.

Death ceremonies

Burials take place rapidly after someone's death. Mobile phones have made it easier to contact family members and friends and save time and people's labour, although messengers continue to have to be sent to places where there is no network coverage.

Most people in the community follow the ceremonial as given by the Orthodox Church rules. This involves a customary ceremony called *fithat* (prayer for the death), performed at church by priests and deacons on the 7th, 12th, 30th and 40th days after the person's death. Family members stay in the mourning household up to the 12th day. The household whose family member is dead mourns up to the 40th day. For the *fithat* of the 30th day more food stuff (one jerry can of *siwa* and lunch) is taken to the church for those who participate in the ceremony. The *fithat* of 40th day, called *teskar*, is a commemoration of the dead person and is 'very huge compared to the previous ones'. Deacons from the different churches come to the home; an ox or sheep is slaughtered.

As noted earlier the government pressure to spend less on funeral and mourning ceremonies decreased in the last five years. Moreover, religious leaders are said to 'keep quiet' on this issue: they avoid taking position openly but oppose to it privately. Community key informants explain that there is no change with regard to procedures and numbers of death ceremonies, but there is a change in people's attitude with regard to expenses. A significant number of people try to reduce spending on funerals and mourning. However, they still end up spending considerable amounts because of sky-rocketing prices.

For instance, the widow head of the relatively successful female-headed household explained that when her husband died, her outlays added up to the gabi and mat to wrap the dead's body, food and drink for those who came from distant places, a big umbrella and a cross (1,000 *birr*) for the priest for the funeral ceremony, 1,000 *birr* for the cross on the tomb and 100 *birr* for the person who helped placing it, and 6,000 *birr* for two cows, one sheep and pepper and onions for the wot. For the funeral and *teskar* she received 10 quintals of grain altogether and 3,000 *birr*. She explained that in the past she would have had to slaughter more animals but government taught people to reduce and she anyway was not able to spend more.

There are people who are said to spend up to 17,000 *birr* for *teskar*. Families of migrants are said to be able to spend a lot of money.

Inheritance

Boys and girls have equal right of inheritance. This is nothing new. There have been changes in the land law including about inheritance, but the principle of gender equity has been upheld. With the new law, the first heirs of deceased parents are their children. However, if they already have land or live outside of the community the land is transferred to grand-children. Adopted children can also inherit under some conditions. This was reported to have happened recently after a woman died on migration in Saudi and the community recognised her adopted child. If there is no one from these eligible categories to inherit the land, it is taken by the government to be reallocated.

The change is that parents and siblings of the deceased persons can no longer inherit land, which the community does not appreciate. The provision that children not living in the community cannot inherit their parents' land may raise problems too, like in the case of this young couple in which the woman inherited land from her father in her community, but her husband who had land in his community did not want to follow her to make sure that she would inherit her land. As a result they

ended up divorcing.

There is contradicting information as to what happens with regard to land inheritance in case of one spouse's death with no children. Community respondents say that in this case the surviving spouse takes his or her share (half) and the other half goes to the deceased person's siblings. *Tabia* officials explain instead that the other half is taken by the government to be reallocated to landless people in the community, which is indeed likely to be the case with the new policy.

Dispute resolution

Various types of institutions and organisations are involved in dispute resolution, including *mehaber*, *iddir* (though this is untested), lineage leaders, religious leaders, and neighbours and relatives for disputes in and between households. Elders have an important role in various types of disputes and conflicts and unlike the other institutions/organisations they are formally recognised in this role, which is described in section 4.4.

Customary organisations

In Harresaw there are no clans. The lineages, *mehaber* and Meskel celebration organisation structures are inter-household structures that link a number of households (small in the case of *mehaber*) together but do not reach out to the community as a whole. There are no structures like women butter or spinning groups, herders' groups or oxen insurance.

Clans and lineages

Knowledgeable people from Harresaw explained that the importance of lineages had decreased a lot with the new system of individual land tenure rights introduced by the Derg and upheld by the EPRDF. The previous *rist* system was based on lineages and therefore lineages had an important role in how land was being used and managed. Their role in this respect has disappeared. For the same land-related reasons, people from the same lineage also used to live close to each other. Nowadays the members of a lineage live in many different places. This contributes to further distend the links, although lineage members still meet for mournings, weddings and religious holidays. In strong lineages there are also scheduled meetings once a month, called by the elders.

Lineages used to be important social reproduction institutions regulating marriages. In principle people from the same lineage could not marry up to the 7th generation. This is still supposed to apply although it happens now increasingly frequently that young people who do not know that they belong to the same lineage (for instance if they meet while living in town) enter in a relationship and marry. If it is discovered later on, in some lineages they are said to be forced to divorce. One lineage leader explained that this was supported by the formal government law so if they refused to obey they would be taken to court.

Dispute resolution between lineage members is a major role played by the lineage's elders. Lineages are also mutual support mechanisms. For instance, there is a lineage which has rules about what members must do when a member is sick or for weddings. In some cases lineages function like an *iddir*. One woman who is a member of a strong lineage explained that the members get together every three months and contribute 2 *birr*. Someone takes this on credit, with no interest. The meeting is also a feast occasion and each member takes his or her turn. The lineage she belongs to has about 3,000 *birr*. They support each other in hard times: for instance four years ago she was given 1,000 *birr* to go and seek treatment in Mekelle.

Elders

Elders in Harresaw are people who are respected and accepted as moral authorities in the community at large. As explained earlier their role in maintaining peace and resolving disputes and conflicts in the community is recognised by the *tabia* administration. There are nine formally recognised elders, three from each *kushet*. They are also model farmers, religious leaders, organisers of the Meskel feast, members of the *tabia* Council or knowledgeable people more generally. They are

known for their good deeds.

There is also a special recognition of older skilled women, who tell other women the right combination of spices and how to prepare stew and brew *siwa* for feasts and celebrations. When women in Harresaw make a feast they invite these *abyeti adi wehale* to get them to prepare the food and drinks.

Iddir

There are only a few *iddir* in Harresaw and they have been established recently as an appendix to the establishment of the development teams and 1-5 network groups. As explained earlier only one was said to be successful. It is too early to know whether *iddir* could become more important in the future, but today they are not (yet?) important social re/pro/duction institutions.

Equb and other savings

Equb are equally rare in Harresaw and have also been initiated in connection with the development teams. The woman leader of one of the few *equb* found in early 2012 explained that it was established five months ago. From the 30 women members of the development team, 18 were members of the *equb*. They contribute 10 *birr* every two weeks, which is easy to do; then one of the members takes the 180 *birr* collected and is thus able to make an 'important expenditure'. The leader said that the *equb* was important particularly for the poor because it was like a saving. Members also contributed 5 *birr* initially. These 90 *birr* were used as lending capital, for small loans with 2 *birr* per month interest on 45 *birr*. After 5 months they had lend some money and the capital was 100 *birr*.

As for the *iddir*, *equb* are therefore linked to the implementation of government policies but it is too early to know whether they might become more important than they are now.

Mehaber

Mehaber are very important and common in Harresaw. Locally they are called *tsebel*. Practically all households are members of one or several *mehaber*. *Mehaber* have between five and twelve members, and they gather monthly to commemorate dates of saints or angels or St Mary for women. There are contributions and rules and regulations. Contributions are most usually 1 *birr* per month. Rules may include fines for absenteeism or lateness. Funds can be used for contributions or gifts to churches (like umbrellas and sacred books), food and drink for the *mehaber* meetings, and loans to their members in some *mehaber*. Some *mehaber* buy female sheep for breeding. The proceeds of this activity are for the group; they can be kept or shared between the members. *Mehaber* are also said to help their members in times of death or illness.

Certain *mehaber* have existed for more than 25 years. The leader of a well-established *mehaber* said that they had no relationship with the government. Among the households interviewed, only in the poor male-headed household was there no one member of a *mehaber*. The woman living with HIV/AIDS also explained that she stopped going because she could not drink *sewa* (because it is alcoholised). In the middle wealth male-headed household they had membership in three *mehaber*, and this was the case too in the richer female-headed household. Younger people are members of *mehaber* too. Several of the young women interviewed said that it was important. In the household of one mid-30s man both he and his wife were members of two different *mehaber*. Sometimes widows replace their husband as a member, or the son of the dead man.

As benefits, members mentioned credit and that *mehaber* were good to strengthen friendship. Members have meetings and leaders record the decisions made, members' contributions and loans and when loan repayments are due. Then they have food and drinks together. In good times when the harvest is good they may stay a longer time like 5-6 hours. When the times are bad they do not have as much food and drink and meetings are shorter.

One woman said that it was good to share information among members. The *mehaber* interest rates for loans seemed to vary a lot, from no interest in one case to 10% interest in another. The loans are

small, for instance 200 *birr* maximum in one *mehaber*.

The woman head of the poor household explained that members of her late husband's *mehaber* had told her to skip her turn in organising the *mehaber*'s gathering, and instead use the money to buy school materials for her children. Other people also mentioned that there was some flexibility for instance in postponing one's turn if it was a bad time for the household.

Other customary organisations

The Meskel feast organisation has a leadership of five people including two priests. They record the promises of contributions, collect them when the time has come, and coordinate the organisation of the feast. The remaining funds are saved on a Dedit bank account, which is used to give credit to community members. The organisation also lends materials to those who need it for wedding or funeral ceremonies. Community members explained that expenses on Meskel had decreased, in line with the government policy; but some said that there was nothing wrong as the costs of the Meskel feast was spread out among many people, and anyway they benefited from being able to lend the items that they were buying for the feast.

Local informal security regime

Tabia officials explain that households get informal social protection from relatives, neighbours, friends and grown up children. Husband's and wife's kin provide important support for a household but this depends on the type of closeness they have. In most cases wife's kin give more support. In their views there is no change with the way husband's and wife's kin give support. In case of drought in one's place relatives living in another place may support in keeping one's livestock. This had helped some of the households in Harresaw to cope better with the 2001 EC drought.

