

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

**STAGE ONE ANNEX 2**

**FINDINGS 1: COMMUNITY SITUATIONS**

*August 2010*

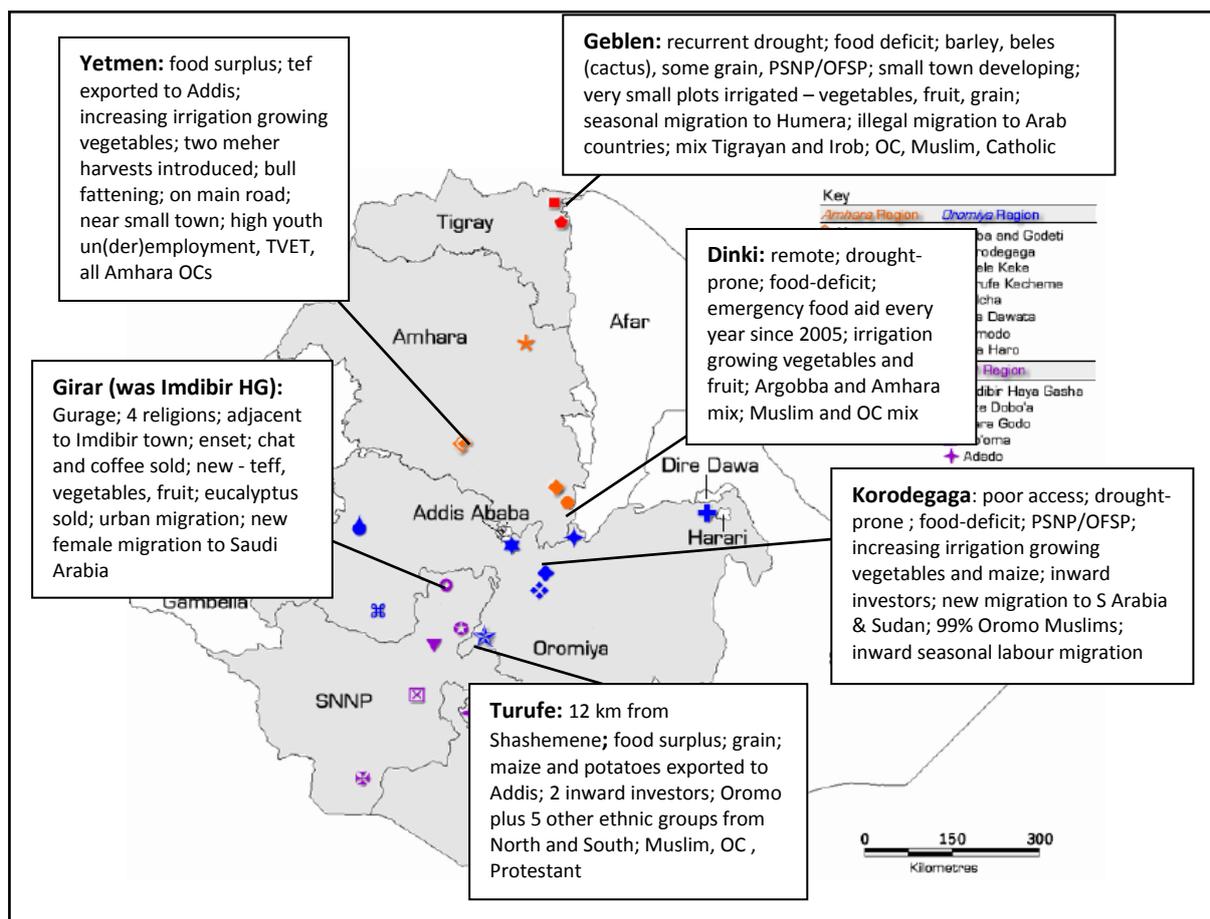
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This Annex, drawing on the Community Situation Reports in Evidence Base 2, presents a brief narrative of what each community looks like today in 2010, and how it works as a whole.

Map 1 below situates the six Stage One communities in Ethiopia. In this section we follow a regionally-based structure, starting by the two communities in Amhara (Yetmen, integrated and Dinki, remote), followed by those in Oromia (Turufe, peri-urban and Korodegaga, remote), then SNNP (Girar, peri-urban)<sup>1</sup> followed by Tigray (Geblen, remote).<sup>2</sup>

Map 1 The Six Stage One communities



### 1. Yetmen (Amhara) in 2010

Rural Yetmen is one of three gotis in a kebele surrounding ‘urban Yetmen’, a small town with a separate kebele administration, founded around a Swedish-funded school established in the 1960s, in Enemy wereda in Amhara. All the rural residents are Amhara and Orthodox Christians. Yetmen is along an all-weather road going in one direction to Bichena, the wereda capital (17 kms and good transport), and in the other to Dejen, another town (same distance, transport) and from there to

<sup>1</sup> Girar is used as an abbreviation of the full name of the kebele, Girar na Yeferema Zigba.

<sup>2</sup> Any of the typologies that will be presented in the next section would have been a useful alternative way of structuring this section.

Debre Markos and Addis Ababa. There is good mobile network coverage everywhere, which is a big plus for the traders.

Yetmen has fertile farm land and good grazing land though with high population pressure landholdings are small and there are many landless households (more than average in the wereda). Land scarcity led the farmers in the community to refuse to give communal land, notably to youth groups and for the construction of a secondary school for the area. There is ample water, with two rivers of which one is perennial, and ground water; there are communal water points (as there is a borehole and a piped water system also serving the town of Yetmen) and people use these, or wells in their compound. A few residents from rural Yetmen access to electricity through extending lines to urban Yetmen which is connected, but some stopped using it as the light was not strong and others were said to have been cut off as a result of a dispute over where the school should be sited. There is no major environmental issue in the area. In 2004 it was estimated that over half of the population was under 20, equally divided between the sexes.

Thanks to its fertile soil and thus far reasonably reliable rainfall pattern, and good access to markets, Yetmen is and has been for a long time a teff surplus producing community, with some other crops being cultivated too and many residents engaged in grain trade. This is complemented by irrigated horticulture for an increasing number of households (wereda officials say there is a lot of potential). Farmers also started using new technologies such as the broad-bed making plough and alternating crops to get two harvests in a year. Different types of households and people benefit from this intense, market-oriented agricultural activity, including: rich farmers able to engage in diversification, young landless household heads renting-in or share-cropping land from labour-short households, households leasing irrigable land for a good price, daily labourers working on others' farms or in loading/unloading farmers' products taken to the market, women retailing irrigated products on the market, and traders. Fertiliser and improved seeds are no longer available through government-guaranteed credit so poorer farmers were using less or none. Harvests in 2008 and 2010 were very good. The wereda and DAs have supported farmers' efforts in various ways (facilitating credit for new technologies, training and advice on productivity-enhancing technologies) although farmers are selective in what they adopt from the advice given.

