

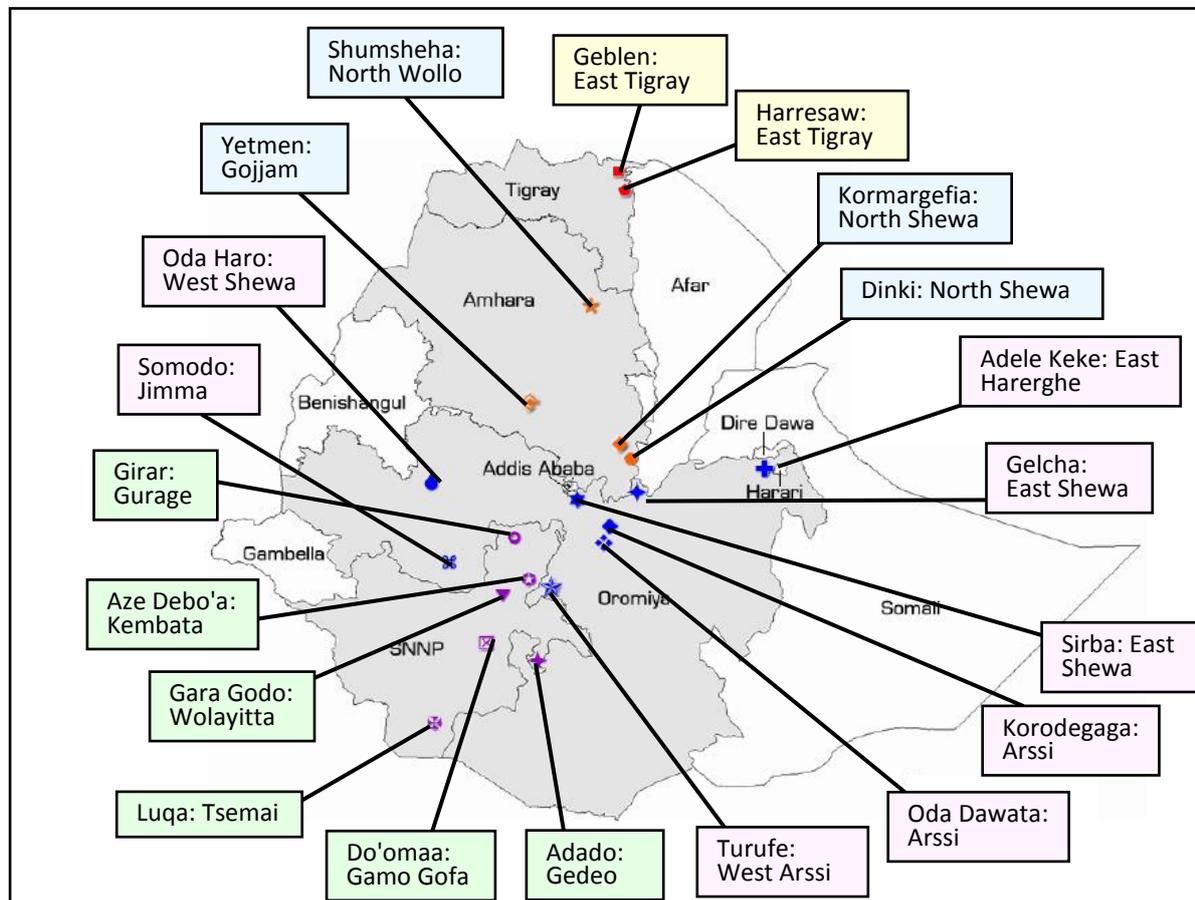
## Rural Ethiopia in Transition: Selected discussion briefs, 2018

### Introducing Ethiopia WIDE<sup>1</sup>

#### Ethiopia WIDE – Tracking rural change since 1994

Ethiopia WIDE is a rigorous independent longitudinal study of 20 rural communities in Ethiopia over 25 years. The 20 WIDE communities are examples of the major types of agricultural-ecological systems found in the four central regions of the country. They include 9 sites identified as surplus-producing or being in agricultural growth potential areas, 2 agro-pastoralist sites, and 9 locations considered more prone to drought.

