# Personal stories of female transitions to adulthood in Luqa, Benna Tsemay wereda, South Omo

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##  Rich young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relationship to the HH head** | **Sex**  | **Age**  |
| 1 | Husband | M | 45 |
| 2 | Wife | F | 33 |
|  3 | Daughter | F | 18 |
| 4 | Son | M | 15 |
| 5 | Daughter | F | 6 |
| 6 | Daughter | F | 3months |
| 7 | Daughter (by adoption) | F | 3years |

### Youth in the community

In the past, young girls were fully under the control of their parents. They were not sent to school and the government was helping much at that time. There were no many people going to school. Young girls spent much of their time in doing domestic chores and looking after goats. They were grinding grain manually, prepare *cheka,* walk long distance to get water points. If they get pregnant before they get marry, it was considered as mingi and it was throwing away after birth. Or it had to be aborted traditional way. Their marriage was arranged by their parents and they have no say on that. But they had no problem to get husband and they had independent household. Young girls didn’t have participation in community affairs and religious activities.

 Now, there is school and girls are sent to school. The government mobilises the community every time to send all girls to school. Girls are also encouraged to go to school by getting food oil every month. Protestant girls have better participation in religious activities than non-religious girls. They have started to participate in meeting through the youth association. There is better situation for girls at this time than in her time as young girl.

Young men in the community, when she grew up, had similar problems with girls to get education opportunities. They were not sent to school because their parents wanted them to look after the cattle and help at the farm land. They could own land through inheritance which is the same to the current land owning system. Herding and farming was their main work and there was no opportunity for other type of work in the community. Now, young men are participating in doing business, fattening and labour work by going to neighbouring towns. There was no problem to find a wife, getting married and having children; and this is similar to the current situation. Perhaps the problem was that their marriage was, most of the time, arranged by their parents. They had less participation in religious and community activities. At this time, young men are actively participating in religious activities (especially among the protestants) and community affairs; such as in cooperatives, youth association and party meetings. They are also participating in development groups and 1 to 5 teams.

### Your life story

She was born in Luqa- Ena sub-kebele; she had 2 sisters and 2 brothers. Her older brother was getting drunk frequently and killed her mother after he had dispute with her. She was about 11 years old. She grew up like any child in the community by drinking mixture of blood and milk, taking messages to her parents, looking after the goats, grinding grain manually, carrying water and fuel wood, etc.

The major shock in her house was death of her mother and famine which occurred repeatedly. Cattle and other livestock were dying due to famine. She remembered a time when she and her siblings eat corpus (dead body) of livestock (But she doesn’t remember when it was and she doesn’t know how old she was). Her brother died due to famine but she survived. Her father died due to malaria when he was in Woito for farming (irrigation). Then, she was taken by a relative to Shalla and grew up there. She was infected by measles and she was treated traditionally by which they mixed qoito chiqa (coloured mud) and butter and painted all her skin and did sit alone in closed place). At her childhood there was no any health post and didn’t ever hear of medical treatment.

She lived in three households by doing labour work for the people. When she was about 12-13, she started to help people in ploughing (there is no taboo for unmarried girls to plough land), to sell raw cotton to Key Afer walking 4-5hours. Then she bought hand and leg braces as well as traditional necklaces.

She did fall down from a tree when she was about 9-10 years old when she was looking after the sorghum farm. She was unconscious for about 2 hours and came back to normal after her uncle helped her. She still feels this pain (at head) when she is hungry, when she works a lot at sunny and hot day, when she is scared or disappointed. She never has been to school before marriage; but her husband encouraged her to go to school after marriage and has completed grade four. Her illness didn’t affect her education as it was before she started education. She was getting sick when she was going to school but it didn’t affect her education.

She wishes to continue her education only if evening school is started. This is because she has two children in the hostel, one is in college, one is in Brayle and two are with her. She also raises one “mingi” child.

She didn’t go to college and she doesn’t have job, she is house wife. She said that she started domestic work early when she was about 6-7 years old. She worked for better-off families to assist in looking after goats, sorghum/maize farm, taking care of babies, fetching water, fuel wood, etc. And they gave her food, shelter and cloth. She was not circumcised.

One day, when she was looking after the goats, a man wanted to rape her and she run away. When the man fell down, she escaped and told her brother about the situation. Then, her brother went to the field and slapped and kicked the man. She escaped from three attempts of rape but; she was raped once. That was her first time to have sex. She then became pregnant due to that rape. But she wasn’t conscious of her pregnancy. She met her marriage partner at the *gibdo/kibirko* (local dance) and decided to marry him. She prepared food and gave him an appointment. An appointment was given by the number of twisted/ties on a rope. She made six twists on the rope which means he was appointed to come at the sixth day. She consulted her older sister about what she could do. Her sister advised her and helped her in preparing the food and drink for the night when the man was appointed. She told her what she should say and what she shouldn’t. When the 6th day came, the man also came at evening. She offered him the food and local drink. At that time, her brother was sleeping at the next room and he had no information about all this. After the man had eaten and drunk enough, he took her in the night to his kebele called Uro. She said it was so long night when she felt thirsty and hungry. After 4 days, he sent messengers to her brother. Her brother agreed soon because he was happy to let his sister marry. He ordered 4 cows, 1 female and 1 male goat, honey, coffee and cloth *degjie*, which is cotton wool (these are the resources demanded by the family of the bride as form of marriage). Her sister was also given *gabi*(local wool dress), tumbaho (smock) which was growing at his kebele. When she went to her family-in-law, the women elders refused to perform the ritual for a new bride because they knew that she was pregnant. Then, they decided to kill the baby and killed it at her womb because she can’t raise a baby which is not of her husband’s. This is the cultural practice that had already been there; if a woman is already pregnant from someone else (other than her husband), the pregnancy is considered as taboo and should be killed (as to the cultural belief) before it is born. She had to suffer for 5 days and nights till the baby comes out of her womb (it was about 4 months pregnancy).