Tabia officials also think that grown up children give support to their families better than anyone else. Community members gave examples of such support, like elderly parents staying with one of their children, grand-daughters staying with their grand-mother, relatives ploughing the land of their elderly relatives for no other cost than taking the straw etc. However, when elderly people do not have any relatives they depend on other people like neighbours. Sometimes they do small activities to help the people who help them in exchange. Women who have not had children may not have any support – which then explains why many women do have children outside of wedlock as explained above, if this is their only option.

One big change is that as many youth migrate to Arab countries some of them give a huge support to their family – including extended family for some (see examples of migrants paying several thousand *birr* of debt of their step-mother etc.). This increased migration also affects negatively some forms of informal support as there is less labour to help elders and take the sick and pregnant women to the health facilities. But remittances are a support mechanism which remains effective when many others fail like when there is a drought affecting all households in the community.

Siblings also help each other in various ways, including in grain and other traditional means but in newer ways as well like this poor young woman meeting the costs of her brother's studying at university and not met by the government (transport, books etc.).

Tabia officials explain that neighbours borrow from each other and they eat together on holidays. The support between neighbours is not huge and it solves problem only for a short period of time. But many community members explain that it is an important mutual support mechanism. Households borrow grain, small amounts of money and household goods from each other.

Friends also support each other and according to *tabia* officials they do so better than neighbours. This extends to migration as well in that nowadays if someone goes to the Gulf and becomes successful he sends money to his friends to enable them to migrate to Arab countries. In their opinion support among friends has increased over the last ten years.

Indeed a number of respondents said that they thought cooperation and mutual support among

people had increased, because of better awareness of the value of helping each other or because of necessity as problems had increased too. One woman explained that it is normal that people should help each other as *'even the government who is not related to us is supporting us'*. However, there were also a number of respondents who explained that nowadays people were more individualistic and cooperation and mutual support was decreasing.

In addition to neighbours, relatives, children and friends there are cultural ways of providing social support through ceremonies like the Meskel feast and institutions like the *mehaber* - but formally structured *iddir* are only nascent. Members of *mehaber* assist each other in times of death or illness, through loans or sometimes direct assistance in food or cash, and moral support. However, *tabia* officials rank these forms of support as the least effective ones.

The 1-5 networks are supposed to fill a gap in prompting people to collaborate with each other and help the weakest members of the community. But they are fairly new and some people expressed doubt as to whether they could be effective. *'The community cannot come to a consensus'*, due to the fact that people think that everyone could benefit from the activities that the groups are supposed to undertake for their weakest members.

New community-initiated organisations

There are no new community-initiated organisations in the sense of being new ways in which community members would have decided by themselves to associate. Development teams, 1-5 network groups, *iddir* and *equb* are all established in the community following government's drive.

Key social actors and their networks

Government employees

***Tabia* manager**

The *tabia* manager is a 25 year old man. He was appointed in 2000 EC, elected by the community. He is from the community. He has a diploma in management. He is also the lead of the *tabia* education committee. He is member of the political party, of the *tabia* Council and of the youth association and league. He has no sibling or father or mother who has a role in the community, but he has relatives in positions of authority (the *tabia* chairman and propaganda Cabinet). He is fine with his positions but he wants to move to elsewhere if he gets a better job and a better salary. He wants to upgrade his education in the field of management. He does not want to continue working as *tabia* manager.

DA Crops

The DA crops is also in charge of the FTC. He is a 28 year old man. He was hired for the position in 1998 EC right after he graduated in plant science (10+3 level). He is also a degree holder in Economics with private sponsorship. He has no other role in the community. As he was not born in the *tabia* he does not have family member who would have a role in the *tabia*. He wants a better position. But there is warning and dismissal for the DAs who learn privately and the regional bureau instructs *wereda* not to hire such individuals. The rule says that the DA first has to resign from his job to compete for other vacancies. He is ready to do this.

Veterinarian officer

There is no vet in Harresaw.

DA Livestock

The DA livestock is a 28 year old man and he has 6 years of work experience. He was assigned to this *tabia* six months ago. As the position was vacant, he applied for transfer. He is Diploma holder in Animal Science. In addition to his DA responsibilities he is a party member and he works with the *tabia* administration in mobilising members for the youth league. He was not born in the *tabia* so has no family member who has a role in the community. He has a (privately paid) degree from Yardstick

College in Agricultural Extension. He is seeking a way of moving on from being DA: his expectations have not been fulfilled and he has too much workload.

DA NRM

The NRM DA also serves as chair of the NRM Committee and of the *tabia* development committee, and the PSNP PW organiser. He is a 30 year old man. He is a diploma holder in NRM from Maychew agriculture college. For five and half years he worked in another *wereda*. He started as NRM DA and NRM Committee chair in this *tabia* in 1998 EC. He is a member of the *tabia* cabinet, of the saving and credit association and of the monitoring committee. He has no one in his family who has a role in the community: he is from another *tabia* called Hadenet. He wants to upgrade his education and work at *wereda* level, but the government prevents them from studying or does not recognise the diploma they get privately.

School director

The head teacher of the Abyidera Gr1-8 school is a 28 year old man and he was appointed in 2003 EC, after he applied for vacancy. He is a degree holder. He is a member of the cabinet and secretary of the education and training board; he leads development interventions in *kushets* and as the school is a cluster centre he also serves as school supervisor. He plans for the future to continue his education if he gets an opportunity or to seek another job and resign. But he will continue as director until he gets a better job.

Primary school teachers

The male primary school teacher teaches in Dera Gr1-8 school. He seems not very happy with the school (overwork for teachers, lack of reference books, absenteeism of students, weak parental follow up) although he noted a few positive points like the fact that the school has qualified teachers and experienced teachers help others in writing manuals and training other teachers through the networks. He is unit leader of a shift. He is 26, was trained as Gr10+3 but he attended summer school to get his degree. He teaches English and Civics to Gr7 students. As a room teacher he teaches 4 hours a day and spends 4 hours in other activities, 5 days of a week. He sometimes replaces the director. He gets a gross salary of 1,570 *birr* and net salary of 1,312 *birr* and no other benefit. He mentioned that school staff may sometimes be unhappy about the way their performance is assessed and the result-oriented evaluation is filled in. He suggests that providing incentives to teachers would help them to be serious in their work and avoid this kind of problems. For himself he intends to apply for a position of director when there are vacancies.

The female primary school teacher teaches in the Gr 1-4 school in *kushet* Harresaw. She is more positive about the school and her experience, mentioning mainly positive points e.g. noting that students' attendance is quite good, they have a good behavior and parents have a good attitude towards school. As she explained, teachers are expected to teach students with all his/her skills and enable them to get knowledge, support weak students and make them perform better, using teaching aids, textbooks and local materials. Teachers have to make school dropouts go back to school. She is 24 and Gr10+1 from a teacher training institute. She teaches in the self-contained system, an average of 20 hours a week. Sometimes she comes for an hour or so on Sunday to help weak students. She gets a net salary of 840 *birr* per month. She has asked to be transferred and would like to upgrade her education as she does not want to continue in the self-contained system.

Neither of them has other roles in the community as they are not from the *tabia*. Their main connections are with other school staff and the school director of their respective school as well as with the parents.

Health Centre head

The health centre head is a 27 year old man. He was appointed in October 2002 EC to the health centre. He was a nurse and upgraded to health officer. His wife is a health extension worker but not

in *tabia* Harresaw. He wants to move to a health centre with better standards and where he can do research etc.

Health Extension Worker 1

The senior HEW works the whole week with no specific working hours, though she goes to market on Tuesdays when she does not have scheduled work. She earns a net salary of 772 *birr* per month for working as health extension worker. She is 32, started her job in 2001 EC as a Grade 12 student with one year extension training. She attended other short term training courses on various topics since she started. She is member of the *tabia* Cabinet but has no other role and is does not have family members with special positions in the community. She would like to upgrade her education and move on from being a HEW. She communicates professionally with the *wereda* health office and a supervisor comes once or twice a week. In the *tabia* she asks support from cabinet members about community mobilisation and discusses the health plan with them. She also communicates with elders who facilitate her work. They are given orientation first because they should be convinced first otherwise they can be obstacles.

Health Extension Worker 2

The junior HEW gets rest on week-ends and works during the week days according to working hours, although when she is on house-to-house visit, 3 times a week, she works for 12 hours and this can be on Sundays. She earns a monthly net salary of 696 *birr* (908 *birr* gross). She likes the trainings and sees them as a benefit. She is somewhat more critical of the community's level of cooperation. She is 22 and was appointed recently, in July 2011 GC, as a Grade 10 with one year extension training. She has no other role in the community. There is no one in the family who have role in the community. For the future her plan is to get educated by the government: she does not want to continue working as a health extension worker but to work in health in better position. Her first port of call is the senior HEW who was in the *tabia* before she came, and the supervisor from the health centre. She communicates with the *tabia* manager and chairperson when she needs to schedule community conversation and other prevention activities in the community.

Community policeman

The community policeman is a 23 year old man. He was hired for the position on 15/04/2001 EC. He first served in another *tabia* in the same *wereda* and was assigned to Harresaw four months ago. He applied for the policeman training after he failed the grade ten national examinations. As a policeman, he participated in public meetings, public holidays, and national examinations (for grades 8 and 10) to keep peace and security. In addition to this, he is a member of the community forum (peace committee).

Savings and credit organiser

The saving & credit organisation expert is 28 years old and has been *tabia* credit expert for the last two years. He previously was for two years in another *tabia*. He was hired to the job after he applied for the vacancy for the position and passed the requirements. He is Diploma holder in Animal Science and he is continuing his education by distance in Management. He wants to find a better position, because the work is hard and creates conflict.