#### Map of the 20 WIDE communities



A group of six sites in drought prone *weredas* were first studied by the Ethiopian Rural Household Survey (ERHS) in the 1980s. In the mid-1990s, WIDE1 produced village profiles of 15 communities, including these six. The 15 sites were selected by Addis Ababa University (AAU) Economics Department, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and the Centre for the Study of African Economies (CSAE) at the University of Oxford, to represent different agricultural-ecological types. Three cash crop communities were added in later years, and in 2003 WIDE2 added two

<sup>1</sup> This paper has been prepared by Catherine Dom and Alula Pankhurst.

pastoralist sites. WIDE3, conducted in three stages between 2010 and 2013, returned to the 20 communities. Most recently under the WIDE Bridge phase the team returned to four of the 20 communities in early 2018 (see below)<sup>2</sup>.

The WIDE communities are not “representative” in the way that a randomly selected and appropriately sized sample might be. However, they were chosen as exemplars of different types of rural community, featuring wide variations in a range of key parameters. These include livelihoods systems, remoteness or ease of access, cultural and identity-related factors, religious composition, and so on<sup>3</sup>. The WIDE approach, premised on the use of well-accepted case-based methods to analyse the data on these exemplars, makes us confident that the patterns and trends of evidence and experiences found in the WIDE sites are likely to have been present in other communities of the same types and over the same or similar periods. As such, the conclusions reached in the research in general, and in these discussion briefs in particular, can be considered likely to hold more widely.

### Ethiopia WIDE research approach

Ethiopia WIDE research has taken a holistic approach to understanding all aspects of life as it is lived in micro-level communities in rural Ethiopia. The communities studied are viewed as complex and open social systems on trajectories through time. The fieldwork has been carried out by experienced Ethiopian women and men with training in social sciences who have interviewed a wide range of respondents from different age, gender, wealth, occupation and status groups. The data have been made, interpreted and analysed using case-based techniques from sociology and social anthropology. The research traces the trajectories of *kebele* or sub-*kebele* communities through the experiences of different kinds of individuals and their households living in them.

After several rounds of research over twenty-five years, the WIDE research programme has been able to develop a longitudinal understanding of how these communities have changed. Its rigorous systematic qualitative approach provides a valuable counterpoint to the statistical or econometric survey data about rural change and to administrative, sector or programme-focused data. Whilst these are more commonly available for high-level decision making, survey data may elide, obscure or distort the local nuances, perspectives, and complexity of the lived experience of change; and administrative data may overlook key aspects of change through its usually narrowly sectoral focus. Ethiopia WIDE, by contrast, offers an independent body of cross-sectoral evidence that enables policy makers to access the “stories behind the numbers” in a series of exemplar rural communities, during a critical period of change.

### Bridging research and policy

Over the last twenty-five years, the Ethiopian state has assertively and pro-actively been pursuing a range of pro-poor policies, which has brought significant change across communities.

The particular value of the WIDE dataset is that it advances understanding of fundamental ongoing change precisely at the level of the village microcosm, where it is experienced and reinvented by citizens. It illuminates the interaction of a variety of local dynamics with broader modernisation trends to show what changes and what doesn't; how local patterns of social, cultural, economic or

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<sup>2</sup> Funding for WIDE changed over time. WIDE1 was funded by the UK government Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) department. WIDE2 was funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of a multi-country research programme. WIDE3 and subsequent phases were funded by development partners active in Ethiopia. WIDE3 was financed by British, Canadian and Dutch development funding through the World Bank-managed Joint Governance Assessment and Measurement (JGAM) Trust Fund. The WIDE Transition and Bridge phases were funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Irish Aid, and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in Ethiopia.

<sup>3</sup> Maps identifying and summarising different types of categories of communities are included at the end of this introduction chapter.

political perception are modified or reinforced; how processes of local innovation or change are triggered, sustained, and sometimes thwarted; and how practices or their evolution are adopted or abandoned, accepted, resisted or rejected: whether by individual citizens, by other groups of their peers and families; or by their local administrators, representatives, politicians, and elders; either individually or working together.