Farmers in Yetmen also keep livestock and a number of them try to increase their income through bull fattening and dairy production with foreign or hybrid breed. More than 70% of farmers have breed cows by using their own or other farmer's bulls. However, although this too is quite well supported by the government (credit, relatively good vet services though shortage of drugs) the community's remaining grazing land is small and indoor feeding requires forage which has been insufficient – although kebele officials believe that more forage could be produced with irrigation. Marketing the dairy products has also been problematic so there are only 12 farmers still benefiting from the Dairy Co-operative.

Farmers have access to credit through ACSI (that they use for accessing new technologies and for trade). They also started a farmers' savings and credit association which gives loans to its members, including for fertiliser and seeds, which is said to be important as the service co-op has stopped doing this. Savings are much larger than credit and not bringing in any interest. However, lack of access to credit at a reasonable interest rate is said to be a constraint for poor farmers (not all farmers are members of the farmers' association, and ACSI requires collateral or the use of group-based modalities).

Women are engaged in farm activities (including tending the household's irrigated production for those concerned). Other activities include alcoholic drink preparation and sale, daily labour, petty trade and activities on the market (e.g. ironing clothes), and retail sale of irrigated products. A women's co-op was recently established: it spun cotton and sold it with a small profit, and got land from the kebele to engage in grain production, but this has uncertain support from the community

and it is too early to say whether the co-op will succeed and benefit its members. Women are also not much involved in local politics and administration, seen as male issues.

Some young people (children of Derg bureaucrats) got small plots of land in 2004 (this was to compensate for the 1997 land re-distribution that had reduced their fathers' land). Today there are disputes around this land, following a change in the regional land law. Young people who do have some land, like these ones or others who got some from their family, and who stay with their parents, can save money and reinvest it and some do quite well in this way.

But a large number of youth and younger households are landless. Those who cannot pursue their education or get access to land through renting-in or sharecropping engage in various daily labour activities or migrate looking for work elsewhere. Following advice from the wereda they also try to engage in productive activities in groups. However, this was not very successful in Yetmen. The community refused to give land to land-seeking youth groups as was suggested by kebele officials, not trusting the government which, they said, could easily accuse the groups to work inefficiently and take the land and give it to investors. Youth themselves are not keen and prefer individual activities so that the other types of association that had been started in urban Yetmen, have now stopped due to mismanagement or disagreements among members.

Residents of rural Yetmen have access to a health post in one of the kebele's other villages. It was initially planned to be a clinic so a nurse has been posted there as a compromise following people's complaints about the downgrading. There is a recently built health centre in urban Yetmen as well as a private clinic. The government facilities provide the usual services under the health extension programme and other government policies. Officials say that there is a problem of acceptance and that few people use the prevention and sanitation measures that are taught, and that people are not happy with the health post/clinic focusing almost exclusively on these things and not on curative services. Yet, with the health centre in urban Yetmen residents of rural Yetmen have better access to health services than average in the wereda. Moreover, many people go to the private clinic which some say has better drugs. Young children are regularly vaccinated. Contraception is widely used and access became better with the health centre, although resistance still exists including among women. Half the women go for pregnancy check-up but few deliver at a health facility. HIV/AIDS is prevalent in urban Yetmen, but community members think it is not an issue in rural Yetmen, though some health personnel disagree with this. It is also not clear whether malaria is prevalent in Yetmen; there was a widespread outbreak in 2005 but has not been much since. Activities to address malaria and HIV/AIDS have been neither very intense nor very successful.

There is a full cycle primary school. Commitment to education is growing as a result of landlessness and the need for other sources of income, and thanks to role models – people from the community who reached a higher level of education and whilst not having land, support their parents. Girls outnumber boys in the primary school. Yet, apparently putting some pressure on parents to enrol children and send them to school regularly is still considered necessary, which teachers say they have to do even though they dislike this role. The community successfully resisted full day education and automatic promotion. A secondary school is to be built once the siting issue is resolved to everyone's satisfaction. At the moment to continue after primary school level Yetmen's children have to go to Bichena, where a brand new TVET is also found (construction financed by the Region, the wereda and the community). Only richer farmers can afford this. Some are even able to send children to Debre Markos where there is an older and better TVET with more attractive technical options, or to universities (there is a new university in Debre Markos), but only clever children with good marks can get there; for the others, the costs of private college education are even higher. So, there are many dropouts who, except when they can get access to some land, become the unemployed landless youth talked about earlier.

Yetmen is a tightly knitted community where customary social and governance systems are strong and the Orthodox Church is important. There is a special form of funeral society, the *Desh*, which

have been established for a long time and are very influential in the community. Almost everyone is a member, and members misbehaving can be excluded which is considered as a very serious issue. The Desh ostracised one kebele leader who had tried to enforce the banning of big mourning ceremonies by arresting people, also forcing him out of office. He was pardoned and readmitted in the Desh after apologies and heavy penalties. The Desh also mobilised the community against the construction of the secondary school on grazing land. Since then, wereda officials prevented the kebele administration from working again with the Desh or with iddir. This serious incident (with a mother and baby hit by gunfire which killed the baby) provoked a souring of relations between the rural and urban communities. There is also a quite high level of theft, banditry and male fighting, though it is hard to get community members to participate in community policing activities.

In its relationship with the government Yetmen is a bolshy community, able to mobilise strongly against what people do not like (e.g. the provision of land to youth groups) whilst taking what suits them (e.g. some of the DAs' advice). Wereda officials complain about the community's low level of participation in development activities. However, they find it difficult to do anything about this since the good governance package means that people can no longer be coerced into doing things. That is people's democratic rights, as community members say. This builds on the community's history of rebellion against the government going back to the 1960s and earlier. Following the 2005 election the EPRDF included the 'Derg bureaucrats', who had been banned from political participation, in its campaign to recruit new members amongst the rich and influential group in the community. EPRDF structures closely match the government ones at kebele and sub-kebele levels and the membership has increased since 2005. But participation is loose and for many, membership is nothing more than a way of avoiding problems. This context makes it hard for those involved in kebele leadership, who feel 'sandwiched between two fires' (wereda/party instructions and the community's will). The Women and Youth Associations are also weak, in spite of the help that the kebele administration was supposed to give them since 2005.

## **2. Dinki (Amhara) in 2010**

Dinki, along the river of the same name, is one of five gots in Hagere Selam kebele. In Chibite, the kebele administrative centre 1 to 2 hours walk from Dinki, a very small town is emerging, with a few 'modern houses' built also by people from surrounding gotts including Dinki, and a small market. The kebele is located on the lower edges of the escarpment down to the Afar Region, which it borders; it is one of a few lowland kebeles in Ankober wereda in Amhara, with a rugged and hilly topography and small scattered hamlets of a few households. Also in contrast with the predominantly Amhara population in the wereda, almost two thirds of the population of the kebele are Argobba Muslims and one third Amhara Orthodox Christians. In 2004 it was estimated that over half of the population of Dinki (689 people) was under 20 and slightly more than twenty percent of the households were headed by women.