After she gave birth of one child and when she was pregnant of her 2nd child, her household accepted Christianity (kalehiwot) which was preaching in the kebele.

When the kebele Olo was affected by drought (few months after her second child was born) and the farm was not fertile and when many cattle died by famine, they asked permission from the church to leave out of the kebele. The church allowed and gave direction to teach the Tsemay people about Christianity. Her household was the first household with Christianity in Luqa. Now, she is active member of the church as well as the community. She participates in reconciliation and conflict resolution among women. She is still living with her first married husband. She said that her husband and her church fellows are the important people who provide her emotional support, financial and other necessary support.

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

There was no school provision and no other livelihood government interventions which played part when she grew up. There was no even food aid while a lot of people were dying from shortage of food. There was no irrigation, credit other support from the government. When she grew up she didn’t see any cooperative to help in improving livelihood. But there was clean water service. There was health service provided at the health post. There was high political mobilisation to recruit the youth to join the military but there was no much work in cultural interventions.

Her household owns farm land where it produces maize, sorghum and other serials. She pays 30-40 (she was not sure) birr annually for land tax. Last year, her household participated in free labour contribution. Her daughter pays 5 birr for youth association membership and the HH contributes 6 birr for party membership. Besides she pays 5 birr/month for the women’s cooperative.

The respondent appreciated the government policy in bringing about equal participation of women with men. It is pushing women to come out of home and participate in public meetings, share their ideas. Women now are participating in cooperatives and trade affairs to support their life. She participates in different activities of the kebele. She is member of the school feeding committee, women’s cooperative and party. She took credit, 500birr, from the women’s cooperative by which she constructed house and has covered it with tin roof. Her new house has three rooms one of which is rented 50birr/month. She also used the money to buy some *shefero* and did sell. She paid back her debt from the profit she got. Perhaps, she said, her new house covered by tin roof is the first house in the kebele.

She is TBA and promotes mother and children’s feeding, safe delivery services, contraceptive and prevention of HIV/AIDS to the community. She has no membership in the women’s association because the association has not yet been organised at the kebele. She participates in development group activities and *urba*( customary group in which the members help each other to complete a work). But she has no membership in *equib* because there is only one *equib* which is for men and there is no *iddir* in the community.

The school material provision has supported parents to send children to school. This is because the school provides all the necessary materials to the children and parents have no much cost for school. According to the respondent, there has been no intervention in irrigation but the interventions in provision of improved chicken and cow breed has benefited her household’s livelihood. She received two new bread chickens from the kebele agriculture office which have increased their number to be five. The access to clean water service, the road and the grinding mill machine has supported her life. She travels for only few minutes to get the clean water service. The grinding mill machine has also reduced her time and energy to grind flour.

The trainings provided to TBAs and the health post helped her health and get anti-pain from the health post. The HEW has taught her about preventing disease such as acute diarrhoea and prevention of malaria.

She said that the political interventions of the government have brought peace and security in the kebele. There is no women association helped her livelihood. But her daughter is member of the association and she regularly participated in the meetings Cultural interventions, as she said, has benefited her because she learnt to avoid “*gluos*”, to reduce burial ceremony costs, to wash her body and hair, to participate in public meetings, and to go to school even after marriage

### Aspirations and plans for the future

* To raise her children with good disciple and send them to higher education institutions. She wishes higher schools could open in Luqa so that so that she controls and follows up them
* She has planned to continue her education together with her husband if evening classes started at the kebele

She didn’t say anything about her aspiration for the community

## Middle wealth young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relationship to the HH head** | **Sex**  | **Age**  |
| 1 | Wife | F | 34 |
| 2 | HH head | M | 39-40 |
|  3 | Daughter | F | 14 |
| 4 | Daughter | F | 12 |
| 5 | Son | M | 10 |
| 6 | Daughter | F | 6 |
| 7 | Daughter | F | 1 |

### Youth in the community

She said that adolescent girls in the community when they grow up these days have more educational opportunity than when she was adolescent. Her parents didn’t send her to school because they wanted her to help at home and to get marry soon. Adolescent girls were getting married early and there was no problem in finding husband and getting married because parents were arranging the marriage. Indeed, it was also possible to choose marriage partner but the parents have to agree. The domestic work and farming are similar to what the adolescent girls are doing these times. The participation of adolescent girls in the community and religious activities was very low; now they are participating in the development groups.

Most of the young men and adolescent girls didn’t have opportunity to go to school because their parents didn’t understand its benefit. They preferred their children to keep cattle at the forest. This time, the opportunity to go to school for young boys and girls is better as there is school and as the government is mobilizing the community to send children to school. Although the problems that faced by the adolescent girls when she was adolescent are still existing (e.g., early marriage, domestic harassment, rape and abduction), the extent has decreased. The extent of rape and abduction has decreased and adolescent girls are now able to choose their marriage partners. The respondent said that the opportunities to get land and to participate in religious activities have no difference. Because youth get land by inheritance since the early time and it is similar this time too. Their participation on religious rituals is still very limited. Besides, there is no much difference on finding wife, get married and have children.

