Study on Effective Empowerment of Citizens in Ethiopia

Overview Paper    July 2004

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Executive Summary

This report is based on the findings of sixteen case studies of empowerment in Ethiopia. These are presented in the attached annex. The emphasis of the case studies is on poor groups, marginal people, women, minorities, and socially excluded youth, in both rural and urban settings. They document a highly diverse set of development initiatives involving a wide range of sectors and organizational groupings. Some of these are examples of spontaneously formed indigenous groups and their efforts to address their own local needs, while others are examples of projects within large-scale donor funded and driven programmes. In each case, local researchers sought evidence of empowerment, through an analysis of agency and opportunity structure.

Overall, the case studies illustrate that agency can both be the driver of local, autochthonous development initiatives and the result of externally promoted projects that provide a supportive and enabling environment for communities to build up their human, social and economic assets.

The case studies also give an insight into the circumstances that create opportunity. This can involve direct support from the State or from an NGO. However, the role of the State in creating opportunity is not consistent. Some of the case studies show local authorities actively supporting community initiatives and providing an enabling environment. Others show a more passive yet still positive attitude. However, in some cases, local authorities purposefully obstructed community initiatives, or community efforts were stymied by inadequate (particularly legal) frameworks. Occasionally, attempts on the part of local authorities to constrain the work of community groups were overcome by appeals to higher levels of government.

In terms of empowerment, the case studies show the different routes that communities and individuals can take to achieving this. Some groups were able to achieve a considerable amount of success in their development initiatives without any external assistance. Taking advantage of the opportunities available to them, and using their skills and assets, these groups demonstrated high levels of agency and indeed, of empowerment. A number of case studies show how projects and programmes have enabled communities and individuals to regain access to and control over economic and social assets. Others illustrate attempts to reaffirm community and individual's psychological assets by building up self-confidence. Improved access to assets and an enabling environment can enhance the ability of communities and of individuals to feel they have control over their lives, which in turn increases their ability to engage in dialogue with external bodies, such as local authorities and other citizen groups.

The examples documented in the case studies also show how success can breed success. Positive community experience of implementation and management of service delivery programmes can give groups greater levels of self-confidence when dealing with other problems, for example, local authority attempts to interfere or take control of community initiatives. In this way, direct benefits to the poor through service delivery provision can lead to other impacts and the potential to build up further assets. Many of the case studies provide examples of groups showing an improved ability to engage with wider issues, plan future work, diversify their activities and approach government for positive collaboration or to demand support. This would suggest the sustainability of an empowering approach.
What distinguishes most of the case studies analysed here from other service delivery programmes is that they have been designed with a long term strategy to build communities, going beyond pure service delivery. They show the importance of participation strategies, linked closely to models of intervention that build confidence, capacities and local organizations over time. This type of asset building is seen as an essential part of these programmes, not an unexpected ‘add-on’. These conscious strategies seek to provide key services whilst creating and strengthening sustainable, self-managed community institutions.

**Key Lessons**

- Sufficient time must be allowed to prepare communities and build capacities at different levels. Successful initiatives documented here were not rushed. Short-term projects, even if they provide infrastructure within a short space of time, are unlikely to build psychological assets or promote attitudinal change. Lessons from capacity building exercises need time to be internalised by recipient communities.
- Evidence from the case studies suggests a slower but more participatory approach within communities will eventually pay dividends. While this might absorb both time and financial resources, in many cases, the benefits will outweigh the costs. Many traditional development projects have failed in Ethiopia.
- Collaboration and mutual respect between stakeholders is likely to provide long-term benefits. It is understandable that poorly resourced local authorities might attempt to take control of resources, but all parties are likely to gain more if the authorities instead provide the type of positive environment which will allow other initiatives to flourish.
- Informal organizations such as Iddirs are widespread in Ethiopia, and trust seems to be a key variable in promoting collaboration. Heavy handed interventions are not the way to build on this positive base. Instead, support is needed to remove unnecessary obstacles (such as the lack of local level legal structures) that can hinder community initiatives, and to provide enough regulation for the public good (so as to prevent, for example, corruption). Strong informal associations are one of Ethiopia’s most important assets in terms of building social capital and providing survival mechanisms, and should be considered a solid base for future development.
- Flexibility must be a key component in any programme within Ethiopia, considering the social, cultural, ethnic and ecological diversity found across the country. The evidence would suggest that universal programmes are unlikely to have the same positive impact as those that are responsive to local contexts and needs. This would entail programme design that sets out agreed goals and operational modalities and ensures accountability, but does not compromise on operational flexibility. Thus, for example, local level funding mechanisms may have the same agreed minimum accounting requirements, but specific types of work supported may vary. (See for example, the two case studies on education for evidence of how these vary at local level but stay within nationally agreed goals.)
- Programmes must take stock of local capacity: for example, water service provision in some areas might require the creation of water committees, whilst elsewhere, upgrading of basic education, particularly of women, may well be a priority in order to achieve programme goals and develop local social capital.
• In order to ensure a responsive approach, flexibility must be stressed in original programme design protocols. Programmes must then also ensure participatory processes at all levels, from needs assessment and design through to implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
1. Introduction

This report contributes to the Civil Society Capacity Building Project currently under preparation as part of a collaboration between the World Bank and the Government of Ethiopia. The project will seek to enhance the ability of people and organisations to participate effectively in local governance, service delivery and development action. The research on which this report is based found varying levels of ability amongst different groups to engage with local authorities and to influence their own development. The case studies analysed here document how 'empowered communities' had high levels of agency and provide insight into the way in which groups and individuals were able to build up and draw upon certain key human and social assets.

This report is based on sixteen case studies of empowerment in Ethiopia. These case studies are presented in an accompanying annex. Following discussions of the background context and methodology in sections 2 and 3, this report provides an introduction to the detail of each case study in section 4, drawing out issues around the concepts of agency, opportunity and empowerment. Section 5 presents further comparative analysis of the case studies and sets out recommendations for future programme work on civil society in Ethiopia. Section 6 then provides commentary on more specific issues surrounding current practice of capacity building and implications for future engagement in this type of work. The report ends by presenting summary conclusions.