The kebele and Dinki are remote. A dry weather track (crossing a river without a bridge, which can cut off the kebele at times in the year) links Dinki to the gravel all weather road from Ankober to the Afar Region. Along this road is Aliyu Amba, a small town which is the main market for the people of Dinki and to which they go on foot taking a shortcut (8 kms; 2 hours). Further on this road is the centre of Ankober wereda (25 kms from Dinki). The track to Dinki also goes to Chibite, farther away from the 'main road'. It is being improved as there are plans to develop irrigation in Chibite. There is no electricity and no plan to have it in the foreseeable future in the kebele. Mobile network coverage is starting to be available in a few spots. There is a wireless phone in Chibite, which has not always operated reliably though it has lately improved.

Compared to highland kebeles landholdings are large – though communal grazing land is scarce, which explains the community's resistance to attempts to transform hillsides into forestry areas or to give land to groups of unemployed youth. Rainfed agriculture is not as dependable as in the past:

in 2010 there had been regular drought for five years and emergency food assistance had had to be provided. From 2007 it was provided as Food-for-Work. The main potential for Dinki is irrigation with water from the river. This is practised by about one third of the households, who have land near the river. Production of vegetables and fruits has picked up. It is sold on Aliyu Amba's market, providing a good income, and additional food items in the diet of the households concerned. But the river flow recently changed and some households have been affected by erosion that has eaten away their irrigated land. Moreover, tapping the irrigation potential more fully would require better access to markets, something that might improve somewhat with the ongoing works on the track to Dinki and Chibite. The amount of water in the river is decreasing as well, and while an irrigation users committee was set up to manage water better and get people to work on canal clearance, it is clear that the potential of irrigation in Dinki is not infinite.

There is also a nursery near the river that provides seedlings including experimental varieties of spices. The nursery and irrigated horticulture of private farmers are a source of daily labour for other households. When food-for-work is available, as it has been for the last three years, most households have at least one member participating. Poorer households, elderly and female-headed households tend to sharecrop out their land. There are a number of very poor, destitute households, many headed by elderly people or women, which depend on other people's assistance to survive. They are more vulnerable to abuses and do not have the support necessary to seek redress. Poorest households may have male members migrating out for work or become dependent on richer ones for whom they work full-time.

In addition to domestic chores and for the Amhara women, gender specific farming tasks on the family land, some women participate in daily labour and food-for-work. Some earn an income from petty trade, preparation and sale of drinks, and selling small livestock. Traditionally, Argobba women do not engage in farming but there is some change especially for the poorer ones. There also are changes in women's land rights and signs that even Argobba women are ready to claim these rights even though they face more resistance than their fellow Amhara women. Women in Dinki are little involved in local politics and administration although the woman wereda Councillor is an active person who contributed to get some requests from the community acted upon by the wereda.

There are a very large number of (mainly young) landless households. Young men face big obstacles to access land, and the new land and family laws strengthening women's rights of ownership and inheritance are likely to further increase the pressure on land. There are emerging signs that women claim and obtain these rights. Some young men may continue to work for their parents and gradually get land to exploit themselves. For those who do not there are very limited off- and non-farm opportunities, and the promises of the wereda of finding ways for groups of youth to engage in productive activities have come to nothing except for very few who got space and could raise credit to open kiosk shops in Chibite. The one attempt to give youth land was resisted by farmer who made claims to the land they were allocated and other ideas for non-land based income generation activities were not taken forward. The current situation causes a lot of discontent among the youth.

There is limited use of fertiliser because of the cost and lack of sufficient rain which makes it ineffective. Short maturing varieties of maize have been tried but require careful weeding and also enough rain, and the supply is also not sufficient or not timely. The newly re-established service co-op cannot yet provide inputs at a better price, though it has the advantage of bringing these closer to the farmers. The service co-op does not provide loans for lack of seed capital. Credit is available from ACSI, with centres in the kebele. There is no consensus among groups of respondents (community members, wereda and kebele officials) as to whether people who took credit generally improved their lives or not. There are stories both ways, and a sense that credit is good only for strong farmers and those very careful with money. ACSI repayment conditions are thought to be unrealistic, and a big issue is uninsured death of livestock for reasons beyond people's control.

People in Dinki keep livestock. A few rich households have camels that are used for transport and are very valuable. Attempts at improving and diversifying livestock production with new breeds of poultry and beekeeping were unsuccessful, but a qualified vet is now in post in Chibite and even though there are some issues (very large area to cover, shortage of drugs and equipment), people are very appreciative of the service which enables them to get their animals vaccinated a lot more easily.

People in Dinki have access to the kebele health post in Chibite which, because initially it was planned to be a clinic then was downgraded, was allocated a nurse – although it otherwise lacks basic facilities and even a table and chair. Water is still taken from the river. People can also go to the health centre of Aliyu Amba, which has lately become better equipped. The sanitation measures taught under the government health extension programme are adopted only to a limited extent and in particular, few people use latrines even among those that dug one, though younger people seem to be more convinced of the benefits. There is a sense among different groups of people that the use of contraception is becoming quite widespread, although there are also reports of husbands' resistance or resistance on religious grounds or because people – including women – want more children. Malaria is still present in the area while TB is decreasing. HIV/AIDS is considered to be an urban issue, although there are a few cases of people suspected to live with HIV/AIDS in the community, and there are a few HIV/AIDS orphans though from people who migrated.

There is a full cycle primary school in Chibite and two satellite schools in other gottas including Dinki. The reduced distance to school and the shift system enabling children to attend school and to have time to help at home or in the fields helped boost enrolment, including of girls now enrolled equally to boys. However, there is still absenteeism and dropout, linked to the need for child labour and some children's poor performance which discourages parents from continuing to send them to school. A few children go to the secondary school recently opened in Aliyu Amba. This is better than when they had to go to Ankober, but still requires them to stay away from home during the week – which is an issue as it decreases households' labour capacity. The community has no access to TVET or tertiary education.

Following the EPRDF regime's policy with regard to minorities' rights Argobba have the upper hand in the local kebele politics and administration (though not the wereda), although their fellow community members suspect kebele leaders of working to their own advantage, regardless of the ethnic group they belong to. In 2004 Argobba appeared to be at a disadvantage economically. In spite of these factors and some allegations of bias one way or the other, relationships between Amhara and Argobba are fairly good, although some people say that the community cohesion is only superficial. The two religious groups are tolerant of each other and have common organisations (joint iddir) and people invite each other to customary ceremonies – in the past some fundamentalist preachers tried to instil less tolerant ideas including that Muslims should have their separate iddir, but these were not taken up. Mutual assistance between relatives and neighbours and through iddir is important, involving various types of assistance mainly 'in kind'. People in Dinki also devote much time, energy and resources to life cycle and religious ceremonies.

In contrast, people's involvement in government and party matters is distant, even though formally, there are a large number of kebele and sub-kebele level structures for both government and the ruling party. These structures strongly overlap, with the smallest ones overseeing five or ten households' performance in development activities and in adopting the measures promoted by the wereda and responsible for mobilising people for collective labour and raising resources. However in spite of this system of micro level mobilisation, since the adoption of the good governance package in 2007 non-participation is seen as a right. Kebele officials have far fewer means to overcome people's reluctance to participate, which puts them in a difficult position vis-à-vis the wereda.