### Your life story

She was born in a kebele called *Aysonda* and she is from *Gonni* clan (within Benna). She grew up doing domestic work, looking after livestock, fetching water and fuel wood when she was about 7-8years old.

She was getting sick, her sister and brother were also getting sick. She was sick of *Borenge*(skin infection which is common among children), diarrhoea, fever, coughing and measles. There was only traditional medicine. She had two brothers and seven daughters/sisters. She said that all siblings were suffering from different diseases. There was no clinic and no school. She grew up with her parents. Her father engaged her when she was 6-7 years old and she married while she was too young. She didn’t know what it means by getting married mean that when she was asked, she said ok. Her husband saw her first at a wedding at the neighbouring house (his sister’s wedding). It was her first time to have sexual relationship. She was about 14 years old when she got married. She was not been to school

She had difficulties in delivery. She was taken to *Gisma* clinic (one hour drive) during the complication she had in her first birth. She had still birth first; she also had abortion once. She was not circumcised. Now, she has 5 children and they are all living together.

Her husband has two wives and she is second wife. They all live together like an extended family with husband’s family in Luqa. She is follower of the traditional religion and her husband as well as her husband’s relatives are important people in need of support.

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

When she grew up, there was no access to school because the school was very far from her residence. There were no services as credit, irrigation, no cooperatives. There was clean water access, although it was in far distance; but there was no grinding mill machine. There was health post which provided some health services. But when she married out, she didn’t get health service until recently. In the past there was no much intervention against harmful traditional practices. She said the current political system have brought about peace and security. The occurrence of violence has reduced.

Father of her husband pays the land tax and not her husband (although her husband farms on the land) because the holding is still under her father-in-law. She doesn’t know the amount of land tax. She and her husband have participated in the free labour contribution work in 2003EC and in the development group activities. She does fencing, farming, canal construction, weeding, collecting crops, etc together with the development groups. She also participates in women’s cooperative and party meetings. She has no role as health promoter, health army, model family or model farmer. She doesn’t have membership in youth or women’s association. She said that she has no membership in iddir or equib.

The education facility and school materials provision to her children is playing great role because she is now sending her children to school, two are learning at grade 3 and 4 at the primary school in the kebele. She said that her children have got better opportunity which she couldn’t get. The household gets agriculture extension advices form the DAs who supervise her farm land. She has taken improved seed for bean once and two new breed chickens. She said she has learnt about better way of cooking food using spices and vegetables and baking enjera from the DAs. She has access to clean water and she just have to walk some 20 minutes to get the water point. But she is not happy of the health service because she couldn’t get the HEW or other health provider at the health post every time she seeks treatment. So, she suggested that the health service provided for mothers and children should be improved because mothers can’t take their sick children to Key Afer or other health services.

She appreciated the political system of the government in which it secured the peace in the community. There are no criminals that kill people or robe properties because of the militia and the police’s efforts to prevent crime. Offenders are taken soon to the wereda court.

The women and youth associations have no role in her life, so far. The educations given to reduce HTPs are important because advices are given to husbands not to beat their wives. Her husband is not as aggressive as he used to be because he listens to radio and attends community sensitisation events against HTPs.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

For the future, she wants to see her children grew up and complete their education, have good work and help their parents and the community. She also will strive to improve her livelihood by helping her husband in the farm.

##

## Poor young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relationship to the HH head** | **Sex**  | **Age**  |
| 1 | Head and mother | F | ≈32 |
| 2 | Son | M | 6 twins |
|  3 | Son  | M | 6 |
| 4 | Son  | M |  4 |
| 5 | Daughter | F | 1 twins |
| 6 | Daughter | F | 1 |

### Youth in the community

She said that adolescent girls didn’t have enough knowledge to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy and other disease. If they had unwanted pregnancy, they had to escape not to be discriminated by their family members. She had no information about how to prevent unwanted pregnancy because she never had contact with health provider. Now, most adolescent girls have heard about contraceptives and they can prevent unwanted pregnancy.

She said that, in the past, although there was school in the past, not much girls were going to school because parents were not willing to send their daughters to school. Now, more girls are going to school. Girls are encouraged by the government to go to school; they get food at school and receive food oil. During her time as adolescent girl, there was no problem to get a husband as long as the girl respected the norms and values in the community. This was because fathers did already choose a fiancé when they have daughter. The problem was in choosing marriage partner. Most girls were married either by the choice of their fathers or by abduction. Only the marriages of few girls who arranged by themselves was sustained. Currently, adolescent girls can choose their marriage partners and parents are likely to recognise that. Parents are better at this time to respect the will of their daughters than in the past.

They were expected to complete the domestic work as cooking, fetching fuel wood and water, caring babies and elder family members, helping at the farm and looking after goats, etc. There is no much change with the work of those days in the past. Still those roles are responsibilities of adolescent girls at current time.

It was not expected to see adolescent girls participating in public meetings; they couldn’t attend in activities where males and elders participate. Now, they are participating in meetings together with males, they sit together with males at school. There is slight change. There is no change regarding the participation of adolescent girls in religious activities among the followers of the traditional religion. But those who follow protestant church do participate in church activities.