***Tabia* office-holders recruited from within the community (and recent changes)**

***Tabia* chair**

The chairman of the *tabia* (also called *tabia* leader or administrator) is also the chairman of the *tabia* food security task force. He was appointed in 1997EC. He is 39 years old and is grade 8 completed. He has membership in the *tabia* cabinet, council and political party. The *tabia* propaganda and other key people in the community are his relatives. In his interview as FS taskforce leader he says that even though he graduated, he is willing to continue to serve as *tabia* chairman and food security task force leader. In his interview as *tabia* chair and in response to the more general question about his

aspirations for the future he said that he does not want to continue as chairperson. He asked the *tabia* council and the community to release him but they all refused. He wants to quit and do his farming and other agricultural activities effectively.

Vice chair

The *tabia* vice chairperson is a 30 year old man. He was elected by the community in 1999 EC. At that time he refused because it is time consuming. He is also propaganda leader which means that is also chair of the TPLF party. He started this in 1999 EC as well, on approval by the *wereda* and *tabia* council. Before that he was *kushet* leader and was elected to be a member of the *tabia* council. He is also a member of the Council and of the youth association. He is grade 8 completed. He has relatives in different roles in the community. Among others, the *tabia* chairman and the *tabia* manager are his relatives. He said that he will continue serving the community as long as it elects him and appreciates his service. But he would like to hand over his position and work full time to improve his private life. He would be happy to continue being a member of the party.

Tabia council chair

The *tabia* council chair is a 49 year old man. The members of the *tabia* council are those who were nominated by the party and elected by the community. From being vice chairman of a *kushet* he was appointed as speaker in 2003 EC when the former spokesman resigned because of too much work. He is grade 5 completed. He has spent a long time as a militia and has been a member of the military. He is leader of a development group, and a member of the veteran disabled association and the political party. Moreover, he is a member of the supervision committee for the veteran disabled association. His older brother is secretary of the cooperative in the *tabia*. He is willing to serve the community with the current position he has as long as the community likes him.

Wereda councillors

The male *wereda* councillor is 44 years old and he was elected in 2002 EC. He was nominated by the party and the community voted for him because he was a fighter during the war with Eritrea. He is grade 6 completed. He is the main law prosecutor of the *tabia* and a member of the party and of the farmer's association. His younger brother is a guard at the *tabia* administration office; but he has no other family member who has a role in the community. He said that as long as the party wants his service and the community appreciates it, he is willing to continue performing his duty because it is part of his military commitment and because it does not consume much of his time. But he would like to hand over the power of being law prosecutor at the *tabia*.

The other *wereda* councillor is a 40 year old woman. She was elected by the community in 2003 EC. She is not able to read or write. She participates in land judgement and administration. No one from her family has a role in the community. She wants to continue being a *wereda* councillor because it improves her capacity.

Political party appointee

The political party leader at the *tabia* level is the *tabia* vice-chairman. He is also the propaganda officer in the *tabia*. Apart from him people who had to be appointed by the party before being elected in their positions by the community include the *tabia* chairman and the *wereda* Councillors from the *tabia*, as well as the members of the 'basic party structure' of the *tabia*. As explained earlier the *tabia* political leader would like to resign from his multiple positions as he said this is affecting his household's livelihoods. His network is with the *wereda* vice-administrator and administrator and the political party structure at the *wereda* level.

Women's Association leader

The chairperson of the women's association is a 48 year old woman. She was appointed 7 years ago as she was elected by the community. She is not able to read or write. She is also a member of the *tabia* council and participates in TPLF party leadership. There is no one in her family who has roles in

the community. For the future she wants to give her post to the younger generation and to quit the leadership position.

Youth Association/Federation leader

The chairman of the youth association is a 33 year old man and he was appointed the position just this year (2004 EC) when the former chairman resigned as he *got* another job at the *wereda*. The youth elected him as he performed well when he was in the position of *kushet* youth association chairman. He is grade 5 completed.

Tax collector

The tax/contribution collector serves as finance officer of the *tabia*. She is a 40 year old woman. She was elected in 2003 EC, after she was proposed by the *wereda* and the *tabia* council approved. She replaced the former tax collector because it was believed that a woman could perform better in tax collection than a man. Before that, she was a TBA. She is grade three completed. She is member of the cabinet, the council, the party and the women's association. Her husband was the *tabia* law prosecutor until 2002 EC; but he resigned because it was not appropriate to lead his family. She wants to resign as well.

Social court leader

The social court leader is a 40 year old man. He was appointed in 2003 EC, after having worked as a legal advisor. He was nominated by the *tabia* cabinet on approval by the *tabia* council. Before being judge of the social court he was spokesman of the *tabia* council and chairman of the *tabia* farmer's association. Now he is chairman of the irrigation committee, member of the *tabia* council and member of the party. His older brother is a member of the land administration judges and he has another brother who is a member of the *tabia* council. He does not want to continue because the nature of the work is very sensitive to create conflict with people. As chair of the irrigation committee he started in 2000 EC when he was elected by the community. He is also chairperson of one drinking water committee and organising electricity.

Land administration chair

The land administration chair has been in post since one year. He replaced the leader when several leaders were removed because of corruption, while as a member of the administration he had been opposing their actions. When he was in the military from 1982 to 2000 EC he went to school up to grade five. He is also a member of the political party, member of the *tabia* Veteran Disabled Association in charge of supervising the construction of a meeting hall for the Association and he is a member of the *tabia* council. Out of his three siblings, two died at the battle ground and one has been a member of the *tabia* council, member and chairman of the party at the *tabia* level. He is happy to continue but would like if there was some incentive as the work takes much time.

Development group leader

One of the development group leaders is a 30 year old man. He was appointed to the position in 2003 EC due to his prior good experience as deputy leader of a *mengistawi budin*. He is a member of the party and of the *tabia* council and chairman of a sub-*tabia* youth association. He is also the leader of one of the only successful *iddir* in Harresaw. He was appointed to this position in September 2003 EC too, and he is a member of the reconciling committee in the *iddir*. He replaced the former *iddir* leader. He is a grade 6 completed and he has participated in various experience sharing visits. The chairman of the *tabia* is a cousin. He is happy to serve the community by performing well in his responsibilities and he plans to work hard to improve his life too.

Security committee leader

The security committee leader is a 52 year old man. He started in 1999 EC. He was not interested but the community elected him and insisted. He is 4th grade. He was a fighter for three years. He is the

security representative on the *tabia* cabinet. No one from his family has a role in the community. He wants to quit being leader of the security committee because he is busy in meetings and solving disputes so he will ask the council to release him. In the council there is pressure when people are elected that they should serve the community, it is not acceptable to refuse.

Militia leader

The militia leader is a 45 year old man and he has been leader of the militia for 12 years. He has served in total 22 years in the military and as militia leader. He was elected when the former leader was dismissed by *gimgema*. He is grade four completed. He is a member of the *tabia* council and of the political party. His sister's son was *wudabe/aderejajet* of the *tabia* until 2001 EC (meaning, he was in charge of recruiting members for the party); now, he has been promoted to the *wereda* and is working there. He wishes to continue to serve the community as leader of the militia side by side with his personal life as it is part of the development activities.

Public Relations leader

The Public Relations officer is 43 years old and he has completed grade 5. He was appointed in 1998 EC. He had prior leadership experience in the military and in different other positions at the *tabia*. Presently he is member of the *tabia* Cabinet, of the party and of the *tabia* council. He has no family member who has another role in the community. Although he is willing to serve the community as much as he can, his health is an obstacle (he is a war disabled).

Leader of the service co-operative

The leader of the service cooperative is a 55 year old priest. He was elected by the community in 2002 EC. He is 5th grade. He was *tabia* chairperson for a long time. He is priest and also leader of the community forum (peace committee). He was elected when the forum was established in 2000 EC because of his prior leadership knowledge and experience as long-timer *tabia* chairman. In addition he is a member of the *wereda* council and the chairman of the multi-purpose cooperative. He has relatives that have different roles in the *tabia* administration. He does not want to continue in any position in the community because having a leadership position decreases one's income and community members blame leaders when they face certain problems.

Head of the nursery

The nursery site head is 31 years old. He *got* the position by competing with 39 individuals who wanted to get the position. He is 10+3. He does not want to continue as he wants to focus on his private activities and the salary is insufficient (he is paid 22 *birr*/day for 30 days/month). His wife is women's affairs head in the community, and Cabinet member. She is also a decision-maker and an appeal decision-maker for the PSNP.

Health promoter

The health promoter interviewed is a 37 year old woman. She also serves as a TBA. She started to work as health volunteer in 1981 EC (the only one from the *tabia* by then) and has been involved as a health volunteer ever since. At that time the community elected her as an active member who can do different activities. For her current position she was elected because of her previous experience. She is grade two. She is a member of *wereda* council and a member of the PTA. Her husband is agriculture cadre. She is also member of a development team, in which she is secretary and dealing with health affairs. She is ok with continuing with her roles.

Head of drinking water committee

The head of the drinking water committee of one of the drinking water points is a 40 year old man, who started work about three years ago as he was elected by the community. He is 5th grade. His older brother is one of the land judges who decide on land appeals. He wants to be rich by doing business or farming activities and stop as head of the committee. He has a beer house at the centre

of the *tabia*.

PTA leader

The PTA leader is a 30 years old man. He was appointed in 2003 EC because he was chairman of the *tabia* youth association. Now, he works at the water sector. He is a member of the youth association, the council and the party.

Holders of customary office

Elders holding office

The elders' committee leader is a 61 year old man. He worked with the land distribution committee in 1983 EC and he was serving in conflict resolution too. He is a member of the party, the farmers' association and the *tabia* council. He has no family member or close relative in any role in the community. As he wants the community to get peace, he is willing to continue doing his job.

Leader of local community-initiated organisation

There is no such organisation in Harresaw.

Iddir leader

Iddir are not customary organisations in Harresaw. They are being established at present as part of the government drive to prompt various ways for people to work together, and under the umbrella of the development team and 1-5 structures. Most of the *iddir* are not functioning very well.

The leader of one of the better performing *iddir* explained that as *iddir* leader he mobilises members to pay their monthly contribution on time, calls meetings, enforces the rules for repayment of credit, monitors the finance and reports to the members when they meet once a month (on a holiday).