One of the issues provoking people's discontent is the transformation in 2007 of food aid into food-for-work, which people say, is against the federal/regional policy and which some claim was decided

by wereda and kebele officials for their own benefit. This fuels a sense of unfairness as people do not see why they should work whereas people in Afar get free food.

### **3. Turufe (Oromia) in 2010**

Turufe (abbreviated from Turufe Kechem(e/a) is one of three villages and the administrative centre of a larger kebele in Shashemene wereda in Oromia, not far from the border with the Southern region. The village is surrounded by two rivers and located on fairly flat terrain. It is adjacent to the town of Kuyera (3 kms), to which it lost some land in 2009, and not far from Shashemene (14 kms). Most people live in the central densely populated area of the village (legacy of the Derg villagisation) with piped water at several communal water points and electricity since 2008, obtained with help of an investor who installed an electric mill. The mobile phone network covers the area. The village is linked to Kuyera by a dirt road reaching the main road along which Kuyera and Shashemene are located. Access can be difficult at times of the year for the carts and Bajaj that can now be hired, as the dirt road is no longer regularly maintained by public works as in the past. The proximity of Kuyera and of the booming town of Shashemene (radically transformed and attracting investors since it became the zonal capital in 2006) goes a long way to explain what life looks like in Turufe – notably comparatively better infrastructure and access to a range of services (government and also big private sector expansion in Shashemene and missions in Kuyera involved in education and health), market opportunities for agricultural and other products and wage labour opportunities.

The population is mixed, ethnically with a majority of Oromo and significant minorities of migrants from both northern and southern Ethiopia established in Turufe since the imperial or Derg times as well as recent migrant labourers, and religiously with a majority of Muslims, and Orthodox Christian and Protestant minorities. Different groups in the community therefore have different social/family norms and outlooks on things like divorce (common among Amhara and Tigrayan, frowned upon among Oromo), female circumcision (shortly before birth among the Orom and southern migrants, soon after birth among the Amhara migrants), women's role and generally, the ideal-type household cycle. In 2004 it was estimated that 24% of the households were headed by women. Polygyny was present, with 11% of the male household heads reporting having a second wife.

Turufe is a food secure, surplus producing area, traditionally exporting potatoes and maize to Addis Ababa. Farmers also grow a variety of other crops, all based on rainfed agriculture, and rear livestock. There are many migrant labourers working as domestic workers for households or sharecropping land with them. Some men trade or are involved in informal businesses and brokering and local transport activities. A few richer men have shops or are engaged in lucrative trade. A few people with manual skills (e.g. carpentry, masonry) migrate for work. Women in Turufe engage in farm activities. Besides, they may earn an income from petty trade, running small shops and cafes in the village (a new trend), alcoholic drink preparation and sale – for which some women got credit from a private MFI. A few women have small businesses as traders or sewing clothes.

Pressure on land is high (and likely to increase with the emerging stronger women's rights, see below) and there are many landless youth. Recently the wereda organised a number of them in groups to engage in productive activities for which, after initial opposition by community members, they were given some land (for forestry and horticulture) but it is too early to judge the usefulness of this initiative which also will not meet the needs of most of the youth. Some (male) youth work locally as brokers for the potato trade. A few girls are engaged in road-selling, and some young women do hairdressing. However, due to land shortage and limited employment opportunities many youth leave the village. Many migrate to Shashemene and Kuyera (construction, transport) for the men, and the flower farms in Zway for the young women; some migrate farther away including abroad (including a few young women). In spite of the pressure on land, a plot of 15 hectares of communal land was recently given to an Ethiopian investor returning from Canada, although at the time of the fieldwork he still needed to get final approval from the wereda.

Issues of price, lack of credit, insufficient quantity, unreliable quality and lack of timeliness of supply are strong constraints on the use of fertiliser and improved seeds. The use of manure is being promoted but this is also limited; among others, poor farmers with not much livestock face a problem. A few farmers have recently engaged in dairy production with crossbred cows and this seems promising as there is high milk demand in the cafes of Kuyera. But there are constraints which stop this from becoming more widespread: cows have to be bought in cash which is impossible for many farmers; concerns that feed is too expensive and cows might not be resistant to disease or could be stolen; problems with untimely artificial insemination services.

There is some credit provision, though at the moment it does not reach many people. A government-related MFI provides group-based loans but this is at the stage of awareness-raising and no group having been formed. One private MFI is working with women, and one NGO helped parents of children they were supporting to organise a savings and credit organisation.

There is evidence that women's rights to land are being established, and of significant progress with regard to other rights and reduction of harmful practices with tangible support of influential customary leaders (who took an oath against widow inheritance for instance) and the active involvement of local women playing role models (e.g. uncircumcised women testifying to easier childbearing). But women's involvement in local administration and politics remain minimal. Women domestic workers and their daughters are vulnerable to abuses and fear to report them.

The community has good access to curative health services in Kuyera at the old Shashemene hospital which is now a referral hospital as a new hospital was built in Shashemene. The community, calling on higher level authorities right up to the Regional President to whom they sent a delegation of elders financed by the local iddir, successfully resisted the plan to turn it into a nurses' college. There are also mission and private facilities in Kuyera and Shashemene (and a plan to build a health centre in the kebele). Given this comparatively good availability of curative services some people say that it would be better to close the health post which does not provide any of these. The prevention, nutrition and sanitation services provided by the HP as per government policy are widely considered as 'things for the women' – although two recent outbreaks of Acute Water Diarrhoea increased people's interest in using latrines. Albeit not yet widespread, the use of family planning is higher than average in the wereda, which people also link to the proximity of the services in town. The health post also does not provide pre and post-natal care. Women with complications have to be taken to the hospital; richer households can get help faster by calling transport and getting to towns' private services.

There is a full cycle primary school in another village of the kebele and a new Grade 4 school in Turufe. Many parents continue to send their children to the older complete school of Kuyera, said to be better. Children can also go to Kuyera and Shashemene for general and preparatory secondary education, which girls tend to do less as many stop to look for work or get married in their late teens. In the past many children started school late and dropped out once they reach secondary level, which the wereda has campaigned to change. There is a government TVET in Shashemene but officials consider it is insufficient to meet the demand. Children from richer families go for private tertiary education, a booming sector although wereda officials express concerns that education is of poor quality because of the money-oriented mind of the institutions' owners. Richer households, and also migrants keen to maintain links with other places in Ethiopia if they had to leave the area, educate their children outside Turufe. A few students from Turufe have attended university, and there are stories of educated people, some of whom got employed and others not.

Given Turufe's heterogeneity a number of broader developments are bound to have significant effects on the community. With the EPRDF policy of regionalisation, positions in the kebele administration are fully controlled by the Oromo. To some extent migrants tend to stick with people from their own group for certain activities (like joint herding) though other organisations are based on neighbourhoods or religions. Around the 2005 election there was unease among migrants

recalling the Kembata expulsion of the early 1990s, and although these fears proved unfounded, as just noted some migrants have adopted a strategy of sending their offspring to live, study and work in local towns and in Addis Ababa, to maintain links outside of Turufe. Economically things are complex: long-established migrants are not disadvantaged, but recent migrants form an underclass of domestic labourers. Religious tolerance prevails but there is a rise in fundamentalisms and some tension between followers of different religions, particularly related to young and poor people converting to Protestantism.