The WIDE research provides rich evidence of trajectories of significant rural transformation, some of them state-led, and of the resulting rapid and profound processes of individual and social change. Yet it also highlights that, when it comes to development packages and policy frameworks, “one size does not fit all.”<sup>4</sup> It shows that not everything that local officials or other external actors have proposed has worked well, been sensitively communicated or implemented, or enthusiastically received across communities. And much of what has changed is a result of the energy, investment, resources and capital of individuals working independently to make use of the social capital of the communities in which they live. Rapid development has brought better living conditions, greater wealth, and important opportunities to some – but not all – individuals; across some – but not all – parts of each community; and more so in some communities than others.

As H.E. Dr Fitsum, Planning and Development Commissioner said in opening the October 2018 WIDE discussion forum:

*In a country with a population of over one hundred million inhabitants, a great diversity in climatic and ecological conditions, a wide range of agricultural and economic ways of life, and a wealth of social and cultural practices, the interactions between programmes deriving from macro national planning and local conditions and the livelihoods of people living in diverse contexts need to be better understood. This is necessary to make policies and programmes responsive to the diversity of local contexts, in order to further promote equitable and sustainable growth, and continue to address poverty and inequality.*

WIDE evidence helps to explain when, how, and why different outcomes have occurred. These messages are of key importance for those responding to and seeking to enhance innovative productive livelihoods and practice, and aiming at inclusive, developmental transformation at the micro-level. The WIDE Bridge data, with the fieldwork completed a couple of weeks before the appointment of Dr Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister and the wide range of unfolding changes since then, represent a unique record of microlevel perceptions at a special time. They can provide pointers on issues that continue to be highly relevant, to both the federal and regional administrations in charge of taking this change forward.

In line with this commitment to make findings widely available for Ethiopian audiences a number of research outputs were prepared.

Two Series of policy-oriented Discussion Briefs based on the longitudinal data up until WIDE3 (2010-2013) were prepared with a view to engaging with policymaking and practice stakeholders. The Series I Discussion Briefs focused on: unlocking agricultural growth; farming and value chains; job creation for the rural youth; equitable service delivery; models and realities of transformation. The Series II of ten peer reviewed briefs focused on ruralisation, urban expansion, and thickening rural-urban links; inequalities and differentiation; youth transitions to adulthood; education, aspiration and uncertainty; changing patterns in maternal & infant health and well-being; economic participation of women and girls; moving for work; insights on economic success, and; diffusion of knowledge, learning, “technology transfer” & change in rural communities. Both Series were discussed with senior government officials, in March 2014 and March 2016 respectively, and are

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<sup>4</sup> H.E. Ato Newai Gebreab, the former EDRI Executive Director at a High Level Forum to discuss the implications of WIDE findings, held at Sheraton Addis in March 2014.

available on the Ethiopia WIDE website ([www.ethiopiawide.net](http://www.ethiopiawide.net)). A book compiling the Series II briefs was published in 2017 in English and in Amharic, entitled: *Twenty Rural Communities in Ethiopia: Selected discussion briefs on change and transformation*.

In 2018 the team also published a more academically-oriented book drawing on and deepening the analysis of the Series II briefs: *‘Changing Rural Ethiopia: Community Transformations’*, Alula Pankhurst et al. (eds), 2018, Tsehai Publishers, USA. An Ethiopian edition of the book was published in 2017 and widely circulated in Ethiopia – in universities, government agencies etc.<sup>5</sup>

Full details on Ethiopia WIDE and its publications are available on [www.ethiopiawide.net](http://www.ethiopiawide.net). Resources posted on the website include a range of different kinds of datasets and village profiles, research reports, and publications.

### **The WIDE Bridge phase (2018)**

Following on from WIDE3 (2010-13), the WIDE Bridge research was conceived as a way of continuing to build an understanding of rural change over time; as well as a step towards a long-term vision whereby WIDE would be taken forward, as a country-wide Ethiopian-owned programme tracking qualitative rural change, by a network of Ethiopian universities continuing to produce WIDE-inspired research and policy-relevant outputs.

Substantively, in the Bridge research four communities were selected: Aze Debo in Kambata in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Region; Harresaw in Eastern Tigray; Yetmen in East Gojjam, Amhara; and Sirba/Ude in East Shewa, Oromia. The research focused on trajectories since 2010/13 in relation to farming, non-farming, social protection, and local government/community management; the interactions between local contexts and policy developments in relation to land and urbanisation, young people’s economic experiences, and the 2015/6 drought (in Harresaw); and changes in inequality dynamics since 2010/13.