2. Background

This study was conceived as a response to the need for greater understanding and analysis of experiences of empowerment in Ethiopia and their contribution, or potential contribution, to ongoing and planned programmes of decentralisation, democratisation and public sector capacity building, as well as other initiatives of the government and people of Ethiopia. Specifically, this study is intended to inform investigations into possible civil society capacity building programmes.

Despite the large number of relief, welfare and development programmes and projects in Ethiopia, the evidence (including some of that gathered for the purposes of this report) would seem to suggest that empowerment is not always a priority for the sponsors of these interventions. Overall, external NGO and government assistance in Ethiopia has been characterised by a "giving" mentality, in which external resources have compensated for domestic shortfalls in basic goods (notably food) and services. Ethiopia is a very poor country and the resources at the disposal of the state are severely restricted; it is not a country that has resources and a government unwilling to utilise them for poverty reduction purposes. Similarly the availability of social services, such as health and education, for the Ethiopian population is limited, as is access to economic services such as credit and marketing opportunities. The developmental challenge in Ethiopia is considerable and should not be underestimated.

Whilst the provision of basic services is important, efforts to alleviate the widespread poverty found in Ethiopia must also focus on empowerment. From the time of the Empire onwards, successive rulers of Ethiopia have attempted to maintain a
command and control centralised state. It is only in the last decade that the
government has sought to implement a programme of decentralisation, devolving
some authority to the local level, and has been more supportive to the efforts of civil
society groups. However, it is still a widely held view that the central state will be the
engine of economic and social development.

In order for Ethiopia to fulfil its potential, attempts must be made to encourage the full
engagement of its population in the development process. This requires the state to
remove obstacles to development and to introduce policies which encourage and
permit local communities, civil society and others to use their own social and
economic resources to positive ends. As a part of this, the state clearly has a role in
providing positive, rather than negative, regulatory frameworks. The state should also
work with its employees across the country, to break with the historically held
assumption that the state exists to control, own and tax, rather than to serve,
facilitate and support the actions of its citizens.

3. Methodology

The case studies were undertaken with a view to analysing successful experiences
of citizen and local (Woreda and sub-Woreda) empowerment in relation to:
i) Governance
ii) Service delivery
iii) Other development initiatives

It was assumed that empowerment could take place at the individual level, or within
groups or organisations, both formal and informal.

For the purposes of this study, the term empowerment was defined as ‘Increasing the
capacity of individuals or groups to make effective development and life choices’.
Empowerment is considered to be dependent on the interplay of two variables,
agency and opportunity.

The World Bank’s text Measuring Empowerment defines these two variables thus:

‘Agency is defined as an actor’s ability to make purposeful choice. The capacity to
act as an agent implies the actor is able to envisage and choose options.’

‘Opportunity structure is defined as those aspects of the context within which actors
operate which determine an actor’s ability to transform agency into effective action.’

In the case of this study, therefore, agency was broadly determined by the ‘human
capital’ of individuals and groups and their ability to act, whilst opportunity structure
was what promoted or constrained the use of agency for community action.¹

¹ For example, the World Bank Woreda study from 2001 documented cases where the development
priorities of Woreda authorities failed to match those prioritised by the local community. The opportunity
to influence the Woreda was therefore low for community members. However, regardless of the Woreda
resource allocation decisions, communities achieved the successful completion of their top priority
interventions. Sometimes the communities presented their problems to other bodies (religious
institutions or NGOs). In other cases, communities mobilised their resources to achieve their aims.
These are excellent examples of agency by communities and exploitation of alternative opportunity
structures (Woreda study 2001).
The case study research sought to document evidence of self-determined action, which was not simply a reflection of external (state or NGO) sponsorship. As such, this action could be regarded as a positive sign that communities were engaging in their own development through specific activities. The research also looked for evidence of local resource mobilization, as well as partnerships of community groups with different stakeholders (avoiding, however, 'contractual' type relationships in which community members would provide labour for food, for example, or where contributions were a condition on external aid).

At all stages of the research, it was important to acknowledge and highlight the interplay between agency and opportunity. Researchers were aware, from the start, that they might find examples of agency without opportunity, which would be reflected, for example, through indigenous self-help organisations, where regardless of state or other inputs, a community of people had taken control of their own development programmes. Or alternatively, they might find cases of opportunity without agency, where the local level implementation of external programmes would follow a blueprint, with very little participation from the user community at any stage of the process. Clearly, the interplay of opportunity and agency can have both positive and negative effects on potential for empowerment or dis-empowerment. Thus an increase in agency can change opportunity structures and vice versa. It is necessary to examine both vicious and virtuous cycles in order to understand the synergies between agency and opportunity.

However, factors that impact upon empowerment were further complicated by an acknowledgement amongst the researchers, that agency can be understood in a variety of ways, and that fixed external definitions should not be imposed upon or override the perceptions of the people affected by the initiatives under study. Agency can be understood in terms of psychological, information, organisational, material and financial assets, as well as other human assets of individuals and groups. As such, the researchers attempted to capture an understanding of ‘agency’ amongst poor people by exploring, in each specific case, what they felt made a difference (psychological assets) or where it was thought people had taken the initiative, made decisions and developed their own responses within a project or other framework (material or organisational assets).

The case studies collated in the annex to this report do not constitute evaluations of the individual interventions. The aim, as noted, was to review a wide variety of examples of empowerment and show how groups of people had either evolved their own development strategies based on an approach that demonstrated agency, or had been assisted to do so by improving their opportunities and access to resources. The research team was dependent upon the help of well-placed individuals to identify the cases, but it must be assumed that there are many other examples in Ethiopia that could have been included and made an important contribution to this study.
4. Agency, Opportunity and Empowerment: Examples from the Case Studies

It is clear that in a country as large and diverse as Ethiopia, programme design must take into account issues of ethnicity, religion, attitudes towards gender and varying livelihood strategies as well as regional and other differences.