Turufe has been known as a place where youths are involved in theft, with gangs attacking people on their way to market. There seems to be no consensus as to whether this is being properly addressed and is reducing or not (with e.g. contradicting accounts on the effectiveness of the militia, wereda officials claiming progress with the recently established community police but a sense of dissatisfaction among community members with the conditions relating to justice, notably that it is not effective in tackling the problem of continuing theft).

Reflecting the community's broader outlook on education, the kebele leader, who trained as a DA after completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade, is taking a course at a private college in Shashemene. The manager has a diploma in social sciences from a private college. At the same time, the government is tapping the strength of local customary institutions: the wereda formalised the Aba Gada customary institution as a committee (on which two people from the kebele were elected), which sends people to kebeles to settle disputes which wereda officials say, is quite successful in Turufe.

The relationship between the community and the government, mediated by a large number of kebele and sub-kebele level government and party structures as elsewhere, seems to be neither particularly close nor intensely problematic, although as noted earlier at times the community mobilises against plans that it does not like (see above the story about the hospital; there was also popular resistance against the organisation of collective labour for harvesting by the sub-kebele government/party structures).

#### **4. Korodegaga (Oromia) in 2010**

Korodegaga is a collection of nine villages scattered over a large area (2 hours walk between some of them) and forming one kebele in Dodota wereda in Oromia. Sefera village, the administrative centre (and a legacy of the Derg villagisation) with some new administrative and service buildings, is located along the Awash river. It does not have electricity (nor do any of the other villages) although since the fieldwork a line may have been extended across the river to Sodere (as was done at times in the past), which was needed to restart an irrigation scheme using electric pumps. There is only one spring giving potable water so that most people use water from rivers for all their needs.

The nine villages are almost encircled by the Awash and the Qelete, another perennial river. Access to Dera, the wereda centre, is either through a dirt road (25 kms) which is not passable the whole year but was recently maintained with the help of a recently arrived Australian investor using his tractor, or, crossing the Awash river on a manually-hauled raft as there is no bridge, and walking to Sodere where there is an all weather road and transport to Dera. So on the one hand Korodegaga is remote. On the other hand, once on the all weather road people can easily reach Nazreth (30 kms), the second or third largest city in Ethiopia, and several small towns on the way. Moreover, most people have access to a mobile phone (in addition to a public V-Sat phone in the kebele though only receiving calls).

The people, who are descended from pastoralists who settled gradually, are almost 100% Oromo Muslims belonging to thirteen different clans of which one (Sebro) is dominant in terms of population and economic power and social and kin networks. In 2004 it was estimated that well over half (56%) of the population was under 20; 23% of the households were headed by a woman; polygyny concerned 12% of households.

New laws and repeated training led to people saying to be changing their mind and progress being made on a number of women's rights issues. Female circumcision is at the very least much reduced though may still be hidden; at least half of the young women who marry are said to choose their partner (less likely if the family is rich); women can and do refuse to be 'inherited wives' when their husbands die; polygyny is solidly entrenched but first wives now have to be consulted and can obtain that property is shared in case they do not agree to their husband taking a second wife. Individual land rights by inheritance or upon divorce are enforced, which is a dramatic change with repercussions for relationships between siblings and between married partners.

The kebele has ample land, but many young men are landless. To address this, for a few years the wereda and kebele administrations have worked together to allocate communal land (of which there is a good amount) to groups of youth organised in co-ops to engage in rainfed and irrigated agriculture. Some youth co-ops also started non-farm activities (sand, loading/unloading, and stone splitting and crushing). The loading/unloading co-op was successful; the other two failed due to quality and market access issues.

Rainfed agriculture (mainly maize and teff) which used to be the most common form of livelihood in the community is unreliable. There have been few good harvests since the early 1990s and four severe droughts since 1984 including two since 2002. The kebele is considered to be food insecure and received food aid regularly since the mid-1980s. Since 2005 it has been included in the Productive Safety Net Programme. Food aid is generally appreciated by community members but provokes a lot of conflict during the selection for targeting. Kebele officials highlight that food aid increases a sense of dependency, whilst wereda officials highlight that the good irrigation potential of Korodegaga provides the way toward food security.

This potential is being increasingly exploited. A number of farmers owning small pumps individually or in small groups irrigate their private land. There are two communal schemes with almost all landholding households belonging to the larger government scheme, operating under one joint irrigation association which gives good services to its members including credit for inputs: the first was established with the support of an NGO which phased out since but the scheme is still operating; the other, recently developed with government support, faced problems resulting from theft of parts after one year of operation but was due to restart soon after the fieldwork. Some of the youth groups/co-ops got irrigable land and one of them a pump from an NGO. Most recently a group of eight women formed a co-op and got irrigable land though they had to call on the wereda Women Affairs' office to overcome initial refusals by the kebele and wereda administrations, and later on faced further opposition from other community members. There are a few inward investors, including an Australian investor who was given land by the wereda. This was against a decision by the kebele administration and the community to give this land to a group of youth. However since then, the investor has gained acceptance as he proves to be willing to help the community and individuals in different ways and his farm generates employment opportunities.

These developments benefitted a large number of households, directly for the farmers and youth producing on irrigated land, and for others through providing opportunities for daily labour (largely substituting for firewood cutting and selling), loading/ unloading work to one of the youth co-ops, and an emerging land leasing market for households with irrigable land and not enough labour (which is against the rules). But there have been setbacks too, due to pests, increasing price of inputs, what looks like sabotage with critical parts of the equipment of the government-sponsored scheme stolen for several months, and a number of conflicts over land or other issues (like the pump for a youth group that was borrowed by the irrigation association which later on refused to give it back). Some farmers grow maize and not vegetables and fruits as this is less labour-intensive, but it also is potentially less good return on their investment. The main constraint, though, is the lack of a bridge over the river to facilitate marketing of the products, something which the community raises repeatedly at wereda level. Recently wereda officials have promised a 'step-by-step solution'. It also

seemed that wereda officials had a plan to graduate almost the whole community from the PSNP – although this was not known by community members who also did not seem to know about a second phase of PSNP.

Apart from the developments around irrigation various government-led initiatives to try to enhance agricultural and livestock production have had varying success. In principle farmers have access to credit to get some inputs and new technologies (but fertiliser must be bought in cash). But there are quotas (e.g. on improved seeds and livestock) so that the quantity may be insufficient; there are allegations of bias in the distribution (e.g. for improved seeds); there are issues of repayment (e.g. revolving fund for livestock not revolving); failure to use the technology due to insufficient information (e.g. improved maize) or loss of livestock due to lack of vaccination and drugs (there is a newly built vet post but no assigned veterinarian). There also are some stories of successes.