In the past, young men had to help their fathers in keeping the cattle and goats. Most of them were not going to school. Now they are going to school and there are few who went to the hostel. Adolescent boys couldn’t own land unless their fathers announced the ownership. Now, the youth/ over 18 can apply to the kebele and own land. However, there is no change regarding to land ownership by the adolescent boys. What they can do now is, they can help their parent at the family land and may share the product. There is no difference in doing work except that few adolescent are now participating in business- selling and buying livestock.

Adolescent boys have been free to choose their partners since the past. They choose their female partners at dance place (kibirku). Despite this, they have to pay bride wealth to get wife as to the culture of the community. It is still similar that there is no change with regard to this culture. Besides, there still is pressure by the fathers in arranging marriage. The parents interfere in the family of their son. Thus, there is no difference among young men in the past and now regarding to finding wife and getting married. They separate their bed room when they are married; but still with their parents compound. They continue to support their parents. Most adolescent boys marry at the age when they and their parents think they are old enough to marry and they start to bear children as much as possible. They may marry more than one wife if they want to have more children. This is still similar as in the past. Both girls and boys are needed by parents because female children will bring wealth to parents when they marry and males continue to bear children and increase the size of the extended family.

Young boys are not expected to participate in meetings and activities where elders participate. Now, there is a change where they are participating for e.g., in the 1 to 5 team work to replace their mothers for some work. They also sit at the back of elders meeting and watch conflict resolution process. But they are not expected to talk a lot. They participate in youth association and work with cooperative (multi-purpose). Young men don’t participate in religious leadership among the followers of the traditional religion and this is still similar as in the past. But they are active participants at the Kale hiwot church activities

### Your life story

She was born in a place called Lagie/Gawada and grew up with her uncle when her mother died leaving her about 1 year old. She has 3 brothers and one sister. Her mother’s death was the main shock happened when she was a kid. She then was given to her uncle who raised her.

She was married when she was with her uncle. Her father sent her to live there because he was unable to take care of her and her youngest brother. She had a lot of domestic work. She had to chop grain (maize, sorghum, and beans), she helped at the farm to weed and collect harvest, herding goats and looking after the sorghum farm land. Adolescent girls were raped and abduction was very common. After marriage beating by husbands is common. She has seen her mother to be beaten by her father. She never had seen famine, death of livestock due to famine before she married. But her sister was severely sick of malaria and died after she was taken to health post in the village.

She never had gone to school; she said she spent her childhood time doing domestic work, looking after cattle and playing in the field. She has no plan to continue to school because she is too old to go to school. She started her first sexual relationship when she was about 10 years old when she got married. She said she had no sexual experience with a boy before that. Her marriage was arranged by her father and she didn’t complain because she didn’t deeply understand what it meant. Her husband died from malaria 6 months ago. Now, she lives in Luqa kebele with five of her children. Her husband didn’t have younger brother that she couldn’t remarry. Besides, she said that it is too early for her to seek partner from male relatives of her husband. She has 5 children within 6 years, because she had twin births twice

Her first born twins were identical twins of males; again she had males-twin births. Unfortunately, one baby died right after birth. After two years, she gave birth of twins for female babies. She now is dependent on her husband’s relatives for farming and looking after the goats.

She never had been circumcised. She had been helped by TBA during all her births. But she had prolonged labours all the time. She lives with all her children close to her husband’s family who are important people to provide economic as well as emotional support.

Now most girls choose their partners and the forced marriage is decreasing. Besides, girls in her time were getting married while they were too young, now they get marry when they are ready to marry. After marriage, girls start to live with the family of their husband and they will have separate bed room. This is still the same with these days

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

As she grew up, she remembered no government intervention that played great role in her life. But she remembered that there was food aid when it was drought. She said that there was no agricultural interventions, no credit services and no cooperatives. Her parents had to take her to traditional healers when she got sick because there was health facility

She has not yet started to send her children to school because they are too young. She has been benefited from the food aid of the government but she didn’t take any other benefit. She has no membership in the cooperatives. She said that she gets clean water service at nearby distance and she uses the grinding mill machine. She gets health extension advices and some medicines from the health post when her children get sick. She has no much political participation and it has no much role in her household. The TBA has advised her not to give her newly born babies solid food and to exclusively breast feed her baby until 6 months old. She also was advised to keep her personally hygiene and sanitation of her babies. This has benefited her to keep her babies healthy

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She seeks government or NGO support to raise her children because, now, she is alone as her husband died. She said that she will share out the land and the livestock because she will have no one to plough the land and to keep the livestock until her children grow up. She has no plan to send her first children to higher education (after completing grade four in Luqa) because they have to help her in raising the youngest children.

## Rich young woman mid-20s

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relationship to the HH head** | **Sex**  | **Age**  |
| 1 | HH head |  |  |
| 2 | Wife |  |  |
|  3 | Son | M | 10 |
| 4 | Daughter | F | 8 |
| 5 | Daughter | F | 6 |

### Youth in the community

The adolescent girls have better opportunity to go to school this time than in the past because the awareness of the community is been changed. Parents are sending them to school and buy them modern cloths and shoes. During her time, parents were not buying clothes and shoes to their daughters and they were not willing to send them to school. In the past, girls were only needed to work hard at home and get marry to bring wealth for the family. After their marriage, they still are expected to work hard, serving their husbands and bear many children. Otherwise, they were beating day and night. The respondent think that although the same situation still exist, the adolescent girls, now, have opportunity to appeal to the court when they are harassed by their husbands. There is the social court and police who can listen to their cases. They get better access to information about their rights and about living better life through the meetings held at the kebele.