The study purposely included examples of initiatives that reflected the diversity of organisational forms and ethnic groups, different levels of domestic and foreign input and the partnerships and relationships between different actors. As such, the study sought to capture cases that illustrated the roles of central government, local government, official aid agencies, International and local NGOs, and formal and informal civil society and community groups. The study also examined a range of sectors: water, agriculture, credit, marketing, education, vocational training, rural development, adult education, pastoralism and natural resource management.

The following section presents findings from the case studies and assesses levels of empowerment through discussion of agency and opportunity structure. Taking into account the diversity of initiatives studied and approaches to development taken, where applicable, issues of capacity building, mechanisms for community engagement in development processes, communities’ assets and the institutional environment are discussed.

For ease of presentation, the case studies have been grouped according to the types and combinations of stakeholders involved. These are:
- 4.1 Community initiatives undertaken without external support
- 4.2 Initiatives of Ethiopian NGOs
- 4.3 International NGO or Official Agency Programmes and Projects
- 4.4 Multi-stakeholder programmes

4.1 Community Initiatives undertaken without external support.

In a country often regarded as aid dependent, and sometimes characterised as dominated by a passive approach to change, it is encouraging to be able to document examples of purely indigenous initiatives in which communities and groups have forged their own approaches to development. The degree of agency demonstrated by these groups is impressive. It is clear that the way in which these local groups took control of their own development was both a reason for their success and a characteristic of the way they worked. What these cases do not explain is why some communities are able to demonstrate this type of agency and others, apparently are not. Whilst the study draws on examples from different ethnic groups, these represent a limited sample, and it would be wrong to draw conclusions regarding different degrees of agency based on ethnicity. What can be demonstrated is that trust is a quality which can be found in ‘successful communities’. Several of the cases presented here, and the accompanying study on Associations, refer to strong degrees of trust within indigenous groups. The challenge of any intervention is to maintain and foster trust rather than weaken and damage it.

The case of Awra Amba (Case 5) provides an example of a community that, against considerable odds, developed its own distinct approach to resolving local issues, addressing economic and social development goals, and responding to pressures
and influences of the outside world. Established as a community in 1980 and consisting of 19 households, its membership has now increased to 90 households. The community is structured into nine sub-committees, to which residents are elected, under the overall development committee. These cover various aspects of community life. The community has undertaken adult literacy campaigns, provides pre-school facilities and encourages livelihood diversification along with environmental protection. The researcher noted a high degree of gender equality: there is provision for maternity leave, early and forced marriages are outlawed and domestic reproductive work is shared between men and women. Underlying their core values of equality, transparency, honesty, self-help and hard work is a memorandum of understanding that was drawn up, in a participatory manner, by members of the community.

The community of Awra Amba has survived for over twenty years and has, it would appear, been almost strengthened by adversity. Its approach to local level development has, over the years, attracted support from NGOs and governmental agencies (both Ethiopian and external). However, the majority of external interventions have failed, principally, it would appear, as the needs of the community members themselves were not prioritised. For example, although the provision of modern looms meant weavers were producing improved products, they were not able to access better markets for their products. Community members were also provided with livestock that was inappropriate because of local land constraints, or for which they were unprepared in terms of technical capability. These inputs were received on credit, and recipients are now indebted and reluctant to participate in future schemes. Despite these problems and pressure from the authorities under the previous government, which at one point forced the community to leave its land, the Awra Amba community has shown remarkable degrees of agency and has established itself as an example of the benefits of group solidarity. Their initiatives and mutual support mechanisms have attracted new community members and they are trusted by surrounding communities to provide certain services. The regional government has also expressed its support for Awra Amba and is considering replicating some of its principles in other communities. This is particularly remarkable considering the conservative nature of Amhara society and the problems of food insecurity in the region. Although community members have renounced all religious rituals and ceremonies, they have based their work on traditional values of honesty and hard work, and have, as such, avoided alienating outsiders. Building on the enabling and trusting environment within their own community, members have been able to develop a range of new ideas and practices that increase social, economic and educational assets. Furthermore, they have been able to introduce these to neighbouring communities, impressed by these innovations.

The shorter case study from Lalibela (Case 2) documents a similarly indigenous initiative, but one that involves a far newer group of young people. Established in 2000 by a group of university graduates, the initiative draws on local cultural concerns and priorities in order to address a wider range of development problems. Initially, the group’s founders were concerned by damage to the historic rock hewn churches in Lalibela, environmental degradation around the site and an influx of destitute people begging from tourists. Lack of government efforts to address these problems provided the original motivation for the group. The researcher notes that the complete absence of financial support for the work of the group was actually helpful, in that it compelled them to focus on community sensitisation and mobilization around their cause. It would appear that the key to the acceptance of the need for action on the part of the community in Lalibela, was the idea that they would
be saving their own ‘holy land’. The group were able to introduce a new idea to the community by highlighting the importance of its traditional, cultural heritage.

Whilst the group have managed to achieve their original goals by organizing voluntary clean ups, and reforesting a buffer area, they have been motivated to build on this initial work to develop several other initiatives, including cross-generational work with local elders and young people as well as work with youth around HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. By stressing the positive elements that they identified in traditional local culture, they were able to gain the support of community elders and working with this goodwill, introduce programmes of a more sensitive, yet essential, nature. The forums that have been set up to promote exchanges of experience between elders and the younger generation have provided a space for the local community to talk about emerging social changes and problems.

In theory, the group has strong support from the Woreda administration that has now set up a steering committee to coordinate government and NGO activities in the locality and has appointed the group as chair. However, the Woreda administration lacks relevant expertise and funds and is unable to provide much practical assistance to the group and its community activities. Furthermore, there were considerable bureaucratic obstacles that the group had to surmount before they achieved formal registration with the federal Ministry of Justice, as required by law. The process of registration took over a year, and nearly caused the group to abandon its efforts. The group demonstrated considerable degrees of agency, despite structural constraints, and were able to raise awareness amongst the community of their own cultural and psychological assets.