There is no salary or benefit. He is 32 and was appointed in this capacity in September 2003 EC, replacing the former leader because he was seen as being actively involved in development activities. He is grade 6 and he has participated in various experience sharing visits. He is a member of the party and a member of the youth association. His cousin is the chairman of the *tabia*. He is also the leader of the development team from which the *Iddir* was formed.

Meskel savings group organiser

The leader of the Meskel feast organisation is 61 years old and he was elected in about 1979 EC, taking over from his father. The position is not hereditary but the community appreciated his loyalty and fairness as community leader making reconciliations, and member of the land distribution. He has no family member that has any role in the community. He is member of the political party, of the *tabia* council and of the community leaders. He wishes to continue serving the community as long as it appreciates his services and as long as he can.

Mehaber leader

The chair of the *tabia* largest *mehaber* is a 52 year old man. He became chairperson in 1987 EC; he was elected by the members. He is 4th grade and was educated during the Haile Selassie regime. He is also the one who organised contributions for churches from those living in Saudi Arabia when he was there. There is no one else from his family who has a role in the community. He wants to continue as chairperson, depending on the will of the members.

Equb leader

The *equb* leader interviewed is a 38 year old woman. She has started working when the *equb* was established in August 2003 EC. She was selected by the members. She is not able to read or write. There is no one from her family who has a role in the community. She wants to continue as chairperson of the *equb* because it is for her benefit and it does not take time.

Religious leaders

The religious leader interviewed as such is a 47 year old man; he has been appointed as leader five years ago because he had played a good role as *kushet* religious leader. He had completed grade 4 before his religious education. He is a member of the party and of the *tabia* council and he is leader of a network. He has relatives who participate in different roles in the community. He also has been serving the community and is happy to do his religious and other services. He also is lineage leader, elected after the former leader died. Another priest as said earlier used to be the *tabia* leader for many years and he now is the (reluctant) chairman of the *tabia* cooperative.

Other notable people

Educated opinion leaders

In Harresaw the educated opinion leaders are ex-fighters and people who have a religious school background and modern education. They are fast to accept new changes and mobilise the community. They had exposure to other places. Community members identified two priests and one *haleka* (destined to be priest when married), five ex-soldiers (2 sergeants, 2 lieutenants and 1 corporal) as well as two civilians. These people advise and explain to the community about environmental issues, new development systems and government policies.

Rich and successful farmers

Key community informants gave eleven names of rich and successful farmers. Some of the rich and successful farmers in Harresaw are 'recognised' model champion farmers; they have been trained about modern farming system, participate actively to development activities and play leading roles in various committees, and collaborate and work with the *tabia* administration and the DAs. Others are farmers who are not awarded as models but doing well. There are successful women farmers too.

Among those interviewed, one 50-year old champion model farmer became model by concentrating on his own activity after resigning from being a law prosecutor, and because he listened to the DAs' advice. Champions are expected to use government agricultural inputs and modern beehives and to be role models for the community. He did what he promised during the training. He said that his life has considerably changed in the last five years as he focused on his activities. He is now considered to be a rich man. He sells his products at the Dera market; he has benefited from increasing prices on the market. He contacts the DAs when he has a problem or when he wants advice, and also the *wereda* experts when they come to the *tabia*, as well as other model farmers in the *tabia*.

The most successful woman farmer, a 45 year-old widow, has irrigation land; she sows wheat, lentils and beans. She was not successful in using fertiliser last year because of frost. She also grows onion, garlic and potatoes and benefits by selling vegetables in Harresaw. She also has some livestock activities. She said that for her the market changes are important because she sells at better prices. She does not have other roles in the community and has no one in her family who has a role in the community. It is her son who communicates with DAs and other farmers and brings her information.

The most successful male young farmer, a 30 year old man who leads a development team and a large and successful *iddir*, is landless but sharecrops irrigated land. He has other activities too (e.g. he has a sewing machine and makes clothes that he sells on the market in Dera). He is successful with his irrigation activities because he implemented modern inputs provided by government and he used credit properly. Besides, the increasing price of the products he sells has helped him to be successful (this was a very important factor). His older brother is a member of the *tabia* land administration. The *tabia* chairman is his cousin.

Businessmen and traders

The people named by key community informants as businesspeople and traders have opened shops and sell things that the community asks for. They make business by moving from place to place.

One 26 year-old businessman is engaged in petty trade (keeping shop, selling livestock skins and hides) and he rents land for farming. He is a member of the youth association and he contributes the

annual fee because he hopes to receive land through the association. He has no family member who has a role in the community. His wife helps him in doing his work. He has planned to open a restaurant in the near future. When he wants information about the price of items he contacts other traders in the *tabia* and those who are in Atsbi.

Another 27 year-old is engaged in petty trade and selling drinks. He brings supplies for the drink houses and shops from Atsbi and sells them in the *tabia* and in Koneba (neighbouring *wereda* in Afar). He dropped out of school and started running the shop when his older brother who used to run it left for Atsbi. He is a member of the youth association but he refused to accept other roles in the community because he is busy with his private business. There is no other family member who has a role in the community. When he faces a problem in doing his job like lack of money to buy items he discusses with other traders in the *tabia*. He goes to the community elders when there are individuals who borrow items from his shop and refuse to pay.

One young woman trader sells consumption goods like soap, sugar, candy, and coffee which she brings them from Atsbi and sells them at Harresaw. She works day in day out in her shop as it is the same as her living place. She started the shop with the savings she made from being employed as the shop keeper at the cooperative for some time. She also studies and is in her third year of a distance education diploma. She gets a good result from her shop, and her father also assists her in filling gaps. She has no role in the community nor does anyone from her family. Whenever she wants information she asks other business persons. She does not communicate with the *tabia* or *wereda* officials or with community leaders.

Investors

There is no investor in Harresaw.

Skilled workers

This 45 year-old man started work as skilled worker more than twenty years ago when he was in Eritrea. He has never taken any training but he learned through experience. He was a militia in the Ethio-Eritrea border conflict. He generally participates in development activities and safety net but he has no membership in the party or in other associations even though his older son and his younger sister are members of the party. When he wants some support or advice regarding his job he contacts his friends and relatives who live in Dera and Atsbi. In the *tabia* no one has better knowledge and experience regarding this type of work but everyone collaborates with him in giving information, lending money and doing what they can to help. In turn, he also supports people as much as he can; he said helping each other is something common in the *tabia*.

Traditional healer

The man interviewed is bone setter, he cuts uvula, he pulls teeth of adults when they get sick, and he gives herbs. In very rare cases he treats patients by bleeding, only for very close relatives as this is now prohibited by the law. He has almost abandoned the work as very few people still come. He said that he has no relation with the government health centre and hospital and has not heard of government regulation, although he knows that the government prohibits the use of unprotected sharp and bladed tools and does not allow the practice of bleeding and cutting of uvula. His day-to-day activity is the same as the other farmers in the *tabia*. He does not have other roles in the community. He has a daughter who is a development team leader.

Traditional birth attendant

There are 4 TBAs in Harresaw but now they are not allowed to attend birth: they follow pregnant mothers, make them to go for their ANC visits and advise them to deliver at the health centre. They do this as volunteers and work to assist the health extension workers. There is no relation with the health centre and hospital. One of the TBAs, a 37-year old woman started as a volunteer more than twenty years ago. She is also a member of the *wereda* Council and a member of the PTA. But as a

TBA she does not communicate with the *tabia* officials or other community leaders.

Ex-soldiers

There are a number of ex-soldiers and those with disabilities have an association. Ex-soldiers are usually respected in Harresaw and many people in leadership positions are ex-soldiers. Some of them have been exposed to many places. One ex-soldier told the researchers that

When he was a young man he was taken by the Derg to resettle in Wollega. He was chairman of the settlers and was going to school. He returned home after a few years then went to Saudi. He returned from Saudi and for two years lived as a farmer. He then joined the TPLF as a soldier, participated in conquering Ambo town and entered Addis Ababa after numerous battle. Then he was assigned to the Southern region where he stayed up to 1990 EC. He was given his pension rights but he re-joined the military during the Ethio-Eritrean conflict in 1991 EC and was assigned to Zalambesa. He was working on an office because he already was on pension. He has farm land which he received in 1983 EC when the EPRDF took power.

Women's leaders

The women's leaders are the chairwoman of the *tabia* WA, the vice chairwoman and the women's affairs Cabinet member as well as the *tabia* finance officer (also tax collector). There are also three women in every sub-*tabia* who are WA chairwoman, cashier and secretary. The main activity of these women leaders is to sensitise women's groups about the unfairness and oppression against women that have to be avoided, collect membership contributions, mobilise women to participate in development activities and collaborate with the HEWs and TBAs to coordinate vaccination. They organise contributions of money to help any member of the association in trouble. They participate in the identification of safety net beneficiaries and to the *tabia* Council and Cabinet. They are members of the political party and of the women's league.

Youth opinion leaders

There are different types of young people who influence the opinion of their generation. Those who migrate in Saudi Arabia are one type. But there also are influential voices among the young people who stayed at home.

One such young opinion leader is a woman, whose account of what the young generation aspires to is outlined in section 4.6 below. As an individual, she explained that people referred to her as opinion leader for wearing fashionable clothes for young women, for having and using a mobile phone first among women, for travelling with her husband on a bicycle as far as Atsbi, for showing the equality of women in her practical life. She is married and has four children and she lives with her husband and children. She is involved in farming, and she is women's affairs representative in the *tabia*. She is an opinion leader in the community for the reasons she gave but as women affairs' head of the *tabia* she teaches about the rights and equality of women in the *tabia*.

Political activists

Six of the eight men identified as political activists (who are the members of the *tabia* 'basic party structure') are ex-soldiers. These ex-fighters of TPLF are now serving in membership and leadership positions of the party in the *tabia*. The main duty of the political activists is to sensitise the community about the objectives of the political party, to mobilise the community to vote for TPLF/EPRDF and to reject opposing parties in times of election, and to recruit new members for the political party. They also work for and play role model in implementing government policies. They participate in the *tabia* Council and various work of the *tabia* administration.