She said that adolescent girls have better confidence to find their marriage partners because their parents are not putting a lot of pressure to force them marry for the man whom they choose. The domestic work is similar as it used to be in the past because it is the responsibility of the females to complete the household activities.

The young men have equal educational opportunity with adolescent girls but they have better chance to go to the hostel and continue their education. Young men have better opportunity to be engaged in bigger business as production of cash crops and fattening which the females can’t. Besides, the cash crop production has been introduced very recently that the young men in her time didn’t know.

Youth participation at the religious activities is very low, unless they are Protestants.

### Your life story

She was born in a place called Shalla and grew up there with seven of her siblings. Two were younger sisters and the four boys were her older brothers. She said that her father had three wives and her mother was his first wife. He was keeping great number of cattle and he spent much of his time at the forest until her brother grew up and started to help him. She remembered the major shock at her family was the drought which killed many of the livestock and caused migration of her father and her brother to a place called *Male (*she doesn’t remember when it was*)*. Then, her mother had to ask her relatives-in-law for help and they were giving the children some food to eat. One of her brother died at the forest when he went with his brother to keep the cattle. Malaria, measles, coughing and *borenge* were common diseases to her and her siblings. They all were getting only traditional treatment to all their illnesses. She was not been to school and she has no intension to go to school because she is too old and because she has to raise her children. She was not circumcised.

She started to be interested in boys when she was about 13-14 years old. She had a boyfriend with whom she had her fist sex. However, she didn’t marry him because her father had already engaged her to another man. When she refused her father’s marriage proposal, the man abducted when she was going to fetch water together with her sister. She said, he covered her face and carried her and run away. She doesn’t remember how she got her in to his house. Then, he sent message to her father and arranged the marriage. She feared to refuse staying with him because she might beat her harshly. He chained her for some two days and asked her if she agrees to marry him. He had a gun at his waist and he was too big to talk to him. He told her that he would kill her father if she refused to marry him. She kept quit but she was crying. After some time she got pregnant and understood that she should marry him because she would have no other choice. Now she has 3 children (1 boy and 2 girls) from this man and she still lives with him. One pregnancy was aborted (naturally) and one baby died after he was one year old due to illness. After that he married another wife and they all came to Luqa when drought attacked that kebele. His second wife has three children (3boys). They all are followers of the traditional religion.

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

She said that she grew up in a place where there was no government intervention. There was great problem to get clean water service that people were using river and pond water, drink together with their livestock. There was no health service and no agriculture extension services

When her family came to Luqa, her father got land and he started to do farming. He kept a lot of cattle, goats, sheep and beehives. He has been advised to keep more male goats, sheep and oxen for fattening and make business by the DAs. For the last three years, he has been doing good business. Besides, he has started to grow sesame, sunflower and maize for selling. He pays land tax but she was not sure whether it is 40 or 45 birr annually. He also is member of the party, the credit and saving cooperative in the kebele and he contributes membership fee for each organisation. He had participated in free labour work in 2003EC at the terracing work around the OroMountains.

She has received new breads of chicken from the DAs at the Kebele and has many local chickens from which she cooks eggs for her children. She also sells sometimes. She gets clean water service and the grinding mill machine is in nearby distance. As there is health post, she said, she can go and get treatment there. Otherwise, the Key Afer health centre is very accessible. She participates in women’s cooperatives and some public meetings. She is also party member and participates in some of its meetings. She is member of the 1 to 5 development teat at her locality and does different activities together. She has no other role in the community.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She wants to send her children to school until to the level of education they want to achieve and to assist her husband to be economically more successful. But she has no concrete plan to achieve this.

## Middle wealth young woman mid-20s

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relation to HH head** | **Sex** | **age** |
| 1 | Wife | F | 26 |
| 2 | Husband | M | 37 |
| 3 | Daughter | F | 14 |
| 4 | Son | M | 12 |
| 5 | Son | M | 6 |
| 6 | Son | M | 5 |
| 7 | Daughter | F | 3 |

### Youth in the community

The adolescent girls’ life is gradually changing as many of them now are going to school. During her time, girls were afraid to come out of the house thinking that they might be harassed by boys. Although there was school even at that time, the parents were not willing to send their daughters to school. They were thinking that if the girls go to school, they will change their religion and they will marry to a stranger. Now, many girls are going to school. There are some girls from the kebele who went to the hostel and completed grade ten.

To find a husband is not so big problem in the community because any adolescent girls can participate at the kiburku and choose a husband. The problem comes if her parents or the man’s parents are not willing to have the marriage. The other problem is that as both the young girls and young boy may not know each other and they may have blood relationship which is taboo in the community. In the past, fathers had strong stand that their daughters must marry to the man who their father choose otherwise they would be discriminated. Now, there is some space to discuss with parents and convince them about the type of marriage both young girls and young boy want. Having independent household is common after marriage. Even before marriage, adolescents do not sleep at the same room with their parents.

The main problem that many adolescent girls facing, at her age, was unwanted pregnancy. If they got pregnancy before they are married or before they perform the cultural ritual (glo), the baby was considered as mingi and it was killed. Otherwise they can’t live within the community. Now, many girls get pregnant before the glo and still live within the community without any problem. Mingi doesn’t have legal acceptance. If someone is caught to kill mingi child, he or she is immediately in jailed. Young girls have still low participation in community as well as religious activities.