Another small-scale initiative involving young people is documented in the example of a rubbish collection programme in Addis Ababa. The case study of Yeka cleaning services (Case 16), an initiative set up with almost no external help, shows how members of a marginalised group can both develop income-generating strategies for themselves, as well as provide a public service. The founder members of the group were three unemployed young men and a young woman who pooled their financial resources to start up a collection service for household waste. Initially, they had to challenge the stereotype of young people working on the street, who can force their services on households in the neighbourhood by threatening them. They also faced stigma stemming from a belief that those working with rubbish are affected by evil spirits. However, by taking their work seriously, the members of Yeka were able to challenge these traditional attitudes in such a way as to win supporters, a client base and an enhanced status for themselves. The original group has expanded to include a further eight members.

The original group were motivated to start work by a much larger, voluntary, city-wide initiative to encourage unemployed young people to clean up their neighbourhoods, which had proved popular. Whilst the group were able to take advantage of this positive environment, opportunity structures were also in place to promote their activities. The group were required to register with the city administration and report to the Kebele and Kifle Ketema. As a result, they had to meet certain obligations that strengthened their organization, including drawing up a memorandum of understanding and following reporting regimes. On their part, the Kebele made sure that the group’s members were able to access training courses on the development of their association, and on waste recycling. As a result, the group now plans to undertake recycling and is negotiating with the Kifle Ketema administration for a plot of land on which to carry out these activities. The Kebele has also made the public aware of the services Yeka are providing, thus further improving their status, and business profitability. The group members themselves believe that their activities
have inspired other unemployed young people in the area to consider business initiatives, rather than waiting for a space on a government employment scheme.

On a larger scale, the annex includes a case study of the **Guaraghe People Self-help Development Organisation (GPDSO)** (Case 11). There are many other ethnically based development associations in Ethiopia, but several commentators have identified the Guarage as one of the oldest, and most independent of these. For almost forty years, this group has worked in one of the poorest, and initially most isolated areas of the country. Starting with improving road connections within the territory as a response to increasing population pressure on degraded land, they have been successful in harnessing support from the many migrant Guaraghe outside of their homeland, principally those based in Addis Ababa. The organization has diversified its areas of focus to include initiatives in the areas of health, education, agriculture and skills development. Early programmes, in particular the building of roads, were achieved by impressive ethnic solidarity between diaspora groups and the homeland, that drew on traditional Guraghe social institutions and other family ties and affiliations as vehicles for resource mobilisation. These programmes were further supported by innovative financing (road tolls to contribute to road building costs) and for many years good relations with local authorities.

Along with evidence of a high degree of social cohesion within the Guraghe community, it would also appear that the educational assets of urban Guraghe elites and their willingness to provide professional services voluntarily, contributed to the success of the organization’s activities. The researcher also notes psychological assets that were developed as Guraghe migrants fought against social stigma in the cities, and constructed a new Guraghe identity around the promotion of the development of the homeland.

Initially the group was considered to be apolitical, although the present government believes the group to have its own political agenda. This has made the relationship between the central government and the GPSDO less productive and hindered Guaraghe initiatives in recent years. The organization has further suffered from allegations of corruption, and bad relations with government have caused the organization financial difficulties, as it has been ordered to stop charging road tolls. Whilst it would be inappropriate to comment on the political aspects of the case here, it is clear that for many years the group were successful in supporting major infrastructure and other programmes in their area. However, while Guraghe discourse states that development of Guragheland is only possible with the full participation of all urban and rural Guraghes, the researcher notes that Guraghe social institutions have a tendency to marginalise or even exclude some social groups, notably women and young people.

All of these cases illustrate how poor people were able to develop initiatives independently, without external governmental or other assistance. However, it should be noted that in the cases of Lalibela and Yeka Cleaning Services, groups had to negotiate with the local authorities before they could develop their programmes significantly. The openness of the local authorities that enabled these two groups to develop their activities must be seen as an important factor in their success. It is where local authorities have used their power negatively, by blocking initiatives, that so many similar ideas have failed to flourish. It is clearly in the public interest that, for example, waste collection benefits from some level of regulation. But it is also in the public interest that citizens have access to a collection service of some sort, rather than none at all. The negotiation between local authorities and initiative groups needs to be biased towards supporting the local initiative, rather than trying to stifle it, whilst
ensuring that basic regulations are adhered to. However, as these organizations grow, they may be regarded as a threat by government, as in the Guraghe people’s association. The challenge is to build upon indigenous agency, trust and innovation and promote these strengths, whilst encouraging transparency. In the cases presented above, it would appear that a light touch of regulation, and some agreement to tolerate different approaches (privatised garbage collection, road tolls) rather than prohibit them, can encourage livelihood strategies amongst poor communities at minimal (if any) external cost.

4.2 Initiatives of Ethiopian NGOs

It has been argued that there are relatively few local NGOs in Ethiopia, and in purely numerical terms this is probably true, as so many of the formal NGOs present either originated from International organizations or are local offices of International NGOs. During the course of the research, however, several interesting local groups were identified, that had managed to attract external support. The largest of these was Hundee (Case 8) which works with communities in the Oromiya region. Its approach towards working with communities is based on initial programmes to develop ‘cereal bank associations’ that ensure the availability of grains for food use at the household level during the lean period. These associations are used as an entry point through which to introduce a series of interventions that aim to deal with more profound social issues, including injustices suffered by local women. Hundee seeks to empower local communities by enhancing their management skills so that eventually, the cereal banks are self-sustaining and managed by the community. As well as reducing food insecurity, the cereal banks encourage farmers to tackle problems collectively, rather than rely on handouts from government in times of shortage.