Elite network map

The above shows that in Harresaw there is overlap and interlinkage between different elite groups, namely, the elite leading on the government formal structures (including now the development team and 1-5 group leaders), the elders and the religious leaders, and the economic elite. This is further

illustrated by the findings summarised in the table below.

Box 11: The various elite groups in Harresaw: a summary

The nine **community elders** are also model farmer (1), religious leader (1), organisers of the Meskel feast (2), members of the Council and knowledgeable people.

Among the six **priests** one is also an elder; another is one of the community leaders organising the Meskel feast; one used to be *tabia* leader for long years.

Among the 11 named **rich successful farmers** two are ex-soldiers, two are elders and one of them is also one of the leaders organising the Meskel feast.

None of the ten well known **traders, businesspeople and delala** is among the elders or community leaders, none of them is a Cabinet member, and they are not considered to be opinion leaders. One of them is social court judge. Several are members of the youth association.

Among the ten **educated opinion leaders** two are priests, and five are ex-army people. They have a religious education or had exposure to other places. Most are party members. They are networked with the *tabia* officials. One is also an elder; another is one of the organisers of the Meskel feast.

Among the **tabia Cabinet members** from the community, the *tabia* leader and the security official are both ex-army men and named among the educated opinion leaders. They are also among the local political activists and members of the *tabia* political 'basic structure' (*meseretawi wudabe*).

All members of the *meseretawi wudabe* except one are ex-army people.

Two of the **women's leaders** are also Cabinet members: one is the women affairs' representative, who is also a young woman opinion leader, a member of the *tabia* food security task force, a party and women's league member; the other is the finance official. Two other influential women are the WA leader and her deputy. These women have important roles in e.g. selecting PSNP beneficiaries, collaborating with the HEWs and volunteers, and raising women's awareness about their rights. They participate to the *tabia* Council.

Thus, people belonging to one elite group often also belong to another. E.g. the leader of the service cooperative who used to be *tabia* administrator in the past is a priest; some of priests are elders; it is one of the elders who is the head of the PSNP appeal committee – though it is not really functional (it is noteworthy that he is not a party member). Elite from different groups consult each other formally and informally (e.g. religious leaders and elders involved in conflict mediation processes, sitting on several committees, and many of whom are Council members). They may also pass each other's messages on topics about which there is agreement (e.g. messages about HIV AIDS passed at the churches; rich successful farmers, priests/religious leaders, educated opinion leaders including ex-soldiers about 'hard work').

There are also points about which there is less convergence or one group is not sure about the other – e.g. priests are less vocal against reducing funeral and teskar expenses and working on all days except the agreed holy days, than they are about reducing extravagant expenses for weddings; *wereda* officials are not too sure about elders' understanding of some of the things about which they exert influence over the community (e.g. in relation to women's rights).

Today, local leaders are also supposed to belong to the economic elite; they should be model farmers and graduate early, showing the example to others. In reality, this overlap is not perfect. Many of the local leaders stressed that their (often multiple) responsibilities hinder their own household's development. Conversely, one of the model farmers in Harresaw became model once he was allowed to resign from his position as a legal prosecutor for the *tabia*.

As the box above shows, for a number of relatively well-off and known people their livelihood mainly depends (to a varying but sometimes large extent) on options that are hardly compatible with spending most of one's time in the community (traders, shop-keepers, skilled workers, and nowadays the growing group of international migrants and returnees).

Party membership crisscrosses these different elite groups (meaning by this, membership of the ruling party/TPLF). Whilst this may not be the case for the other groups, members of the formal government structure elite are all party members. It is even a 'TPLF law' down to the level of the leadership of the development teams and 1-5 groups.

Ex-fighters are an important elite group in Harresaw, also overlapping with other eliteness statuses. In addition to the examples given above, two of the land judges are ex-fighters; the *wereda* councillor is an ex-fighter and explains that once he was selected by the party to be candidate the community supported him because he is an ex-fighter; the militia leader is also an ex-fighter, as well as the deputy leader of the service cooperative (who is the politically important household head).

Among the younger generation there are young men doing well with farming and holding local leadership positions, thus conforming to the model of overlapping local political and economic elite - like the young man engaged in irrigation on sharecropped land, leader of a development team and of the only successful *iddir* to this day. This includes young women – like the young woman considered as an opinion leader, known for her progressive ideas and attitude (having been the first woman to own a mobile phone and travelling at the back of her husband's bicycle up to Atsbi) and who is deeply engaged in local affairs through her position as Cabinet member representing women. But these may not be the majority.

The interviews of young people suggest that eliteness is associated with having a relatively settled form of life – notably having established one's own household.

It is debatable whether the government employees working at the *tabia* level are part of the local elite. On one hand they have some influence on local decision-making processes. On the other hand some of them (teachers and DAs in particular) do not belong to the community and their career is likely to call them elsewhere after some years – even when they are appreciated by the community. Things are different when they are also a member of the community like the *tabia* manager, who is a relative of the *tabia* administrator, a member of the local youth association and youth League hence a party member, the leader of the education committee of the *tabia* and a Council member.

Although some of the economic success stories are the feat of women (e.g. the woman head of household who has de facto graduated from PSNP as she does better with her irrigation) and there are a few women considered as influential, eliteness seems to continue to be more of a male characteristic in Harresaw.

Network exclusions

Key informants explained that it used to be important to be connected to the *tabia* and sub-*tabia* officials (more so than with *wereda* officials though this could be useful to fill information gaps), to '*have better access to information about new developmental activities in the tabia..., to know how things go in the tabia..., to know about one's rights and how to deal with it when one is denied one's rights*'. There are not many people who have a close network with *tabia* officials. Most people would approach them only when they had a specific reason and so, they used to have less access to this type of information.

However in the last few years things have changed: it is no longer considered to be a privilege to be networked with *tabia* leaders. This is because people have enough information about what they want to know through other ways. And, there is a significant advantage in not being included in this network as it allows escaping from attending frequent meetings!

Also, according to some people '*the aspiration of the youth is to keep away from participating in political activities. They do not want to participate in politics because there is poverty and they want to improve their life. Those who are engaged in different political activities waste their time for no economic benefit*'. Given the overlap between aims and leadership of government and party, keeping away from politics is likely to mean making as few contacts as possible with the *tabia* administration and the 'development army' drive – although as said just above, not all young people

keep aside and some individuals in the young generation have engaged with the local development/political processes.

Most of the community respondents highlighted that not being part of the network of *tabia* officials had no incidence on access to services and to getting support from the PSNP or as emergency food aid. One key respondent explained that there was no group that could be called excluded in the community. Among the vulnerable people interviewed, one man who is sharecropping the land of a woman whose husband has migrated explained that he was unfairly excluded from the PSNP because he did not turn up for the PWs as he was sick but officials did not believe him – but he does not seem to have bad relationships with them in general. Most of the interviewed elderly people or people with disability seemed less well-connected (e.g. in some instance saying that they were not 1-5 members). But this seemed to either arise from their having asked to be dispensed from attending meetings, paying membership fees etc., or an implicit assumption by *tabia* officials that they would have little to contribute (to developmental activities, community decision-making etc.).

One problematic issue was access to land through the reallocation process. There were allegations that most of the people who *got* land were those with personal contacts with the land people and that the process was biased – although this may have referred to those officials who were later on dismissed as explained elsewhere. But there were also accounts that only those paying their youth association membership fee would be considered in the lottery process.

Indeed there are several cases of what might be called ‘forced inclusion’ – that is, people explaining that there were threats of them being excluded from getting any food aid if they were not paying the membership fee of the local mass associations; or refusing to take fertiliser to use on their irrigated land; or refusing or delaying to dig their latrine.

Social interactions within the community

Government-people relations – co-operation, non-co-operation and complexity

***Wereda*-community relations**

According to *wereda* officials Harresaw *tabia* is exemplary in terms of cooperation with the *wereda* and implementing government activities. It is second to Barka Adisebha *tabia*, which does better in implementing the zero-grazing policy. But in Harresaw the *tabia* administration and Council are strong because they have committed young people in leadership positions. The *tabia* administrator is indeed a quite young man, respected because he is an ex-fighter. The vice-chairman of the *tabia* who is also local party leader is a really young man (30). The *tabia* manager, a relative of the administrator and who is also a youth member of the Council, plays an active role.

Type of relations

Most of the relations of the community with the *wereda* are mediated through the *tabia* administration and government employees working at the *tabia* level. Even justice cases must be referred to the *wereda* court by the social court or land administration. Community members see the *wereda* as the source of information on new things but as mentioned earlier, they think that they are less dependent on this channel of information than in the past. The *tabia* vice-leader explained that at times he was asking clarification on new things to the *wereda* administrator and vice-administrator before he would explain them to the community. The *wereda* is also using the *wereda* Councillors representing the *tabia* as a channel to inform community people.

Tabia officials, government employees and community members in various ‘community volunteer’ positions go to the relevant sector office for advice or when they meet a problem ‘*beyond their capacity*’ – e.g. pest on beans (irrigation committee leader), technical extension advice (DAs), security issue (militia leader going to the militia office), school management issue (parents encroaching on school land for which the PTA asked the *wereda* education office to intervene) etc. *Wereda* officials are also called upon in cases of complex conflicts (with the Afar, between *gots*).

Tabia people usually explained that this type of interaction with the *wereda* (for advice and support in case of problems) was not very frequent.

The reporting aspect was not stressed very strongly. The *tabia* propaganda Cabinet member said that he was quite regularly attending gimgema sessions at the *wereda* level, where the performance of the different *tabias* was assessed. *Tabia* officials did not mention that *wereda* officials were visiting other than occasionally when there was a specific issue (conflict, or assessing the situation when there was a health epidemic of unknown causes in 2002 EC).

The *wereda* is also a source of training for various kinds of people beyond the government experts – for instance elders were trained by a *wereda* judge, development team and 1-5 leaders by *wereda* officials, model farmers get training in Atsbi and sometimes Wukro. In contrast, health promoters explained that they do no longer have relationships directly with the *wereda* health office and things come to them through the HEWs.