She saw no much difference on the opportunities and problems that young men had in the past and have at these times. However, she said that they have better community participation and they try to participate in doing some business as fattening. Their problem and opportunities are similar to that of women except that they were not discriminated for having mingi because the baby is born form a girl. Their land ownership right depends on the will of their parents to inherit them; and this has no difference. To find a wife and get children has no problem since the past.

### Your life story

She was born in Luqa. She said that she was grinding grain manually when she was 6-7 years old, looking after goats, help in farming, fetching water and fuel wood. She grew up among 7 siblings (3 females and 4 males) and she is the first born child. Her father had two wives and her mother was his second wife.

She said that there was drought and famine when her father was selling goats to Male (neighbouring wereda) people. A lot of livestock were lost in the family due to lack of grass and water. When she was a child a dog bitted her and her leg was infected. Her mother carried her to walk till Arbaminch for medical treatment. She said she was cured after the medical treatment she had. She had been also suffering from malaria repeatedly.

She never been to school because there was no school in Luqa and she doesn’t intend (now) to go to school because she has to do the domestic and farm work. During her adolescent age she was participating in the *Kibirku* (night dance). She married her husband who was living at the same community after he sent messengers to her father. He paid three cattle, honey, but he will pay Jenfel, goats, cloth as bride price when her family demands. He is her first husband and continued to live with him until now. She was about 11-12 years old when she was married. Her first pregnancy was still birth/dead.

She is follower of the traditional religion but she is thinking to be converted to Protestantism because when her son was very sick, she was very worried and she did rituals which didn’t work much. She lost hope. Then he died. She was very disappointed and wanted to be converted to Protestantism; but not yet.

She was not circumcised

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

Although there was school in her village where she lived, she was not sent to school by her parents. she benefited from the health service at another place (Arbaminch) and no health service was provided at her village. She had to fetch water from along the bands of the river and ponds. There was no government intervention that changed her life in the past.

She has been participating in different political as well as development related meetings. She works with the development groups in the farming and health extension programs. She has constructed latrine and benefited from disease prevention interventions. She uses bed nets and cleared her compound to prevent malaria

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She said that she wants to send her children to school and see them having higher job status.

## Poor young woman mid-20s

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Household head | F | 26 |
| Son | M | 7 |
| Son | M | 3 |

### Youth in the community

Almost all the young in this community, who are in their mid-20s are married and have children. All adolescent girls at age 13-15 are married either by their families’ arrangement, by abduction or by their own will. A lot of adolescent girls are raped when they go to school, to fetch fuel wood, to fetch water or when they look after the goats or when they are alone at home. Many parents resist girls’ education because they want them to help at home and use them as source of income by the culture of *Koyta*(bride price). And they think that they may learn things that change their behaviour to contradict the culture. They send them to school only up to grade 4 only because they want to get the oil aid. Very few parents (most of them are protestant converted) send their children to school and motivate them to work hard.

Traditionally, adolescent girls and boys meet at the Kibirko (Evangadi) dancing night to choose their partners. They may choose their mates but that must be approved by their parents to have peaceful marriage. Many girls face problem of abduction by men, who, most of the time do this when the girls refuse their marriage proposals. Fathers engage their daughters when they are too young to have a say and to a man whom they thought could pay great amount of bride wealth. If in case the girls refuse this marriage, they are either abducted or should escape to very far place with their partners (whom they choose). Then, if the father already has received some wealth from the man, he has to pay it back or should give younger daughter as an exchange. Young girls don’t have independent household before they are married. However, they separate their households after they are married out.

The domestic work is the responsibility of female members of the household. They assist in the farm when it is harvest season. Young girls have very limited participation in community public meetings. But they participate in meetings only if it is for young women. They have no acceptance as equal as to older women. They don’t give ideas when there are men and old women in the meeting. They assist only in doing labour work in religious rituals/ceremonies. Among the Protestants, they have better participation in the church activities.

Opportunities:

* Young women have opportunity to choose their partners, to go to school, to get reproductive health and HIV/AIDS advice and contraceptives from the health post. They have opportunity to continue their education till university level if they work hard
* Married youth females’ opportunity is very limited.

Young men have better opportunity to search for paid labour at neighbouring towns (as for example, the irrigation farm at Brayle) and to do business like fattening and selling livestock. Although they have equal access to education, they are not encouraged to go to school either by their parents or by the government; for example, the government doesn’t provide oil aid as it does for the girls. So, they feel unhappy and get discouraged to go to school. They prefer to keep as much cattle as they can rather to complete their school. Besides, parents do not like them to continue their education by going to the hostel; rather they order them to keep cattle and do farming.

Unlike the adolescent girls, young men have less pressure from parents about their marriage choices; in fact they are still expected to discuss it with their parents to make clear that there is no blood relationship with the girl and other problems. They have very limited participation in religious activities but they are now been active in community activities. They have membership in the party, cooperatives and youth association.