Hundee understands that attitudinal change is more likely to come from meeting local traditions half way. Of special note is the way in which the NGO has interacted with the traditional institution of the Gada, using traditional law making to achieve social reform, end harmful practices and defend women’s rights. The case study gives examples of improved land holding for women, a reduction in the number of abductions of young girls and of practices such as early marriage and female circumcision.

The case study also notes the importance of training, prior to the establishment of cereal banks, to ensure that the community is adequately equipped to run these. The need for follow-up training is clearly stated, to allow for rotation of office holders. Training of trainers is also a priority so as to identify female activists who can go on to encourage influential community members to participate in workshops on social issues. It is clear that good facilitation is needed to promote discussions around more delicate social problems.

The researcher notes that the cereal banks have already started to develop a strong organizational identity. It would appear that members of the Banks have derived self-confidence from economic and organizational success. On a number of occasions they have defended themselves against the attempted incursions of the Woreda administration into the affairs of the cereal banks. These demonstrate the use of agency to maintain an enabling environment for the activities of the banks. The researcher notes, however, that decentralisation of the oversight of development initiatives to Woreda has not been a smooth process, and there is a danger that activities of this type of grass-roots group could be disrupted, both by legal restrictions and obstruction on the part of Woreda officials.
Another rural project that aims to improve livelihoods for farmers is the **Adiha River Diversion Project** (Case 12) supported by REST (Relief Society of Tigray) with funding from Oxfam America. Working to improve traditional irrigation systems, the project was designed to diversify agricultural activities in the drought prone area, where the majority of farmers were dependent on rain fed agriculture. This would be achieved by increasing the amount of irrigable land. Although traditional irrigation systems were being used by inhabitants, technical knowledge on how to maximise benefits from these was low. The systems that were in place were also generally temporary and often washed away during the rainy season. Frustrated with the limited utility of these irrigation channels, farming inhabitants of one Tabia (the lowest administrative unit in central Tigray) initiated the river diversion project. They were then assisted by REST to develop and carry out their plans.

The project began by identifying the responsibility of each actor and involved the Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as the Baito – the locally elected body. An action-learning research and training approach was adopted that brought community members into problem identification and planning of implementation and generated practical applications from lessons learnt. Community members also benefited from specific training to help them make the most from better access to irrigated land and to take responsibility for the water system. As a result of the river diversion, local farmers’ yields have improved considerably.

Whilst the principal benefit to the community appears to be economic, the researcher also note other benefits. The system is now being managed by a community water committee, but is integrated with other development activities in the area, in particular with soil and water conservation activities and education on health and sanitation. These different activities are coordinated between different actors: the community, representatives of regional government and the local Baito. It would appear that the practice of clearly setting out responsibilities at the start of the initiative, has encouraged this type of cooperation for integrated rural development. In this respect the project differs sharply from Hundee’s cereal bank initiative, whose members are finding themselves excluded from other farmer oriented development interventions provided by the local Woreda.

Moving to examples from urban areas, the **Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO)** (Case 1) runs three projects in Addis Ababa. Founded by an Ethiopian, it receives resources from international organizations including UNICEF and Save the Children. IFSO runs a counselling centre for child victims of rape, a child education sponsorship programme and a skills training programme. The organization targets children and families affected by HIV/AIDS and destitution and aims to encourage empowerment by overcoming stigma attached to these conditions and reintegrating families into the community. The projects take a graded approach to empowerment, beginning with the individual child and working upwards by involving families and communities in skills training and awareness raising. It should be noted that criteria for the selection of potential child beneficiaries are fairly tight. This is to ensure that it is the poorest and most marginalized individuals and families that benefit from the project. Good relations between different stakeholders were encouraged from the start by involving representatives from line ministries and local Kebeles as well as community organizations such as Iddirs (funeral societies), in participatory needs assessments.

Death of a breadwinner from AIDS causes social stigma to fall upon the remaining spouse and children, and can lead to family breakdown. The resultant economic pressures can also force families to withdraw their membership from Iddirs or Saints Day Associations. This aggravates the already weakened social status of the family.
However, once these families are involved in a project, they start to receive counselling and guidance, as well as financial support. Formal and informal groups set up amongst those who are attending skills training also provide support, by encouraging the sharing of experience and discussion of problems. Relationships between IFSO and the Kebeles and Iddirs are particularly productive, as these bodies now recommend individuals and families for enrolment in the projects. The Kebeles have also begun to provide protection for many AIDS orphans by allowing them to stay in the homes their parents rented, without having to pay, thus helping to prevent social exclusion and destitution.

Project beneficiaries are encouraged to form committees and to play a role in the progress of the project. Although some in the communities lack educational skills and experience and do not feel that they can make a major contribution, beneficiaries do state that they can influence the way the projects function. Some of the committees are now discussing new community income generating activities, whilst others have petitioned the City Administration to provide a plot of land to build offices for IFSO. Graduates of the skills training project have formed an Alumni Association. IFSO plans to hand over management of this particular project to the Association in 2007.

In sum, IFSO is working to rebuild the psychological assets of individuals and families affected by the stigma of an AIDS death, as well as improve the educational assets of the poorest families in one Kifle Ketema of Addis. Working at the community level and involving traditional institutions, IFSO attempts to ensure that society accepts the reintegration of damaged and vulnerable families and individuals. Beneficiaries of the projects are shown to have increased organizational assets, as, through committees and informal groups, they begin to develop income generating alternatives.

The Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Project (IHA) (Case 13) is also located in Addis Ababa and is an organization established by an Ethiopian that has drawn in international support. The project, in one of the poorest Kebeles of the city, takes a three-pronged approach through its focus on physical infrastructure, primary healthcare and socio-economic or community development. The stated aim of the project, from the start, is eventually to hand over ownership and management of the project to a local community based organization. Capacity of this CBO is developed as the project progresses and the phase-out is meticulously planned.