Richer farmers may spend most of their time on their farm on rainfed and irrigated agriculture and some livestock-rearing. Sons, poorer farmers and female-headed households usually have a portfolio of activities changing over the year and including in addition work on sharecropped/rented land, daily labour, FFW and selling wood. There are virtually no local non-farm activities. With the various co-ops started recently, wereda officials estimate that about 15% of the community is engaged in the co-op movement, to which the irrigation association must be added. There is some (likely illegal) migration of young women and men to Sudan, a trend which started quite recently and is slowly increasing.

There is a new health post and health extension workers living with the community since 2009, though the HP equipment and services provided are minimal, focusing on teaching the health extension programme 16 packages and sanitation and prevention advice. For curative services people have to cross the river, the nearest facility is a private clinic (8 kms) then the health centre in the wereda centre. Malaria is a big problem, bednets are distributed but not regularly and people do not always use them, partly because their shape is hard to fit in the round huts of most people, and treatment is not available at the HP. An epidemic of chronic diarrhoea killed three people in 2009. A wereda programme to provide HIV testing, ARV and counselling could not be implemented properly because of shortage of kits, but there is increasing awareness of how the disease is transmitted in the community and a number of voluntary tests were conducted. Family planning services are available at the HP though the supply of contraceptives has been irregular, and large families are still the norm. Pregnancy and childbirth services are available at the clinic and health centre but not the HP, and the distance is a disincentive to use the services.

There is one primary school in Sefara, which was recently expanded to grade 5 with community labour and wereda support and the plan is to gradually bring it to full cycle, and a new satellite school in another village. There are more girls than boys at school, reportedly as a result of the activities of a dedicated committee. Students beyond grade 5 have to go to the full cycle school in Sodere, across the river. Students are often absent on market days or miss school during peak agricultural time and sometime to do FFW under the PSNP. Teachers are expected to try to prevent this by going door-to-door which they hate doing. This is not out of lack of commitment: for example the teachers successfully approached an investor, who agreed to support six orphans (providing them with educational materials). Very few students go beyond primary education and most of those who do drop out. There is no TVET provision nearby.

The wereda and kebele administration played a significant role in the developments around irrigation. However, the community is upset by the lack of progress with the serious issues of lack of access/link to markets, and safe water supply, in spite of the pressure put by the woman wereda Councillor from the kebele. Wereda and kebele officials do not always see eye-to-eye. The case of the land allocation to the Australian investor prompted the then kebele leader to step down even though he was well-liked by the community for being a 'democratic leader' who did not force people to do what they did not want to do and simply reported to the wereda, but basically, he said, the

wereda did not want him to be the leader. Other leaders were removed because of community allegations of corruption or lack of effectiveness, which suggests that the opinion of the community somehow matters (also, the recently appointed kebele manager was known previously and recommended by the kebele officials) but may also be linked to inter-clan competition for access to government resources.

There are a large number of kebele and sub-kebele structures involved in development and political activities (including EPRDF party cells with 20 members, a leader, deputy, accountant, and co-op person). The OPDO-EPRDF party activity was stepped up since 2008 and almost everyone is a member in Korodegaga. However, for most men this seems to be a matter of avoiding problems (even if there are no fines in principle, people say that 'fines happen indirectly') and they were speaking bitterly about the number of meetings they had to attend given the lack of economic development in the community. In contrast, many women apparently supported the EPRDF, saying that 'with this government women get their rights'. On the other hand, participation in the Women's Association meetings and community work seems to be fairly compulsory (threat of exclusion from other government interventions). Militia members reluctant to work (as they are not paid) are also told that they will be excluded from different kebele services and advantages if they do not serve as they should and can be fined.

### **5. Girar (SNNP) in 2010**

Girar na Yeferema Zigba (abbreviated to Girar) comprises sixteen villages surrounding Imdibir town, the capital of Cheha wereda in the Gurage zone of SNNP. The kebele emerged from Imdibir Haya Gasha rural kebele<sup>33</sup>, part of which was incorporated in Imdibir town and the rest merged with other areas. The villages of Girar adjacent to Imdibir are as urbanised as the town itself (which enjoys an economic boom and rapid development notably thanks to the chat trade). Girar and Imdibir are bisected by a (gravel) all weather road with regular public transport, going to the zonal capital Wolkite (30 kms) and from there Addis Ababa in one direction, and Hoseana in the other direction. The 'inside villages' are not very well connected to the main road (seasonal roads and community built bridges) which is a constraint for marketing their products, particularly eucalyptus. There is electricity and piped water in town and in the urbanised villages. Elsewhere people have to use water from the rivers crossing the kebele. The lack of access to safe water is a bone of contention between the community and the wereda, especially as there seemed to be solutions that the wereda, allegedly inexplicably, prevented from happening. The mobile phone network covers all parts of the kebele and most people have access to a mobile phone, which made a big difference for trade, keeping in touch with relatives and migrants etc.

People are almost 100% Gurage, a group with strong customary institutions and structures that are still very important in people's everyday lives and with which the government is increasingly trying to work (e.g. clan elders have been a critical support for the 'modern' gender equality agenda in Girar). There are followers from four major religions, Islam, Orthodox Church, Catholicism (since the 1980s) and Protestantism (most recently established). The different groups and their leaders entertain mostly good relations, with faith-based organisations collaborating to address social issues affecting the community and assisting each other in development activities, although there was a dispute between Catholics and Protestants over land to build a church, and people are said to dislike conversions, which these days happen mainly toward Protestantism.

Population density is high and landholdings are very small. People do not talk about landlessness but there is a growing number of youth and young households who do not have their own farmland.

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<sup>33</sup> Abbreviated in Imdibir in previous research.

Some are organised in groups to engage in productive (agricultural and non-farm) activities with support from the wereda and kebele administrations. However, this is fairly recent and groups have faced difficulties (poor repayment of credit, lack of genuinely common interest etc.). Youth unemployment is seen as a major challenge by the community. Young people (especially men), spending time in town for work and entertainment, are said to be at risk of becoming chat addicts. They may also get involved in the sometimes violent conflicts occurring around the chat trade.

There is an emerging big change in women's lives, which the new regional family and land laws underpin and with actual cases of women claiming and obtaining new land rights and rights to divorce, evidence of successes in banning female circumcision, progress in girls' education and associated reduction in the trend of young girls being sent to work as easily abused housemaids for relatives in towns, and progress in women's economic empowerment. Some 200 women (from among Girar's 900 families) are involved in economic activities (through co-ops) beyond their domestic chores and tasks on the family's farm. These changes (less pronounced with regards to politics and administration) make a deep indent in the traditionally male dominated Gurage society and provoked stiff resistance from some men. Most were supported by the powerful Gurage customary institutions although the growing number of cases of divorces is thought to be a much undesirable consequence of lack of consideration of family and social implications under the 'modern' justice system.