### Your life story

She was born in Luqa; she is third born child in the family and grew up with her 3 siblings (2 female and 1 male). She grew up wearing the traditional skin wear, shaving her hair at half and traditional hair style. She started to wear shoes after she was over 6 years old. She was not circumcised. She went to Brayle (nearby town) during the famine when she was about 10 years old. Her father took all the family to the place so that he did feed them by doing farming by irrigation. When she became about 12 her father wanted her to marry to a man whom she doesn’t like but her father already had accepted *Koyta*. She refused the marriage and escaped to Key Afer with a tourist car which was crossing along the road. Then, she met her neighbouring man (in Luqa) who was government employee at the wereda. He took her home and lived with him for some years. He sent her to school and after one year she found a partner who wanted to marry. He was also from Luqa. She agreed with his marriage proposal and they got marry. Later on, He took her back to Luqa. Her father is now dead. Her mother and her son are living still in Brayle.

Her husband converted her to protestant and she attends church program every Sunday. She has two children and her husband died recently after he suffered from hepatitis. Her church fellow and neighbours provide her emotional and financial support when she needs. Relatives of her husband also supports her by keeping the cattle and doing the farming.

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

She said that although there were government interventions like irrigation, water and health services, in the place where she grew up (Brayle), none of them helped her to improve her life.

She said that she has received food aid, oil, beans and food oil. She also has received two new breads of chickens from the agriculture office in the kebele. She is trying to keep much more goats and chickens with the advice of the DAs. She has not yet sent her children to school because they are too young. She gets water service and grinding mill machine at nearby place. She lives at the road side that she easily gets transportation when she needs to go to nearby towns for better health service. No other interventions have affected her life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has planned to borrow some money from her husband’s relatives and to be engaged in petty trade so that she can raise her children properly and send them to school. She wants to sell *shefero* and other consumable items. She also said that, if she gets a man who can assist her to raise her children, she will marry after one year or so.

## Rich young woman 16-17

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relation to the HH head** | **Sex** | **Age** |
| 1 | Wife | F | 17 |
| 2 | Husband | M | 19 |
| 3 | Son  | M | 6 |
| 4 | Son | M | 2 |

### Youth in the community

She said that adolescent girls have to work hard and obey their parents otherwise they are beaten. The father, the brother and husband do beat them. Some are going to school but still have to work the domestic work. They face abduction- because fathers get cattle and goats and the girls refuse. There also young girls that are raped when they look after goats, fetching water and fetching fuel wood.

Married young girls- can’t go to school. Those who go to school have no opportunity to continue their education after grade four because there is no school in the kebele after that and their parents don’t want them to go to Key Afer for schooling. The best opportunity they have is that they get school materials from the school and receive oil every month.

Young men have similar educational opportunity but they don’t receive oil. They work to help their parents in the farm and looking livestock. They may have to stay in the forest for long time just to keep the cattle there. They have limited opportunity to participate in community and religious activities. She added that adolescent boys spend time in the forest, move seasonally, most of them do not go to school, fight each other, rape girls, and are exposed to unsafe sex.

### Your life story

She was born at a place called Duma. She was fetching fuel wood, water, looking after goats, grinding grain. If she refused, she was beaten by her mother and her father. Whenever she climbed to the trees her father was beating her. If in case, she lost one goat, she had to find it. Otherwise, she shouldn’t come in to the house. She had to go to her uncle’s house.

She grew up with her one sister and 3 brothers. One son died who was second born. She is third born child.

In times of drought her family lost crops and a lot of livestock. She grew up with her parents and didn’t move. The male members of her family did stay far in the forest and at the farm land. She suffered from a disease called *Borenge* (skin infection which is common to children). She used traditional medicine. She also was suffering from malaria and survived by traditional medicine. She never had been to clinic.

She has not been to school because in Duma (neighbouring kebele), there has been no school and because she married soon. She has no intention to go to school in the future because she is married and she has to take care of the children. She grew up playing *Kibirku* but had no sexual experience before her marriage because, she said, she was too young to have boyfriend. Her husband sent message to her father who already had promised him and she was engaged while she was a kid. According to his promise, her father arranged the marriage when she was 10-11 years old. Her father-in-law brought *Areke* and was talking to her father. The *Koyta* was paid to her father and she was married. She is follower of the traditional religion but she has no involvement. Her husband buys and sells cattle and he is among the rich youth in the kebele. He owns cattle, goats, sheep but she said they are too many to count.

Her husband has taken camel (new breed) by credit from the agriculture office of the kebele.

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

She didn’t get any school provision and didn’t remember any government intervention that affected her life.

Her household has benefited from the advices of the DAs and received improved crop and new bread camel. Her husband’s farm production has increased after he used the improved seeds. The number if livestock is also increasing from time to time because they are not attacked by diseases due to the veterinary service. Her husband does his business from Luqa to other neighbouring towns because he easily gets transportation facility.

Her household pays land tax which is 40bir/year. She also participates in free labour contribution and development group activities. But her husband is more active than her to participate in political, religious and community activities. He is member of the youth association and political party and he pays the annual contribution of membership. But she has no membership in the community

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She wants to have more children and more wealth but she has no concrete plan to achieve this. But she wants to have as more children as possible.

## Middle wealth young woman 16-17

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relationship to the HH head** | **Sex**  | **Age**  |
| 1 | Daughter | F | 16 |
| 2 | Father | M | 52 |
| 3 | Mother | F | Doesn’t know |
| 4 | Brother  | M | 12 |
| 5 | Sister | F | 14 |
| 6 | Brother | M | 12 |
| 7 | Brother | M | 6 |
| 8 | Sister | F | 2 |

### Youth in the community

She said that adolescent girls have opportunity to go to school; and they are encouraged by the school and their parents to learn up to grade four. They don’t have a problem to choose husband because, now there is no one to force them marry to the man whom they don’t want. At home, they have no separate room but they sleep with their siblings. They may have children before they get marry and the government supports them to raise their children. There is no problem in getting children; but they may have problem to get health service when they are pregnant and when they deliver. Some of them get pregnant when they are too young and suffer a lot when they deliver. There are girls that die during delivery. Some also give dead birth. Girls are expected to work hard at home; both before they marry and after they marry. Most of the domestic chore is their responsibility. They have very low participation in community activities and none at religious activities. Some young girls have the opportunity to make business together with their mothers. They sell consumable items at the market place.