Needs assessments are carried out by community members, in conjunction with professionals, in door-to-door baseline surveys. Both groups are trained at the same time, to ensure professionals do not misinterpret the answers of respondents. The project trains recent school graduates as female extension workers, who then act as a bridge between the community and the project. It also gives on-going capacity building to community members who are elected to Neighbourhood Groups. These Groups meet regularly to discuss the project and possible solutions to problems they are facing. They then collaborate with project staff. Amongst other activities, community members are involved in the rehabilitation of physical infrastructure in their neighbourhood. Many have developed skills in construction which they are now able to use to gain employment elsewhere. This includes women, and the project has broken certain gender barriers with regards the type of work women were thought able to undertake.

IHA has now handed over two projects to local CBOs. This process has not proved simple, however, and there are problems with the legal environment and capacity of local authorities. The biggest challenge has been reaching agreement with government offices to take over the running of various social services that had been
provided through the project – in one example the care of the elderly and education. The relevant offices were not able to assume responsibility however, and the project phase out had to be postponed in order to raise funds to continue these activities. It should be noted, therefore, that there is a danger in assuming that state will have the funds and the ability to take over the provision of certain services. The handover was also affected by the limitations of registration mechanisms for CBOs. CBOs are not properly recognised in law, and cannot have bank accounts.

The project draws on concepts of full community participation and conscientization, and is concerned with building the psychological assets of poor communities, as well as improving physical infrastructure and public health. The researcher notes that there is a widespread fatalism amongst the poor: poverty is often regarded as spiritual and psychological. There is a clear understanding amongst project workers that changes in attitude and levels of self-belief can only be achieved over the long term. IHA staff state, ‘Attitude is a major impediment to participatory development and there is no short cut to bringing about positive attitudinal changes. Without attitudinal change, reinstated self-dignity and people-centeredness, there will not be a meaningful change that brings about a sustained and improved quality of life for the poor’.

Both the IHA and IFSO projects demonstrate possible types of engagement in the complex context of urban Addis, with mixed social groups, often suffering from extreme poverty and related issues such as HIV/AIDS. Both case studies, from different perspectives, show the importance of taking a long-term approach to building capacity and developing the confidence of their clients to enable them to gain control of their own lives. Some of this can be done through training in organisational management and other interventions, but another important component of self-realisation is for people to see the successes of their own collaborative labours. These cases show how an ‘indirect’ entry point for the interventions (improving physical infrastructure or providing skills training) has allowed for wider achievements and realisation of longer term goals, including attitudinal changes within society towards women and those marginalized by HIV/AIDS. Both agencies showed an holistic approach and a long term vision for empowerment and poverty reduction. This permitted trust to be built through initial interventions and then coupled with longer term capacity building that has achieved impact beyond the initial programme goals.

4.3 International NGO or Official Agency Programme and Projects

Externally supported programmes appear to be better resourced and thus able to act on a larger scale than those of local agencies. The more positive examples demonstrate a longer term engagement and perspective that enables them to develop not only the organisational and physical resources of a community, but also crucially, other human assets. The ActionAid supported Dalocha Women’s Water Development Association (DWWDA) (Case 9) is a good example of an INGO that has not only invested in the creation of a water system for a large number of people, but has also invested in the capacity development of the general population within the programme area. More specifically, it has developed the capacity of the women working in the water association, or responsible for it.² ActionAid initiated the project in 1996, responding to a critical shortage of water that forced women in the area to travel up to 8 hours a day to collect water from a river. It was thought that since it was women’s lives that were principally affected by the need for water, they would be

² A similar model has been used in several sites by Water Action across Ethiopia with remarkable results.
more concerned for the proper functioning and sustainability of a water system. Ensuring that women managed the system was also considered to be a way of challenging negative assumptions about women’s status and abilities. DDWDA took over the project in 1998 and now manages a network of 42 water supply points, known as water kiosks, based on two separate water systems, that provide water to 83,000 people in the project area.

A considerable proportion of costs, over the entire programme period, has been devoted to assisting women to take on governance, managerial and delivery functions. Support for the association is based on an long term approach, rather than short term one-off training programmes. It should be noted that intensive training has been undertaken over many years for all the different stakeholders, and this has included basic literacy for 500 women. Specifically, this has involved:

- DWWDA board members (16 women) receive training one day a month for 6 years on: management and administration, financial rules and regulations, water utilization rules and regulations, water and health, gender, and protection of the water network.
- DWWDA general assembly members (178 women) are trained once every three months for 6 years in similar areas as those above, but including the management of water distribution kiosks.
- Kebele water committee members receive similar training over a similar period of time as the assembly members.
- Women water kiosk operators (64 women) receive training over a period of 7 years on: operation of water kiosks, financial accounting rules, water use and health and gender.
- Basic literacy education for over 500 hundred women, which includes DWWDA leadership, over a period of three consecutive years. When DWWDA started its operation 98% of members of DWWDA leadership were illiterate, and the objective was therefore to enable the leadership and those working as employees in the water kiosks to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Training on conflict resolution for Kebele water conflict resolution committee members.

It could be argued that in the case of Dalocha, in order for the initiative to function properly, the programme was obliged to address the education deficits of the local population (in this case lower levels of women’s schooling) before introducing specialised training related to the specific needs of the water programme. If the upward levelling of education had not taken place, then the only alternative would have been to seek out previously trained and/or well educated staff and board members. In this context, this would probably have meant working with men, rather than women. However, high levels of training invested in board members and other staff positions means that bringing in new office holders and rotating board positions is difficult. This problem is compounded by generally low levels of female education in the area.