Institutionally, the Bridge phase allowed for initiating relationships paving the way for new institutional modalities to take WIDE forward. Strong links at researcher and senior leadership levels were established with four federal universities, Ambo in Oromia, Bahir Dar in Amhara, Hawassa in SNNP, and Mekelle in Tigray, and with the Addis-based research and policy-oriented Forum for Social Studies think tank. In the course of 2018 and following a range of meetings and joint activities (fieldwork, writing, dissemination etc.) these five institutions have formally expressed their keen interest in being involved as full partners in WIDE4, as a step towards the long-term vision outlined above. Together, the partners have reached a principled agreement on the WIDE4 partnership modalities.

Fundraising for WIDE4 is ongoing, and it is hoped that this three-year project can start in 2019 so as to be able to provide insights at the time of the transition between the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) and its successor.

Simultaneously, a series of awareness-raising and policy engagement activities will take place in the first half of 2019, including the publication of this book presenting the WIDE Bridge key findings and policy and practice suggestions. The book is also available in Amharic, and both publications will be distributed to relevant stakeholders. Regional launches, meetings with federal agencies, radio, TV programmes and articles in newspapers are also planned.

### **The Ethiopia WIDE Bridge communities**

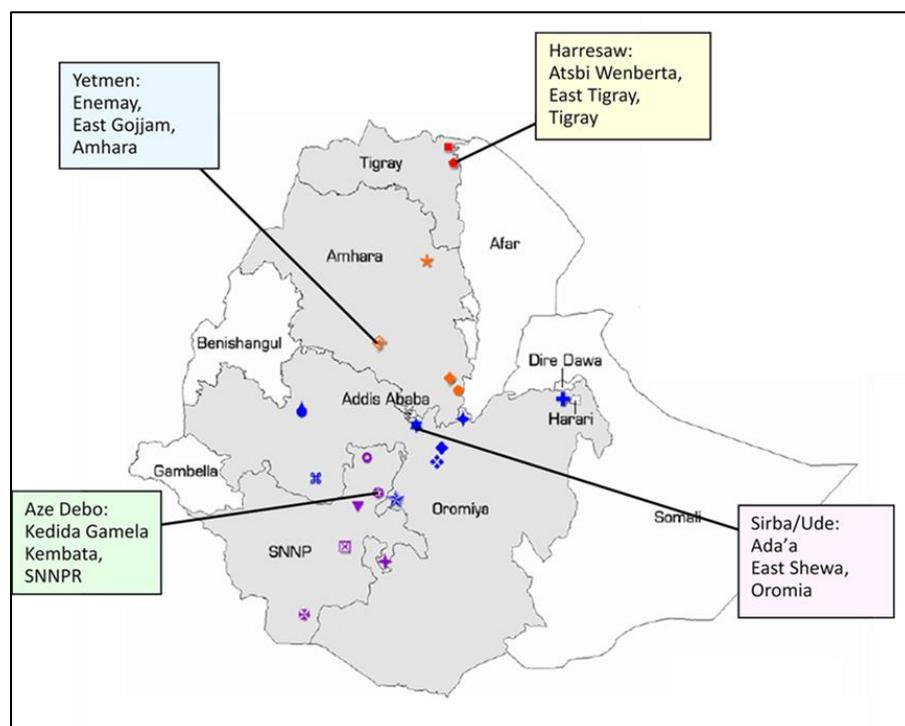
The four communities selected for study in this Bridge phase are shown in the map below: Aze Debo

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<sup>5</sup> entitled ‘Change and transformation in 20 rural communities in Ethiopia: Selected aspects and implications for policy’, edited by Alula Pankhurst and published in Addis Ababa in 2017

in Kambata in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region, Harresaw in Eastern Tigray, Yetmen in East Gojjam, Amhara, and Sirba/Ude<sup>6</sup> in East Shewa, Oromia. They represented a fair mix considering the focus of the research.