Characteristics of the relations

At the broadest level *tabia* officials explained that the community understands well its rights (elect, express ideas and get services) and its duties (paying taxes and using the land well so as to leave it in a proper condition for the future generations). There were effectively no complaints about taxes and about that form of the government action among the community people interviewed.

At a more specific level, the *wereda* is the source of government interventions. Several community respondents explained that there is no government project or proposal that is resisted by the community. One person said *'there is nothing that could help the community but that the government is not doing, or something the government is doing that the community would like them to stop.'* Many people (including women) stressed that the government was doing a lot, including for women; the young people interviewed tended to agree. There was appreciation of certain interventions - notably road paving, irrigation, PSNP and emergency support, the introduction of hybrid cattle and oxen, the easier access to health and education services, the NRM works including watershed development which had showed spectacular results in one place. The young women appreciated vaccination and education (for their children and the younger generation) and the better access to family planning and health services generally.

However, underneath this broad endorsement interviews show that there are also interventions or ways to implement things that are not popular; and there are things that the community would like the government to do. Among the things that the community is unhappy about one is the lack of action with regard to provision of drinking water in some parts of the *tabia* – although they recognise that it is likely beyond the *wereda* capacity and should be done by the regional government. Several people also highlighted that the government should create job opportunities for the young people. Some women said that association membership fees should be used for something useful like buying grinding mills.

With regard to unpopular interventions, initially people suspected the government to have some hidden intention behind the introduction of the zero-grazing/protected land policies. There is at least foot-dragging with the latrines, birth deliveries at health facilities and planting crops that farmers think are less resistant and planting early because of frost.

There are much mixed feelings as well in relation to the way people are 'enforced' to do certain things - in particular, taking fertiliser and improved seeds. One man, reflecting the sentiment of many, said that

...any work related to the community should be done by creating common understanding and things can be done successfully only through discussion and not by direct rule. For example,... no one should be forced to take fertiliser. The tabia administration creates fear among the community members who refuse to take fertiliser by saying that they will be excluded from the FFW programmes because they have improved their life. This is not acceptable.'

People resent this enforcement, highlighting that when there is a bad harvest they are worse-off. They resent this all the more that in contrast with some other issues this one cannot be raised in *gimgema* sessions. People explain that this happens because *tabia* officials and experts want to outperform other *tabias'* performance before the *wereda*, thus recognising that the pressure comes from the *wereda* while not totally exonerating *tabia* officials and experts.

In turn, DAs explained that there are '*many problems in trying to accomplish different government plans. There are plans that come from the wereda saying that the community should work on this e.g. distribute 300 modern beehives, but the community has not taken them... When it is planned to give loans it is found that the community is in debt from previous credit.*' The HEWs put the lack of cooperation for some packages down to lack of time, labour and other resources, and some resistance. The DAs highlight the lack of awareness of farmers and that for instance, they do not calculate the costs and benefits when they refuse to take fertiliser.

There is a distinct difference between officials' and people's account in relation to how decisions affecting the community are made; the former insist that there is community consultation, the latter explain that there is no such consultation, or it is consultation about things predefined by experts and the *tabia* administration. In general people do not have issues with the decisions made (e.g. priorities for PWs and free labour) but for some of them the ways in which the decisions are made leaves to desire. This is the case for instance in relation to the contributions through deductions from PSNP transfers, a 'majority decision' whereas they say that it should be left to individuals.

Tabia officials and community people agree about the fact that there are far too many committees and meetings. Underpinning this there seems to also be a feeling that there are too many priorities and not enough time is given to see the effect of one measure before jumping to the next idea. As one man said, '*the community does not accept having a lot of meetings and there is overload of programmes. It creates a great problem when the community is asked to accept a programme before the first programme is completed.*'

Those of the community respondents who had something specific to say about the *wereda* court and police were critical. Several of them mentioned that the *wereda* court and the police were corrupt and dealing with cases in a biased manner, which was '*shameful even for the government*'. They explained that it was not a matter of connection but of bribes. One man gave an example related to a house in Atsbi which he thought he had bought and for which he had paid 9,000 *birr*; explaining that the seller contested that he has sold it and the court gave reason to the seller because he had bribed the judge.

***Tabia* - community relations**

The relations between *tabia* officials and experts working at *tabia* level and the community are influenced by the paradoxes and tensions just described with regard to the relations between the community and the *wereda*.

This is perhaps most acute for the 'community volunteers' that is, the members of the community serving in various leadership positions. For the government employees as just explained, the big issue is that when plans from the *wereda* are unfeasible because the community does not cooperate (for various reasons that they at times understand well!), they are in trouble because this is seen as poor performance on their side. For the volunteers, the same is true but in addition, their recourse to coercion or the threat of coercion make them unpopular or pit community people against them, which they do not like. As the leader of the cooperative explained:

For the future the respondent does not want to have any position in the community. He wants to continue as priest... This is so because having a leadership position decreases income and community members also blame leaders when they face certain problems. He does not want to be the chair of the cooperative. He wants to improve his life by working hard.

Many among the 'community volunteers' wanted to resign or quit their position for the same

reasons – being better able to focus on their livelihood strategies, and avoiding conflict with community people. Several of them, including the *tabia* administrator, explained that they had asked to be permitted to resign but this had been refused by the *tabia* Council or the community did not want to let them go. This suggests that the community appreciates their services – or that people do not want to run the risk of having to volunteer in turn!

At the same time the community volunteers get some sympathy from community members who recognise that in many ways, the position of the officials is not enviable not least because of the pressure they are subject to from the *wereda* and the party, and also because the burden of their responsibilities prevents them from spending more time to improve their own lives.

Local elite-people relations

The different elite groups are interconnected as described earlier. At the same time, elite do not seem to be seen as fundamentally different from other community members. There also does not seem to be feelings of envy or jealousy. This may be because for some of the elite groups, being part of it or not depends on clear and long agreed criteria (elders, priests, Meskel organisers, opinion leaders, ex-fighters); whereas being part of the formal elite groups like party and government structure leaders has disadvantages as much as if not more than advantages. As noted earlier, a number of the people belonging to these elite groups, especially the formal ones, would happily resign, or they play their role out of a sense of duty and responsibility toward the community. Although this was not said explicitly, there is a sense that their role and the services they render is in turn recognised by the non-elite community members.

Economic elites are respected, but it is something to emulate rather than envy, and in addition economic eliteness is relatively precarious in the local environment.

Ethnic/clan relations

This is not relevant in Harresaw.

Relations among different religious groups

This is not relevant in Harresaw considering that the community is 100% Orthodox Christian.

Class relations

As described earlier in this report there are many ways in which the community in Harresaw is structured. In the past few years a number of new statuses have emerged, including the various elite groups already mentioned. The ways in which households construct their livelihoods also seem to be increasingly differentiated (e.g. younger or female-headed households making a living out of running the small shops of the *tabia* centre; returned migrants investing in trade or businesses locally or in Atsbi; educated young people seeking or getting formal employment). And differences that existed in the past may have become more accentuated or certain groups have expanded (e.g. landed vs. landless households, of which there are many more). Access to capital has also taken a new turn with the flow of remittances or savings sent or brought back by migrants. The younger generations have aspirations that differ from those of the older landed generations, in which education has a role although at the same time it is no longer seen as guarantee for a better life. All these trends suggest that the community may well be more stratified than used to be the case.

As in the past, there are major differences among households that relate to where they are located in their respective household's lifecycle, which therefore continuously evolve over time. However, it may well be that generally the community is ageing. International migration is mainly the feat of the younger generation and while it seems that many of those who leave keep links with the community and return, those who are landless are said to then go and establish themselves in towns like Dera, Atsbi or even Wukro. So, the internal balance between households at different points in their lifecycle is probably also changing.

Because of the multiplicity of these differentiation processes it is hard to distinguish groups that could be defined as 'classes'.

Interactions affecting gender relations

Similarly to relations between classes, there is much change for both men/boys and women/girls. Some of it tends to decrease the differences between sexes – like schooling, and the push for one's economic betterment which leads women and girls to engage in activities hence forth considering as 'male'. The availability of family planning and contraception seems to have contributed to women having greater choice (e.g. being to avoid unwanted pregnancies, space children or postpone having the first child, being able to migrate etc.) – even though this is only emerging.

There are other aspects of the gender relations where the change so far appears to be less pronounced – for instance in relation to domestic chores and women's lesser role in community management and political affairs.

One puzzling aspect is this large number of women having couple-like relationships with men and bearing children, without these being official marriage relationships. Clearly for some women this kind of relationship is a 'second best' option. But this does not seem to be the case for all of them.

Interactions affecting inter-generational relations

In inter-generational relations there are both changes and continuities. Community members generally emphasised that relations between parents and children/youth of different ages are less authoritarian (less beating of 7-12 children, no ordering of 12-16 years old) and more discussion and trying to reach agreement. Parents also send their children to school, which is a change. Around 16-17 young men in particular are said to begin to be concerned about getting their own income. Young women may start thinking about marrying. Some people say that education makes young people think and behave as adults earlier than used to be the case in the past.

One big change is that when young people start thinking about their own livelihood, it has become increasingly difficult for them to get land and establish themselves. As noted earlier this results in people marrying later. Sometimes as in the past they marry but the wife stays with her parents or in-law while her husband gets some capital by working elsewhere including migrating abroad. In other cases there are conflicts between parents and their children when the children marry and claim a piece of land to establish themselves. Land is a cause for inter-generational tension more broadly in the community. A number of young men explained that for instance, the policy of giving hillside land to youth was being blocked by the older landed generation.

At the same time as said earlier children are seen to be the best possible support to their parents. There are indeed many cases of such support, in various ways. Some children send remittances to their parents – although when they have their own household this competes with remittances they send on that side too. In other cases households take a surviving elderly parent to live with them, like this woman who explains that her mother lives with them, she pays all her expenses from the household's budget and although her mother has land, it is not fertile so, she says, it does not bring them much. Another woman explains that she and her mother-in-law cooperates, she does the work outside (like fetching water and getting the grain to the mill) while her mother-in-law takes care of cleaning their two houses.