Rural livelihoods are organised around enset cultivation and cattle rearing, closely interlinked. Farmers also grow an increasing number of complementary crops for cash and household consumption especially for richer households, some of these promoted by the wereda and DAs (grains and vegetables and fruits), others in response to market demand (e.g. coffee). Chat and eucalyptus wood have emerged as high demand/value products and some farmers growing these are quite wealthy. Chat especially is well suited to provide a good return from farmers' increasingly small plots of land (moreover, enset and coffee production has been beset by diseases), and many in Girar are involved in chat trade. As another response to farmland scarcity, communal land is being parcelled and given for use under contracts to groups of youth and women formed in co-ops and to farmers with small private landholdings to experiment with government-promoted crops. This is part of a recent big push for '*no land to remain idle*', which also includes government services advising farmers to use techniques such as intercropping (which they were reportedly already using in 1994).

The rivers crossing the kebele are said to be hard to use for irrigation; water harvesting had little success (among others because household reservoirs takes precious land away) and brought very little change if any (contradicting accounts). The use of modern inputs is limited, due to a mix of inter-linked factors including alleged lack of sufficient credit opportunities and bad repayment issues. Formal credit is widely available (government-linked MFI, private bank and MFI in town, women co-op credit service, NGO schemes for poorer households) but there are various issues including modalities that people criticise, and poor repayment of 'government credit' as people allegedly do not take their obligation seriously when something 'comes from government'. This has also limited the reach of wereda-led initiatives to promote new livestock activities (e.g. bull fattening, a scheme said to be 'in its infancy' for four years because of constraints on the number of farmers allowed to take loans).

A number of people engage in agricultural daily labour for others (households where men have migrated, the women's co-op, female-headed households and wealthy households with businesses in town). People in Girar have access to non-farm daily labour opportunities in Imdibir town and a growing number of them spend time there (sometimes blamed by their wives or the DAs for doing this rather than working hard on their garden), a trend parallel to the rapid development of the town. Some complain that youth from the rural villages do not have access to better opportunities such as metal or woodwork, because of lack of both TVET education and skills, and electricity in the

villages. The market is also an income source for many women and girls engaged in pottery. A number of wealthy farmers from Girar invest in shops and other activities in town.

Following the long-standing Gurage tradition of migration many people from Girar, including many youth, migrate to towns elsewhere in Ethiopia to engage in all sorts of activities, from shoe-shining to very big businesses for the successful ones, or joining older migrants to further develop their activity. Most keep strong links with families at home and return regularly – some men for enset harvesting, and most people for the big annual religious holy days, especially Meskel for the Orthodox Christians and Arefa for Muslims. Some send remittances or more occasional financial support when needed. New patterns have emerged. Among those migrating in Ethiopia there is more permanent or long-term migration of people who get employed in government or the private sector or launch their own business. Migration to Arab countries, including of young women, is also on the increase. Remittances may be a substantial boost to the economy of the households concerned, and provide seed capital for some.

There is a health post in the kebele though it lacks basic amenities (water, electricity) and does not provide any curative services, which some in the community complain about. People have access to the health centre of Imdibir and can and do go to a Catholic mission hospital 12 kms away (including for deliveries with complications). The HP offers vaccination and family planning but no delivery and pregnancy check-up services (the HEWs attend deliveries at home if asked). The use of contraception is reportedly becoming widespread but also still stiffly resisted by some people. Many people in Girar seem genuinely convinced by the benefits of prevention, better sanitation and nutrition (e.g. Girar is a model kebele in the use of latrines) although some point out that lack of safe water defeats some of the measures promoted. It is not clear whether malaria has become an issue or not. Similarly, there is no consistent account on the number of HIV cases though it is a big issue in Imdibir town. Campaigns of awareness-raising and for regular testing seem to have an effect.

There is one full-cycle primary school in the kebele, recently expanded with support from the community and the Gurage 'diaspora', and a (general and preparatory) secondary school at the periphery of Imdibir town. After this, children have to go far away to continue to study. This will change soon as the Catholic mission is building a TVET in Imdibir. A university is also being built in the wereda – this was a promise made after the 2005 elections, reportedly following a request by the people of the wereda. Commitment to education is said to have increased and there is evidence of this among the people we interviewed, as many people have hopes that education will lead them/their children to better life opportunities. However, the costs (especially of post-secondary education), failure to get good enough grades to be able to continue (which parents link to the poor quality of education in the available primary and secondary schools), the prospect of unemployment for those who have to drop out (which is already a reality for many) and the risk of unemployment even for graduates, are big concerns.

The relationship between the community and the government is complex. In 2005 initially in the wereda the EPRDF lost to the CUD. After months of upheavals the alleged effects of the good governance discussions ('government tried to understand why people were unhappy') occurred: people returned to the 'development path' whilst the government was removing 'those kebele leaders who had lost people's confidence'. In Girar this led to some reshuffle but the kebele leader, a long serving and well-liked person, remained in post. Community people differ in their appreciation of the government performance (both broadly and with regard to the wereda administration) and have different opinions on the effectiveness of the good governance ideas. In the 2010 elections for the first time there was no opposition in the wereda.

## **6. Geblen (Tigray) in 2010**

Geblen tabia comprises four kushets<sup>4</sup>: two of them lie on the Eastern Tigray highland plateau while the other two, spread out on the steep slopes from the plateau to the Afar Region, are not easily accessible. A very small town called Mishig is emerging around the tabia administrative centre (on the plateau), which has had electricity since 2008. This urbanisation trend is encouraged by the tabia administration which provides residential land for young landless households. The tabia centre is connected through a small all-weather road (which has to be annually maintained, usually through FFW) to a tar road going to the zonal capital Adigrat (35 kms) and in the other direction to Freweini, the centre of Saesia Tsaeda Emba wereda (39 kms). There is transport three times a week from Geblen to Edaga Hamus (at the junction with the tar road), the second town of the wereda with an important market (18 kms), and transport every day from Adikelembes, the neighbouring tabia where there is also a small market (45 min walk from Mishig). There is a wireless phone in the tabia office. The mobile phone network does not yet reach the tabia except for a few spots and the reception is not good.

In 2007 the population of the tabia was estimated to be 3,500 by the DAs. One third of the 750 households were registered as landless and 46% were female-headed, two trends that are said to be upward. In Geblen there are Erob and Tigrayans, though several people said that they could not clearly identify to which group they belong. There are two main religious groups, Orthodox Christians and Muslims, as well as a few Catholics. The links between ethnic and religious identities are complex. Relations between groups are tolerant and there is no evidence of intentional bias against any of the groups. The 'far away' kushets, historically inhabited more by Erob people, are at a disadvantage with regard to access to infrastructure and services. But this is being addressed, within the limits of the means available to the community, by measures such as the construction of two satellite schools in these kushets and of better paths between the kushets and the tabia centre.

Geblen is known to be drought-prone and this is said to have lately become worse. There was only one good year between 2002 and 2009; in three of the years crops totally failed (in one year even cactus were destroyed), and in one of the years drought and diseases killed 810 animals. Water is very scarce, a big issue for all farm-based activities in Geblen and a strong disincentive for government staff posted in the tabia. The stony soil and the topography prevent the use of technologies found elsewhere in the wereda. The few existing water structures which serve an estimated 10% of the population do not hold water the whole year. Since 2009 all non-farm land has been put under a strict zero-grazing programme which officials say will revive the area, to most people's anger as this causes serious lack of access to fodder and even food items for people (cactus fruits). The very few household ponds built do not hold water as they are not cemented (an unfulfilled wereda promise).