#### Map of the four WIDE Bridge communities



From a livelihood perspective Yetmen and Sirba, with good agricultural potential, contrast with Harresaw, cereal growing and drought-affected, and enset-based Aze Debo, vulnerable though not to the same extent as Harresaw. The research in 2018 found that three of the sites did well over the past five-seven years: in Ude/Sirba, the most 'connected' of the four, both the farming and non-farming sectors were flourishing, although pressure on land is high due to surrounding and internal urbanisation and industrialisation. In Yetmen, historically strongly connected to the national *teff* market, *teff* production continued to drive local economic growth although farming is also diversifying. In Aze Debo, farming is increasingly oriented towards a diversified production for local markets (eucalyptus, irrigated tomatoes, dairy, and poultry), a trend pulled by demand from the expanding nearby zonal capital Durame, and pushed by a coffee disease affecting production. In both Yetmen and Aze Debo nonfarm activities were also on the increase, notably trade. In contrast, in remote Harresaw, at the border with Afar, farming was strongly affected by recurrent poor rains and the disappearance of irrigation due to water scarcity over the past five years; this in turn affected non-farm activities although the sector was slowly expanding as an alternative to farming and pushed by increasing landlessness.

As we expected in selecting them, the four sites considerably differed in the extent and form of urbanisation/industrialisation affecting them: different patterns of urbanisation were found to be present in all four (from within, encroachment from neighbouring urban areas, municipalisation), with in addition, rapid industrialisation surrounding Ude/Sirba, between Bishoftu and Mojo. In all

<sup>6</sup> The site used to be called Sirba na Godeti. It was renamed Sirba (by the name of one of the villages) in 2013, and later on renamed again as Ude Dhenkaka. Of the three rural villages, Ude, Sirba and Kumbursa, Ude had been almost completely included in a newly established municipality called Ude. Parts of the land of Sirba and Kumbursa have also been included in the municipality, more so in Sirba than in Kumbursa. In these briefs we have referred to Sirba/Ude or Ude/Sirba to maintain the continuity with the previous name.

four, there were commonalities and differences in a range of land dynamics including: a) the extent of urbanisation/industrialisation, with associated changes in land tenure; b) the stage of implementation of rural land certification; c) the value of both rural and urban land in these 'transitioning' communities; d) the extent of land expropriation and compensation; e) the extent of demographic pressure on land – with Aze Debo located in one of the most highly densely populated weredas of the country.

Also, the four sites represented a wide range of levels of connectedness: from Ude/ Sirba, strongly affected by changes in the Bishoftu-Mojo urban/industrial corridor, adjacent to the new Addis Ababa-Adama highway and bisected by the old road still much in use; to Harresaw, on an all-weather gravel road, 20 kms away from the small wereda town Atsbi and 45 kms away from Wukro and the Mekelle-Adigrat road, and at the border with the Afar Region. In between these two extremes, Yetmen is located on a recently asphalted road connecting the expanding towns of Bichena, the wereda centre, and Dejen, to the zonal capital Debre Markos and the regional capital Bahir Dar, but quite far from both; and Aze Debo is adjacent to the Kambata zonal capital Durame, connected to the rest of the Region through a road asphalted since WIDE3 and expanding steadily, although clearly not to the extent seen Sirba/Ude with the Bishoftu-Mojo old road and the new expressway.

Finally, the four sites also differed in relation to the range of formal social protection programmes found in each. In Harresaw Emergency Food Aid (EFA) and the Productive Safety Net (PSNP) were active, and in Aze Debo the PSNP; these two programmes were not present in Yetmen and Sirba/Ude. The (newer) Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) programme was implemented in all four communities. In Yetmen and Harresaw there were also attempts to implement the Community Care Coalition (CCC) initiative.