Migration affects inter-generational relationships in multiple ways. Remittances but at the same time absence or lower level of labour force in households affect patterns of inter-generational support. Also, relations may be strained by the decision process surrounding migration. In some cases the youth want to go and nag their parents to give them the necessary capital by selling assets or borrowing from relatives or people they know. Some parents may agree quite willingly and be happy about their child's decision (especially when they have a bigger debt that they hope will be paid in this way), but others may be deeply unhappy or worried. In other cases parents are actually quite keen to send their children – even though they may not always overtly say this.

Tabia officials explain that in Harresaw there are 215 old people who need support, but the *tabia* administration has no way to give them 'organised support' other than from PSNP and emergency support. These old people are given direct support in PSNP. Labour support is given to needy old people in latrine construction; when their house collapses the community mobilises to build a new one, through group work – often the youth association gets involved in this. Now the development teams and 1-5s are supposed to be providing support to elderly people.

External relations

Relations with other communities

Wereda officials explained that natural resource-related conflict with communities in the Afar Region are a development challenge for the *wereda* as a whole, and for the *tabias* bordering the Region – including Harresaw – in particular. The main causes of conflict are about grazing land and forests found on the border. The Afar destroy the forests that are protected by Tigreans and get their cattle grazing on land which is supposed to be protected. There are also such conflicts between adjacent *tabias* within and outside of the *wereda*. *Tabia* officials and people in Harresaw confirmed that there have been land, forest and grassland conflicts with all of the adjacent *tabias* except Hadnet.

There was a time when people killed each other in conflicts with Afar and G/kidan *tabia*. The problems with Afar were very serious until the *wereda* boundary was clearly demarcated in 2000 EC. Since then the conflict intensity is substantially lower and it does not go beyond beating with sticks and stones. When such conflicts arise community elders on both sides participate in their resolution. If there are people harmed by the conflict they are taken to get medical treatment. If a person from Atsbi is harmed the Afar elders should take responsibility to treat the person and vice versa. Similarly community elders from both sides intervene when there is conflict with other adjacent *tabias*. When it is beyond elders' capacity the *wereda* administration intervenes to discuss with the two parties.

Views are mixed as to whether conflict resolution has been successful. Some people emphasise the decreased intensity of conflict and explain that there is now a permanent committee to handle it, established five years ago. Others on the contrary stress that be it with Afar or adjacent *tabias*, these conflicts regularly occur. Long term solutions have not been found and in the views of the head of the successful farmer, they might actually get worse in the future. For instance the conflict with G/Kidan *tabia* was serious again in 2000 EC. *Tabia* administrators and community elders were involved in trying to resolve it but in spite of this, by the time of the fieldwork the negotiation had not been concluded satisfactorily.

People from Harresaw have also non-conflictual relationships with Afar communities. There are long-standing trade patterns (salt, hides from Afar to Tigray; goods from Tigray to Afar). People from Harresaw go to Afar to find daily labour opportunities including herding, and for livestock rearing when there is drought in the community. There are marital ties especially with people from Harresaw *kushet*. The Afar are those who showed people from Harresaw the route to migrate to Saudi Arabia.

The community has marriage, religious and cultural linkages with all the neighbouring communities – although with the Afar this is limited to a few families from Harresaw. As explained earlier there are tight and increasing market and service links as well, especially with the small town of Dera and the *wereda* urban centre of Atsbi. Due to the increasing international migration and returnees establishing themselves in these towns, an increasing number of families in Harresaw have family members or relatives living outside of the community and with whom they keep close links in many cases.

Partly because of this and also in relation to their market interests, people from Harresaw and other rural *tabias* in the *wereda* are said to take a keen interest in the development of Atsbi.

Community – NGO relations

There are no longer any NGO working in the *tabia*. World Vision and a project called Adonay used to be active until a couple of years ago, supporting various groups of vulnerable people. With their phasing out this type of support is no longer available as the government does not support these groups other than through the PSNP.

Social cohesion in the community and beyond

About social cohesion in the community and whether and how it had changed, knowledgeable respondents from the community highlighted that the area is very peaceful and there is a high level of security. They noted that dispute cases are minimised thanks to the various dispute mediation and resolution activities of elders, lineages, *mehaber* etc. People value these customary dispute resolution mechanisms precisely because they are better able to preserve social cohesion, as they are based on principles of reconciliation and mutual forgiveness instead of the formal system's reliance on punishment of one party. The community is also more peaceful because people focus on their own activities and want to improve themselves. And customary ways of supporting each other and bonding have remained strong, according to most people (mutual support among relatives, siblings, children and parents and neighbours; *mehaber* and people's support in weddings and mournings, people visiting each other and eating together during holy days etc.).

At the same time, they recognised that '*people are a bit sensitive in matters related to land*'. Conflicts between households frequently occur about land issues. In particular, the recent directive from the *wereda* that land reallocation should be done at *got* level instead of *kushet* level is said to be a threat for the future as it affects the relationship between people living in different parts of the *tabia*. People from the *got* in which the public buildings of the *tabia* have been erected complain that they have less land to reallocate and should be compensated by getting access to some of the reallocable land from the other *got*, which vehemently refuse. At the same time, this change came about because when land reallocation was done at the *kushet* level there were allegations that the process was biased against landless people from one of the *gots* because land administration people were from the other *got*. Landless youth are also disgruntled because in the land reallocation process they are only one of several priority groups, together with female-headed households, elders, veterans and PLWHAs.

Thus on the one hand, social cohesion is under threat because of the increasingly acute shortage of land – which is the most basic resource for the core livelihood system in the community. On the other hand, the alternative livelihood options that an increasing number of people from Harresaw adopt by choice or as a matter of necessity introduce other potential threats to social cohesion, linked to greater differences in expectations and exposures to ideas from outside of the community.

Ideas in the community

Different ideas on a range of issues and coming from a range of sources reach the community. The most commonly mentioned means through which new ideas may reach community people are the government and in particular *wereda* officials, linkages with urban people and linkages with migrants. These are further discussed below.

In addition, radio programmes are a very important vehicle for ideas. This includes educational programmes for students and also programmes giving explanation on a range of health and agriculture extension issues. TV programmes were mentioned too but less than the radio, which many households have. There are still only a few people having a TV, in addition people watching are mostly children and students and they mostly watch drama and wrestling. However, there is a TV and DVD equipment in the *tabia* hall and it is sometimes used to '*teach people about irrigation, the importance of vegetables and advice about how to improve the livelihood of the tabia community*' (one woman from the community).

Ideas also enter the community through people reading books and newspapers. Several adult respondents mentioned that they would like more materials to read. The politically important head of household said that he is reading books on laws as this is helping him in his conflict resolution activities. The husband of a woman who is TBA and health volunteer explained that he has a good understanding of maternal and child health issues because he reads materials that she brings home. He is also a cabinet member and he gets knowledge about maternal health services in meetings. (In spite of this his wife had recently delivered at home).

Students also tells things to their family, like one of the teenage boys interviewed who said that he was teaching his family about infant feeding, preventing transmittable diseases and treating illnesses. An elderly woman explained that her grandchildren had taught her about HIV/AIDS and avoiding stigma. The HEWs noted that families with students are more likely to follow some of the advices that remain less widely adopted, like delivery at the health centre.

Women may be slightly less easily reached – although in some households the wife was the one to give details on the radio programmes that she was listening to (cleanness, balanced diet, health, the benefit of savings, how to improve soil fertility) and how useful this is. In general information is available more easily and ideas travel more easily too. As one man said:

As the community has good information, it cannot be easily twisted by glittering things. (Middle wealth household head)

Local customary repertoire

The conservatives ‘*who do not want to change from the past way of thinking and doing*’ were said to be most often elderly people and women as well as from the current generation (of adults) those who have never had formal education.

However, the local customary repertoire does not seem to be upheld without any change by many people in the community. From the interviews there did not seem to be people who would unequivocally argue that children should not go to school (or girls); that girls should marry early; that the older generation has the right to decide everything on behalf of their children and parents the right to beat their children and command their adolescent children; that the younger generation should all continue to live as farmers like their parents; that women should obey their husband and generally not involve with community issues. There were still some people holding to the ban of marriages to the 6th and 7th generations within a lineage but not very many.

Thus while there are conservatives, even them have adopted one or several of the progressive ideas of the local modern repertoire while they continue to defend some of the local customary ideas or to behave in line with customary norms for some actions in their life. E.g. a woman who says that she is well aware of the means of protection against HIV/AIDS may still spend a lot on her husband’s funeral and mourning celebrations in spite of being poor. She may want to marry her daughter because this would give both her daughter and herself protection. Women still perform much of the domestic chores; but the same women will also be *wereda* Councillor, health promoters, members of the party and having great ambitions for their daughters.

Local modern repertoire

The local modern repertoire gives great importance to education, but at the same time there is a growing disillusion among both the youngster and their parents when seeing the difficulties of pursuing to higher levels and finding employment. As key respondents said:

Despite the willingness and practice of community members in sending their children to high school, they have an increasing sense of hopelessness about continuation to preparatory after 10th grade. This is because people invest in their children’s education but they fail to pass and sit idle at home. This makes them equal with those who do not go to school.

Modern people educate their daughters in the same way as their sons; they respect their children’s

opinion and discuss with them rather than commanding them; they respect the choice of their daughters in the same way as their sons'; spouses have better communication among themselves and avoid divorce. Progressives use modern health services and are more attentive to their hygiene and to pregnant women's and children's health, they vaccinate their children, and listen to the advice of the HEWs with regard to delivery in a health facility. Partners take an HIV/AIDS test before marrying.

In the local modern repertoire women engage in many of the same activities as men, on their farm and also in daily labour. Women run shops and tea places and have their independent income. Young women may even establish an independent household without being married though that is still exceptional.