Young boys are more work at the field rather than at home. They keep cattle and they assist their fathers at the farm. They also assist/replace their parents at the development group work and the free labour contribution activities. They participate in soil and water conservation activities. They have equal opportunities to go to school with young girls. But they are not provided with food oil support.

Most of them don’t own land; rather they share their parent’s farm land. They have no separate/independent household unless they are married. They don’t face any problem to find a wife; but sometimes there are men who start relationship with girls who have blood relationship with them. Then, the parents refuse their marriage. This kind of marriage has no acceptance in the community.

Their participation in the community is better than the participation of young girls in the community; but still their participation at religious activities is very limited.

### Your life story

She was born in Tsentsera and she is first born in the family. She lives with her parents. Her life as a child was like all other children in the community. She was frequently getting sick of *Borenge* and malaria. She was cured by traditional medicine. Her siblings were also getting sick of similar infections. She has not been to school because her parents didn’t send her; but her younger siblings are going to school. She said that as her siblings were too young, she couldn’t go to school because she had to help her mother to take care of the children and do the domestic activities. She has no intension to go to school because she thinks that she is too old to begin school.

 She remembered that few years ago, there was famine when most her household’s livestock died from shortage of grass and water. Her father was very sick at that time and was taken to traditional medicine practitioner. That time was very shocking time at her household.

She has just started to be interested in boys and she already has boyfriend. He is the first man who she had her first sex. She said that she is planning to marry him soon. She has no children and her parents are insisting to get marry before she got pregnant. She is follower of the traditional religion and she has not been circumcised. Her parents are the important people to support her.

### Government interventions which have played a role in your life

The food aid has supported her family during the drought and all family members have able to survive.

Although her household pays tax for land, she doesn’t know how much it is. Sometimes, her parents participate in free labour contribution activities and development group activities. Besides, since recently, the veterinary service is helping the livestock to get vaccination and medical treatment. So, the livestock in the household have not died. The availability of the grinding mill machine has reduced her time and labour to grind grain. The advised of the HEW has also supported her family to learn about sanitation and personal hygiene. But she said that the political, cultural interventions as well as the youth and women association have no role in her life. But none of her household member has role in health promoter, health army, model family/farmer, in women/youth association and no one participates at iddir or equb.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has planned to get marry and have children in the near future.

## Poor young woman 16-17

### Your household

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Relationship to the HH head** | **Sex**  | **Age**  |
| 1 | Father (HH head) | M | ≈47 |
| 2 | Mother | F | ≈47 |
| 3 | Son | M | 20 |
| 4 | daughter | F | 10 |
| 5 | daughter | F | 16 |

### Youth in the community

The adolescent girls in her community have no much opportunity to come out of the house and see the outside world. They can go to school only when they are kids like 7-10 years old. After that, they are strictly forbidden to go to school. They may choose husband but it should be approved by their parents. They don’t have independent household until they get marry. They are supposed to have as many children as possible when they get marry. They are limited to domestic work and assisting their partners at the farm land. They don’t have opportunity to participate in any community or religious activities.

Young boys have better opportunity to choose whether to go to school or to keep cattle. They can also choose to their marriage partners. They can participate in some community activities like the development group work, but they can’t participate in religious matters. They want to have more children after they get marry and they can have more than two wives if they want. They get better acceptance at the family as well as at the community and the mothers provide them mill bigger than their sisters. The only problem they may have is that their chance to go to Key Afer to continue their education is very limited because parents may not be happy. So, they get become herders after they complete grade four.

### Your life story

She was born in Luqa Ena sub-kebele. She had seen severe famine that affected the life of her family. Her father sold many livestock and some died due to the famine. Her mother lost many children by death and only 3 survived (2 girls and one boy). Her father has three wives (one was from Benna ethnic group). He has total of 13 children from all wives.

She sells fuel wood to the town, egg and aleko at the market day. She also assists her mother in cooking food, preparing *shefero*, grinding grain, chopping, weeding at the farm, collecting harvest and taking care of the children at home.

She has not been to school and she thinks that she is too old to go to school; and she has no interest to go to school. She is follower of traditional religion.

She said that she has not yet started to have sexual relationship with any one because she thought that she better marry a man who can pay good bride wealth to her parents. And that one can be chosen by her parents. Although she participates at the cultural dance (*kibirku)*, she didn’t have any sex with a boy because she goes there with her brothers just to enjoy dancing.

She is follower of the traditional religion and she was not circumcised.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

The government provided her household with food aid but she remembers no other support provided to her household that affected her life.

She said that she knows no support from the government; but her father borrows some money from his brother and purchases grain to feed his children. His relatives also give him some grain when he needs to buy grain and other food items. When he was sick, his brother took him to Key Afer clinic. A traditional healer also gives him medicine.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She wants to get marry as soon as possible to a man that her parents chose for her and to have as many children as possible.