### **The Ethiopia WIDE Series III Discussion Briefs**

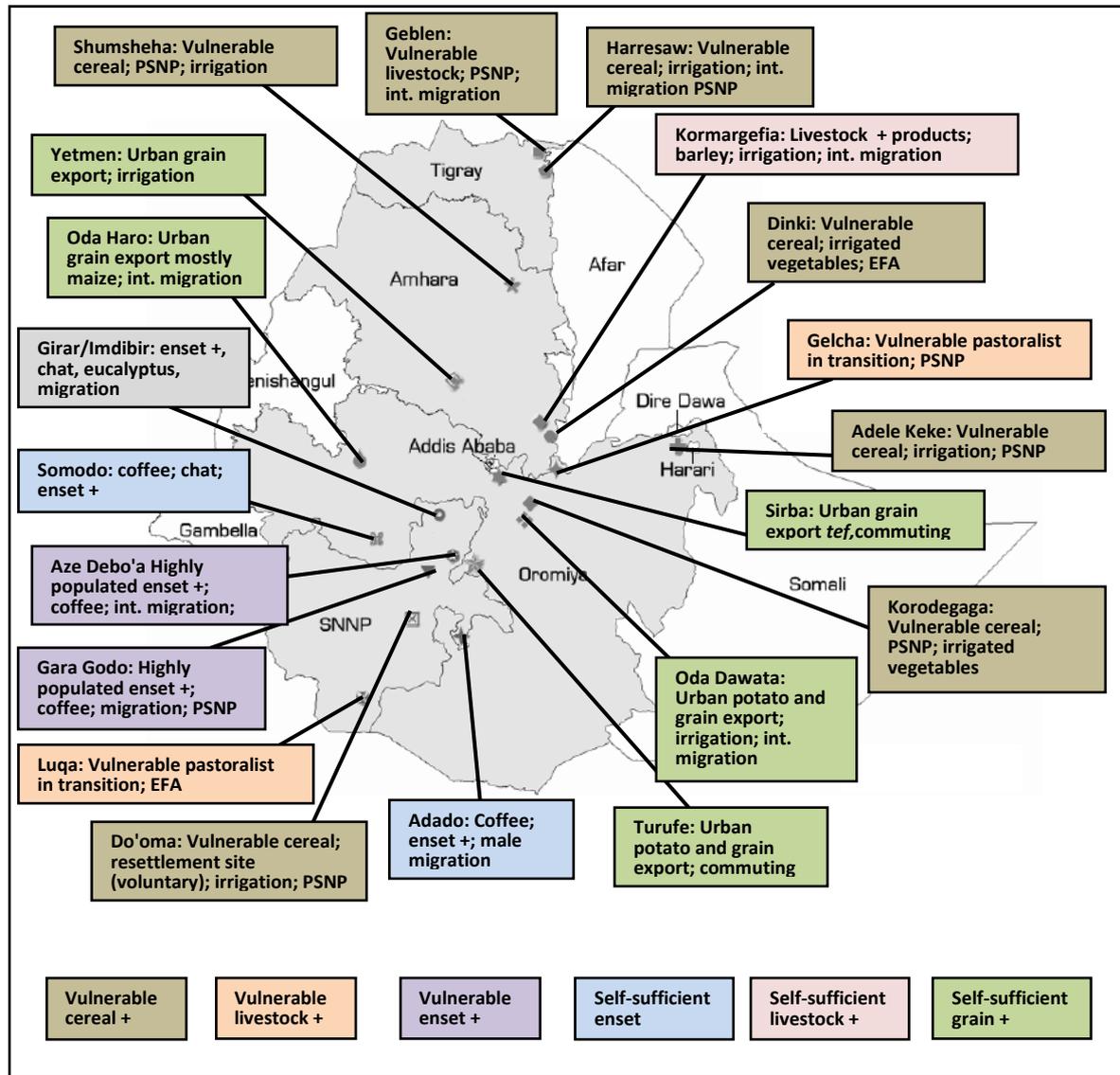
This book presents the third series of Discussion Briefs produced by the WIDE team, based on the WIDE Bridge data and analyses made in the course of the year 2018. Following this introduction, the second chapter entitled "*Transitioning Rural Ethiopia, 2018*" presents an overview of findings and associated policy implications and suggestions, related to seven topics. The subsequent chapters present each of the brief in turn and focus respectively on:

- Land and urbanisation (*DBIII:01*)
- Modernising smallholder farming: achievements, challenges and prospects (*DBIII:02*)
- Nonfarm enterprises and 'rural' livelihoods: survival and growth (*DBIII:03*)
- Economic experiences of rural young people (*DBIII:04*)
- Rural modernisation and increasing economic inequalities (*DBIII:05*)
- Selected aspects of social protection in 2018 (*DBIII:06*)
- Local government and governance (*DBIII:07*).