The tabia is included in the PSNP. The assistance is shared through a system of partial family targeting (condoned by the tabia administration) so that 90% of the households benefit for some of their members (instead of 70% officially registered), a situation that is more acceptable for the community than the full family targeting foreseen in the policy. There have been allegations that some tabia officials were biased, some of which were taken up to and addressed by the wereda. By 2010 no household had graduated from the safety net, although a few households having done less badly than others had been 'excluded' from the PSNP second phase and others had been included. In very bad years the community gets additional emergency assistance. 40% of the under-five children get supplementary feeding (which is often shared too, among household members).

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<sup>4</sup> A tabia in Tigrigna is like a kebele; a kushet is a part of a tabia, like a got for a kebele.

Less than 10% of the tabia is farmland and in most areas the soil is poor so that even in good years, households cover at most a few months of their food needs with their own production. Very small-scale irrigation is being practised but for minimal incomes. Households therefore have to have a range of other activities in their livelihood portfolio. One option for most households is work under the PSNP which, although not well paid compared to other daily labour opportunities (including smaller-scale NGO FFW projects), is supposed to be a reliable source of food/income. Delays in PSNP transfers cause hardship but once they arrive transfers make a real difference for poorer households.

People in Geblen keep livestock, mainly goats and sheep and richer households have oxen to plough. Modern beehive and small livestock packages, available on credit provided by DECSI, the regional MFI, are being heavily promoted under the government Other Food Security Programme. In an effort of the tabia administration and DAs to try to reach the wereda targets for the OFSP, reportedly many farmers were forced to take modern beehives packages 'against their interest' (with threats of otherwise being denied other opportunities including access to the PSNP). Most of these failed, mainly because of drought (500 bee colonies died or absconded in 2008). Also, although in 1995 beekeeping was mentioned as important a number of people explained that they had no experience with it and they did not believe that it would work for them, and so they were reluctant to take the hive packages. Livestock packages are generally better accepted and whilst many fail due to lack of water, fodder and regular vet services (there is a veterinary post in Geblen but no assigned staff) some people could get some income from these.

For the poorest households, taking a package under constraint may just aggravate a cycle of debt (for which some use their PSNP rations as a collateral and even repayment means). Due to failure with packages some households have had to become PSNP beneficiaries, which they were not before. People of all ages and even loyal party members deeply resent the coercion and blame the tabia officials for their cowardly attitude when they refuse to take their complaints to a higher level. Tabia officials, pointing at the high level of bad debt in the woreda as a whole and the usually good performance of the tabia in terms of repayment, stress that this (enforcement) '*cannot continue*', as everyone in the tabia will become bankrupt.

People engage in various non-farm activities, self-initiated (e.g. daily labour) or, for a few and more recently, non-farm package options in the OFSP. A number of women are doing quite well with running small shops, teashops and bars in Mishig. Apart from the PSNP, other local non-farm opportunities are few and occasional (e.g. NGO development projects needing labour). People thus migrate for variably long periods of time to different places, finding jobs on construction projects or quarry work in the Region, going to Humera for the sesame harvest, finding work in towns as housemaids, waitresses, or commercial sex workers (for women) and manual labourers (for men), or migrating (illegally) to the Gulf States for both men and women (some women migrate legally), with stories of hardship and failures but also successes – with a few people sending remittances to their families in Geblen.

Migration is increasing particularly among the youth, who lack access to land and '*lose hope*' (one going so far as saying: '*our parents are our enemies*'). The tabia tries to organise groups and facilitate the provision of credit for them to start economic activities but by 2010 only one such group had been formed. They got communal land, though after strong resistance by others in the community, and started beekeeping but failed like others to get any production due to drought. The OFSP non-farm packages mentioned earlier worked for a few youth who '*at least did not get bankrupt*'. But tabia officials point that youth need skills to be able to engage in more lucrative work. Market linkages are also an issue as the local demand for services and products is unlikely to expand dramatically in the future. Examples of success among the young people who stay in Geblen are rare, and linked to some exceptional factors like the story of a young man who invested the savings he had made by working several years in a grinding mill in various local activities.

Education and getting a job is hoped by many to be a way out and there is a strong commitment to education. Even poor households find ways of sending children to study at university and poor students of self-financing their education. But there is also much concern about the poor quality of the education in the local schools and the implications for children's ability to get further, the lack of affordable opportunities, and the risk of unemployment. Some women point out that children from poorer families have much fewer chances to succeed in the 'education-job' route and criticise the government/party for failing to address this. Indeed it is not easy for children to pursue education after primary school. There is one full-cycle and two satellite primary schools in the tabia. Enrolment is said to be almost 100% and gender parity is achieved. There is a newly opened secondary school in Adikelembes, the neighbouring tabia. Children from the far away kushets of Geblen have to stay there for the week because of the distance, which increases the costs. Children from families who can afford it also go to Edaga Hamus, Freweini and Adigrat – also for TVET though there are not enough places so pass marks are high to restrict entrance. The number of young people who drop out at some stage after grade 8 is becoming large, and there is little for them to do as said above.

There is a health post in Mishig although only one HEW, who faces a real challenge considering the difficult topography of the tabia, and given that she has a child under five. She offers the usual teaching on sanitation and prevention and Geblen is a model tabia in this respect, though she says that she does not know the extent to which people actually use latrines for instance, which even do not exist in all houses in Mishig. The HP offers first aid, pregnancy check-up, delivery and post-natal vaccination services – though the HEW is concerned that she needs better ANC skills. Distance to the HP is also a disincentive for women from the far away kushets. There is a health centre in Adikelembes and most people interviewed are satisfied by the services though some point out that costs are high. Waterborne diseases are a serious issue. HIV AIDS is not seen as a big issue by most. VCT is available through campaigns but there is little use of it before marriage as is advocated, and many youth are said to have unsafe sex practices. Family planning has been available for a long time in Geblen and although it is now even more easily accessible with the HP and health centre offering a range of means, its use is only slowly increasing.

The relationship with the government is good 'on the surface'. Geblen is the 2<sup>nd</sup> model tabia with regard to governance and wereda officials say that the community is easily mobilised (for instance for the 20 to 40 days of annual free community labour). The tabia and sub-tabia administrative and party structures overlap and have the same leaders. There is a heavy responsibility on party members and especially local leaders to 'show the way' and convince others to adopt government policies. Party membership is high but not universal. For some people it sounds like a matter of genuine personal commitment, for others, and in particular many women who have been strongly encouraged to become members (in a drive to increase women's representation on local Councils in the Region as a whole), it brings 'no benefit but no harm'. However, as noted earlier people deeply resent the coercion which is apparent in several areas (particularly packages but also latrines and fertiliser), and extension workers resent being prevented from studying outside of wereda-sponsored scheme.