However, the Dalocha case study also highlights the danger of a weak enabling environment (this problem has been echoed in similar Water Action programmes). In the case of Dalocha, the Association controls substantial levels of assets and revenue, and the local authorities have attempted to take control of the income without any commitment to further investment in the programme. This type of rivalry is an unfortunate feature. The researcher suggests that had the planned advisory
board been formed, consisting of government and non-governmental representatives, better collaboration with local government might have been achieved. Nevertheless, DWWDA has managed to overcome difficulties with local government, in part because it has the support of higher authorities who see the Association as living proof of its supposed commitment to local participation and women’s empowerment. At the time of the most serious interference, the leadership of DWWDA were sufficiently self-confident to stand up to the Woreda administration. The Association has also been assisted by positive press coverage at the local level. Whilst open hostility has subsided, the Woreda administration continues to raise doubts about the potential sustainability of the project and the ability of the women involved to continue in management roles. They do acknowledge that so far DWWDA has an admirable record, yet they attribute this to the involvement and support of ActionAid. DWWDA on the other hand, claims that the Woreda administration is itself at fault as it is unable to engage constructively with the Association. The researcher notes that were there to be problems with water distribution in the future, the Woreda administration would use this as an excuse to oust DWWDA and take control of the project. He believes issues of power and gender to be at the root of bad relations between the Association and the local authorities.

Despite these problems, DWWDA has had considerable success, and is possibly the only large scale facility owned and managed by women in the country. It seems to be attaining financial and organizational sustainability and has brought about marked changes in attitude within the community. At a practical level, women are now freed from travelling long distances to fetch water, but women’s involvement in the water system has also afforded them strategic gains. Whilst initially the discourse of women’s empowerment and potential was adopted by ActionAid to encourage the formation of the Association, this language has now been adopted at all levels of the community. The researcher was repeatedly told that women have a deeper sense of responsibility, ownership and honesty than men. Both sexes explained that women were trusted in their dealings with the financial revenue from the project.

Similar long term and multifaceted inputs can be seen in the two case studies of SOS Sahel programmes, in Meket and Borena. The Meket Development Program (MDP) (Case 7) in North Wollo aims to enable beneficiaries to find sustainable solutions to their environmental, social and economic problems and to promote the transfer of successful experiences of self-reliant community development to other Woredas in North Wollo. As well as dissemination and replication, MDP’s strategy includes work on community empowerment, improved service delivery by the Woreda, integrating relief and development and providing an institutional framework for local level cooperation. Entry points to the community have included projects to improve bee keeping and marketing of products from apiculture, along with micro-finance. The researcher notes that women have been involved in both these areas and as a result are improving their financial assets.

MDP aims to coordinate development activities between the Woreda council, the Kebele and local organizations. It believes that identification, design and implementation of community based projects should remain in the hands of the target population. However, it acknowledges that this institutional model has to be introduced at the appropriate pace, allowing partners, especially the community, to ‘grow into roles that gradually demand greater and greater responsibility’. The level and types of activity should be determined not by pre-set goals, but at the rate at which local structures – CBOs and government – can establish their managerial capabilities.

The importance of working with CBOs was stressed by MDP workers in the report.
‘There is a feeling that CBOs may or may not be democratic, desirable institutions: they may or may not have a place in the longer term development strategy of the Ethiopian government, but they cannot be ignored at the initial stages of any attempt to strengthen the self-reliance of the people. This is because they represent an integral part of people’s identity and life. If we ignore them […] we will never win sufficient trust from the people to introduce new ideas and approaches. Government Organizations or NGOs face considerable difficulties in promoting the degree of responsibility needed for community-led development without this initial trust and confidence’.

SOS Sahel’s other project documented in the case studies, the Borena Collaborative Forest Management project (Case 6) primarily involves working with groups of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists as well as the urban and peri-urban poor. The project was established to address the erosion of social capital and social responsibility that has come about as traditional institutions and management systems are excluded from local governance. Control over resource use has been taken away from local communities, and has resulted in unsustainable levels of resource exploitation and increased poverty.

Although communities, elders and Gada representatives had identified the side-lining of traditional management systems as the cause of increased environmental degradation and poverty, it appears that it was only when SOS Sahel intervened and brought different stakeholders together, crucially including local government, that these explanations gained acceptance with the local authorities. A project was then established to promote the capacity of key pastoralist institutions and traditional resource management systems and to raise awareness of their potential in Woreda administrations. Activities at the grass-roots level also included improving relationships between pastoralist and other communities of resource users and running programmes on conflict management. Women’s involvement in resource management and decision making has been promoted. At a higher level, partnerships have been established between the Gada and the zone’s Department for Agriculture and Natural Resources to coordinate the development of natural resource management systems. All these initiatives, at many different levels, require training and awareness raising with the relevant stakeholders.

The researcher notes that the issue of gender is particularly pressing in traditionally conservative pastoralist communities. By strengthening the Gada and other traditional associations, the project will be mainly engaging with male groups. There is also hostility to changes that are seen to be imposed from outside. The aim is therefore to create women’s sub-committees within forest management groups so as to introduce communities involved to gender issues, for example, women’s rights to common property. There are also plans to facilitate participatory activities that allow for analysis of the benefits of shared workloads and consensus decision-making between men and women.

The Borena case study demonstrates the way in which a project can use issues of general concern (conflict over resources and environmental degradation) as an entry point to work on other social problems. The approach draws on traditional community institutions, but encourages dialogue and collaboration with government. Essentially, the project aims to build up the capacity of pastoral communities to negotiate with other social groups to resolve conflicts and to improve their engagement with local authorities. With better negotiating skills, previously marginalized community institutions should have a greater ability to become involved in governance partnerships over local resource use.
These two SOS Sahel supported projects demonstrate attempts to open up opportunities for participating communities to enter into partnership with local authorities over development initiatives and resource use. Both have a focus on developing the capacity of poor communities to engage with a range of different stakeholders. These programmes have the advantage of longer term commitment on the part of sponsoring organizations and benefit from an approach that understands that capacity building should happen at different educational and human resource levels, as well as at different times during a programme. Planning and monitoring is required to ensure that community groups have the capacity to maximise benefits from resources and to make sure that ‘skills gaps’ do not appear, that may undermine the programmes.