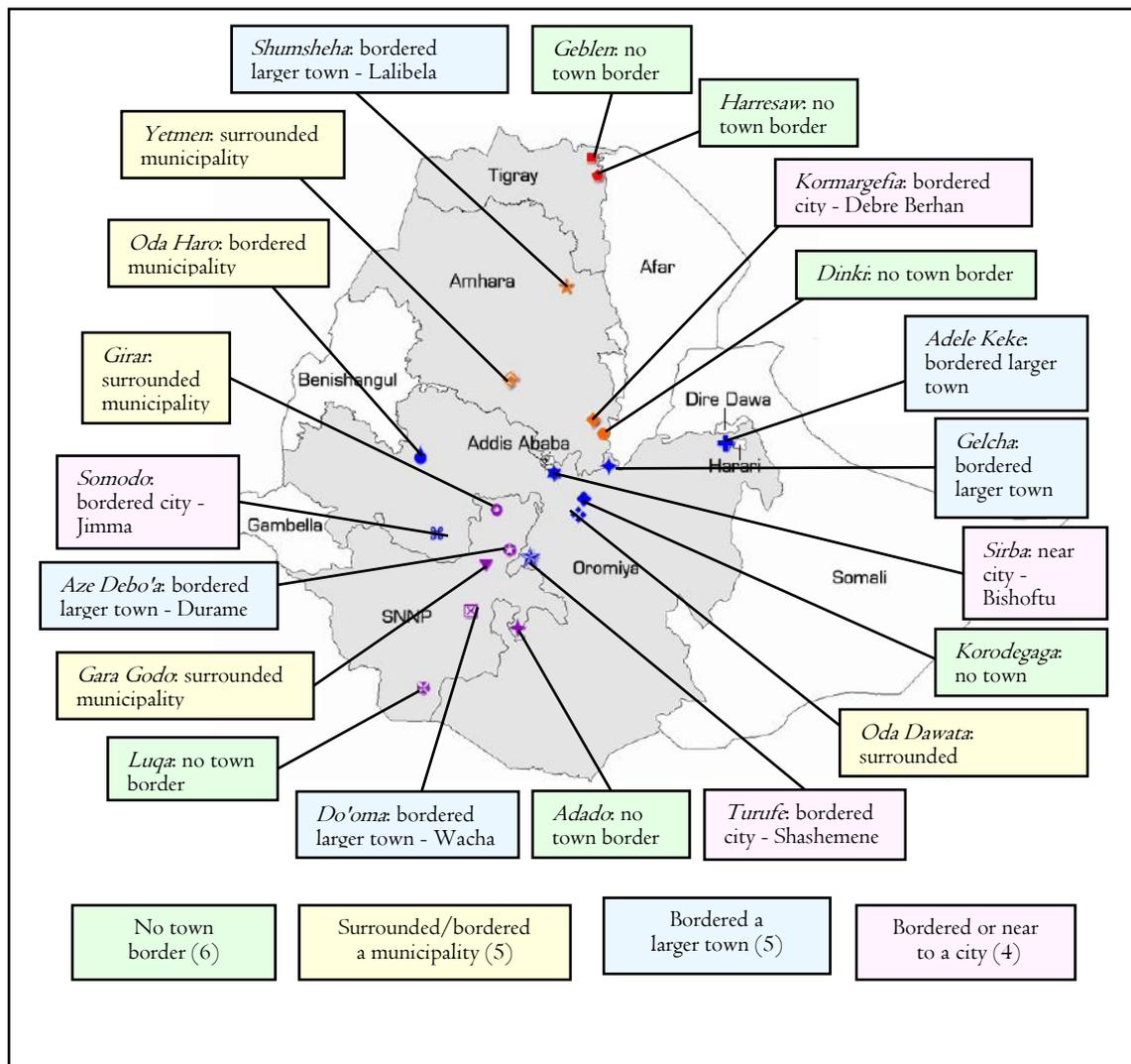
This Series III upholds the concept adopted for the first two Series of briefs. Short of policy prescription, each brief seeks to identify a number of thematic issues and considerations which policy makers in the Ethiopian Government and their development partners might have in mind as they continue to collaborate: to unleash the potential, energy, resilience and resourcefulness of Ethiopia's rural citizens; and to maximise the national growth potential of the support that their interventions provide to these very diverse and locally specific patterns of creativity and change. Each brief begins with a two-page overview of key messages.

Annex: Maps on livelihoods, urban linkages and cultural differences

The WIDE communities by type of livelihood



The WIDE communities within wider Ethiopia



Cultural Differences in the WIDE communities