Partly because of land scarcity (push factor) and partly because of a shift in aspirations, linked to education, urban connections and generally greater exposure to ideas from outside of the community (pull factor), it is seen as acceptable to live a life outside of farming. It also is acceptable and even desirable – and needed for most – for households whose livelihood continues to be farm-based to complement farming with other off- and non-farm activities. Greater linkages with the world outside of the community including towns are a good thing. It is acceptable that people try and establish their children in towns or that people with capital invest in towns or outside of farming livelihood options.

The young generation's repertoire was outlined by the young woman identified by the community as a young female opinion leader (see box below). She is married and has four children, is member of the *tabia* Cabinet as women's representative, wears fashionable clothes for young women, was the first woman in the community to have and use a mobile phone, travels with her husband on a bicycle as far as Atsbi, and '*shows the equality of women (to men) in her practical life*'.

Box 12: Local modern repertoire as explained by a young modern woman from Harresaw

The leading adult male role-models for the community of *tabia* Harresaw are those who come from Saudi Arabia. They are better off than the community in terms of many things.

The work aspiration of young men is do trading in shops, not farming and labour works. Men who come from Arab countries are involved in trading and do not want to do farming and labour works in the community. They do not want to reach higher education because educated men fail in Grade 8 or 10 and go back to the community and do the same farming and labour activities. For this reason those young people aspire to go to Saudi and get changed regardless of their educational status. Some of the successful people migrating to Saudi have no educational back ground.

The residence aspiration of young men is living in towns. This is also influenced by men who have been to Saudi Arabia and other traders in the community. These men go to towns and buy houses by going to Wukro and Atsbi. Those who do not have capacity to buy a house rent a house and live in Atsbi and Wukro towns to get better income.

In relation to marriage these young men want to marry a lady who is active and smart, and who can work and improve their life as a spouse. They prefer a lady who has attained better educational level. There is a change, in the past the choice of marriage partner was based on counting the number of sheep and other wealth.

Young men aspire to have close relationships with young women in a brotherly and sisterly way. A majority of young men have good relationships with women. In the older generation if men and women have a close relationship they are suspected to have some kind of affair. In the young generation this is not necessarily so. Young women have the same aspiration.

The political aspiration of the youth is to keep away from participating in political activities. They do not want to participate in politics because there is poverty and they want to improve their life. Those who are engaged in different political activities waste their time for no economic benefit.

The cultural aspirations of young men and women are changing. They aspire to urban life style and the use of new technologies. In terms of leisure young men want to get entertained by going to Atsbi,

Wukro and Mekelle. This is influenced by those who have come back from Saudi Arabia.

They aspire to wearing clothes that come from Saudi Arabia. These are special clothes and there also are special school bags, shoes and blankets which are not found here in markets. Young men and women also aspire to have mobile phones from Saudi which have music. The mobiles from Saudi are durable and multi-purpose. Other mobiles found here are from China and are not durable ones. In general in clothing even the poor women buy clothes because there is competition in clothing.

The progressive people in the community are those who accept new things, technologies and ideas. They have been exposed to towns, are ex-fighters or have special responsibilities in the community. (See above on the opinion leaders in the community). From the current adult generation those who have attained a better education level are progressive. In spite of generally agreeing with government messages the progressives oppose to the current education policy which makes many students fail at the tenth grade national examination. They say that this is one big factor making many youth migrating illegally to Saudi Arabia.

Migration has a special place in the local modern repertoire, a bit like a double edge sword. Specifically, illegal migration abroad to do more than just filling the annual livelihood gap is new. For those succeeding it brings many good things. Yet it is not seen as unequivocally desirable. For some people this is because they fear for their family members or for those in the community who undertake the journey. Other people convey a sense that migration is down to failure, not necessarily of the individuals who are migrating but on the government side, failure to create jobs 'at home'. For others, people who went to Saudi brings back *'ideas that have frightening messages; they are no longer interested in their own religious norms and values.'*

Government ideology and interventions

Tabia officials explained that there are different ways to disseminate development messages to the community. When it is needed to disseminate general messages that all the population should know, they are transmitted through radio at the regional level which many listen to. When new things are introduced, what is sent from the *wereda* (sometimes in the form of manuals like for the Growth and Transformation Plan) is discussed by the *tabia* cabinet and council and the concerned experts. The community is then informed. Policies are also discussed at party meetings which have a great role in disseminating new things to the community. Members of the community who might have problems with these policies are sent to the *wereda* to learn more and share their knowledge with the community when they come back.

To inform the community the *tabia* may call general meetings. However, disseminating messages from the *tabia* to the development groups, then to the networks and then to all the community members, is now seen as the best mechanism. It is effective *'because the person telling those who are under his or her supervision can supervise the implementation'*. In addition, targeting specific focus groups or providing special trainings (for instance, for people who have irrigation), *'training responsible persons'*, using the party meetings to pass the message and using model farmers/ champions are said to be important ways to bring change to the community.

Usually community respondents who had been trained on one or another topic appreciated this; several of them highlighted the usefulness of demonstration accompanying the training. Several women noted that seeing other people doing things successfully was very useful. This can be arranged by the HEWs for health and sanitation issues or the DAs for agricultural activities. But sometimes people also simply observe what their neighbours are doing.

People get easily convinced when they see things already done. (Middle wealth woman)

When she sees it (a new thing) to be good, it makes her think 'why can I not do like the champions and models?' Observation makes people feel that doing things is possible. (Rich woman)

Women did not seem to resent the house-to-house visits and teachings by health promoters and

HEWs, on the contrary several of them mentioned that this was useful. In contrast, both men and women who addressed this topic unanimously disliked the numerous, long and ineffective general meetings. As noted earlier, the TV in the *tabia* hall, which was received from the *wereda* as a reward for the *tabia's* general performance in implementing government activities, is sometimes used to teach the community about various government messages.

The ideas coming from the government are about the importance of working hard, doubling one's production by using fertiliser and improved seeds and compost and raising one's income; the value of working in network and development groups; the importance of reducing deaths of mothers and infants due to complications that can be prevented by having delivery at the health centre; cleanness and personal hygiene; and the importance of the Hidase (Millennium) Dam in reducing poverty all over the country. People said that these ideas are influential. In particular, expectations that building the dam will achieve great things are high, and accordingly, the community has decided to voluntarily contribute to the dam. These expectations were said to be shared by the youth.

The Growth and Transformation Plan has been introduced to the community through cascading training and general meetings. Several community respondents also mentioned having heard about it on radio and in newspapers. *Wereda* and *tabia* officials explained that first, *wereda* officials were trained. Then *tabia* officials were called at the *wereda* and given training there. They came back with the manuals from the *wereda* and introduced them to the work related *tabia* officials first. Then the community was oriented at *tabia*, *kushet* and development team levels. *Wereda* officials said that *wereda* Cabinet members went to the different *tabias* to discuss the GTP with the community.

Among the interviewees two women said that they had not heard of the GTP and did not have information. Those who had been introduced to it mentioned that the GTP was about using modern technologies adapted to the *tabia* (thus for Harresaw, strengthening irrigation), using time properly and 'overlapping activities'. One poor man explained that:

We (the community) have agreed during the public meeting that we will achieve the 5 year plan to free our country and ourselves from poverty and we will no more depend on aid. The model farmers are also saying that they will double their production and will be free of poverty. The problem is that the community doesn't implement what the government says.

Ethnic ideologies

Not relevant.

Religious ideologies

The Orthodox Church is an important institution in Harresaw and appears to remain so for at least a part of the younger generations (self-reporting the importance of the Church for them; people noting young people's religious participation; young migrants sending funds for their church). But it does not seem to play a major role in the evolution of ideas in the community. Several community respondents explained that there are no new religious ideas. One person explained that when World Vision was active in the *wereda* and *tabia* there was fear that they might want to convert people to their religion but as they have phased out the issue has disappeared too.

Urban connections and ideas

Many new ideas and ways of doing come from urban connections. This seems to be seen as a positive thing. Urban ideas that came to the community were about making children going to school, working hard and improving oneself, personal hygiene and cleanness, using plastic materials and wearing modern clothes like trousers and pyjama for adolescent and even women under their dresses, and *ferenji* clothes for work. The greater religious participation of young people is also said to be due to urban influences. Urban influences are increasing with the migrants because many of them when they come back go and live in towns and tell people about urban life and its advantages.

At the same time, there were people not so positive about towns. Some parents were worried that

the urban environment was contributing to making the preparatory school in Atsbi, where their children studied or would be studying, difficult to manage. One of them said that her son was 'watching TV all the time' when he was a student in Atsbi. Towns are also the places where people migrated to survive during the drought, and people explained that many children at the time ended up in the streets of these cities.

Diaspora connections and ideas

Community respondents explained that returning migrants do not bring new ideas from Saudi or elsewhere. But migrants tell community people about life over there. They instil the idea of migrating and working to '*bring change in one's life*'. One woman explained that migrants also tell people '*about how good it is to be in Harresaw if there is income. They say this because they face a lot of challenges while working in Saudi Arabia*' – like the woman's daughter who was several times caught and sent back.

Globalisation

There does not seem to be a discourse on globalisation in Harresaw. However, the local discourse has integrated elements brought by what can be described as an ongoing globalisation trend in the country as a whole, and which impacts the community in various ways. Access to information has become global in reach with TVs and satellite dishes, much greater linkages with urban areas and the country as a whole, international migration and close links with the migrants, students travelling to other parts of the country for their studies and generally, information that they get at school etc.

An example of how the local discourse is being influenced by these globalising trends is the way people in Harresaw talk about the goods that they purchase. They have become more discerning about the quality of the goods that they buy and therefore more demanding, comparing for instance clothes and bags coming from Saudi with similar ones found locally but coming from China and which they say, are less durable. Another example is the greater value that people nowadays attach to education, hard work, and changing one's life. People are no longer satisfied by 'working on small things'; they 'look to the future' with greater expectations. Research officers linked this to a subtle influence of the capitalist system and ethic.