A further example of an INGO working with traditional institutions is illustrated in the study of Dire Dawa Iddirs (Case14). The INGO ACORD began working with Iddirs (traditional funeral societies) in Dire Dawa town in 1995. Iddirs are the most widely spread type of civil association in Ethiopia: 87% of people in urban areas belong to at least one. The dominant form of Iddirs are those based on the immediate neighbourhood and some involve women only. Iddirs provide support, money and other assets to their members when they suffer a bereavement. ACORD chose to work with Iddirs because they are self-initiated and aimed at mutual support. The idea behind the project was to tap into the potential of these groups and help them to take on new developmental roles. The major components of the programme involved providing grants for revolving credit funds geared to income generation, and implementing joint community projects. Iddir members also received comprehensive training to build capacity to engage in the project. This included capacity building on organizational and cooperative management, group dynamics, entrepreneurship and book keeping.

Initially, members of the Iddirs showed a significant degree of mistrust of ACORD. However, the organization managed to combat this, in part by helping the poorest Iddirs to carry out their traditional services. Also, members of Iddirs who opted out of involvement in income-generating schemes did not forfeit their membership of the society. Provision of credit eventually became popular, and the figures showed a rise in income for a significant percentage of those involved. More interestingly, external support for the Iddirs built up the organizational assets of their members and provided the impetus for these societies to transform themselves into active community groups. The year the ACORD programme was to be phased out, in 1998, the Iddirs proposed the formation of second level cooperative associations that would bring together societies within neighbourhoods. The rationale behind this initiative was to minimise the costs of running saving and credit activities by jointly hiring accountants, liaising as a collective with government agencies and undertaking joint income generating projects. They have also been engaging with other development actors, such as the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia. The formation of these second level associations has strengthened neighbourhood capacity to influence local government entities and get access to land and capital for their activities.

The Iddir leaders have shown remarkable degrees of agency in their plans to build on the work of traditional societies. However, the activities of second level associations have suffered from constrained opportunities, since their legal status is unclear. The Iddir leaders have shown significant creativity in finding a temporary measure that permits the associations to carry on with their activities. But they have spent much of their time in unproductive wrangles in court with local government which could have been avoided were there simpler registration procedures at Woreda level.
The Iddir project in Dire Dawa, and others examples documented here, have highlighted problems faced by community groups when their initiatives run up against local authority obstruction and/or legal constraints. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has been working with Woredas in the Amhara Regional State to try and improve engagement of local government personnel with communities. The Sida-Amhara Rural Development Program (SARDP) (Case 10) centres on raising the standard of living conditions of the rural poor through improvement in service provision, promotion of good local governance and the introduction of projects to promote sustainable agricultural development. The program centres around the Woreda Development Fund which, in the context of decentralisation, aims to strengthen the Woredas themselves to improve their capacity in planning, administering and delivering services. The rationale behind this, is that improved capacity within the Woredas will encourage communities to discuss problems, prioritise them and then work with the Woredas to ensure their perceptions are incorporated into local development plans.

Whilst a recent evaluation noted the rise in skills and prestige of the Woredas and a resultant increase in cooperation and participation of communities, the researcher noted that the poorest individuals in communities were less involved in participatory planning. It is only now that the programme is developing tools to identify categories of the poor, in order to bring those who lack voice into the process. Those particularly marginalized appear to be women and Woreda personnel have lacked the ability to incorporate issues of gender into planning processes. The lack of monitoring and evaluation from the grassroots upwards has also meant that some important lessons have not been fed back to the Woreda. This constitutes a missed opportunity to give greater voice and empowerment to communities. It would appear that participatory planning remains at the level of consultation: the researcher did not provide evidence of empowered communities making autonomous demands on the Woreda. It was noted that training of communities undertaken by the Woredas was haphazard and that training on technical skills on new agricultural initiatives provided by technical advisors for the Woredas, needed to be transferred to the communities themselves.

However, in general, this move towards decentralisation, with greater responsibility for financial disbursement given to Woredas is having a positive impact on the socio-economic environment in the programme areas. Improvement in public sector capacity, when linked to increases in funds, has improved both service delivery and relationships with communities. There is considerable room for improvement though, and the planning for future phases will involve a much greater degree of participatory planning so as to work towards empowerment of communities, not just the Woredas. There is to be an emphasis on training of community representatives and Woreda personnel to encourage community ownership of future project work. There will also be targeted support for women’s income generation and awareness raising amongst Woreda staff on gender issues.

Moving away from capacity building at the Woreda level, this section ends with an analysis of The Horn of Africa Capacity Building Program (HOACBP) (Case 15) funded by Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Quebec. This case study differs to the others presented in this report in that it looks at an overarching programme of capacity building provision for organizations in Ethiopia. The programme currently has six funding partners (five networks and one NGO) and forty non-funding partners. Partners are chosen for their focus on information and communication, voluntarism, women’s and young people’s issues and human rights. Training provided involves local resource management, financial management, fundraising, strategic planning and income generation, amongst other topics. HOACBP also facilitates exposure visits within the country and organizes information sharing forums.
The researcher notes that some external funders and support providers have overlooked community groups in Ethiopia that concentrate on mobilising resources locally and securing support from local government for their activities as of 'little significance for development'. HOACBP takes a different view, perceiving local resource mobilization to be a way to provide opportunities for communities to discuss and act on the problems they face. Indeed, HOACBP believes that external financial support can undermine local communities’ development efforts, and as such demands that partners are able to raise resources locally. The programme also identifies a difficulty in Ethiopia of moving beyond support for individual projects to the macro level. As such, it promotes networking as one of its key objectives, focusing on information, communication and inter-sectoral cooperation.

According to the researcher, HOACBP has built up the organizational assets of its partner organizations. In particular, these organizations have managed to diversify their funding bases and network with a wider variety of organizations in different sectors and locations. Some partners are now in the process of building coalitions and a culture of documenting experiences seems to be taking root.

4.4 Multi-stakeholder programmes

The two education programmes documented in the case studies: the Basic Education System Overhaul (BESO) (Case 3) implemented in Dukem Town by Save the Children US/USAID and the Jijiga Area Alternative Basic Education Support (Case 4), funded by Save the Children UK, illustrate examples of multi-stakeholder programmes where, despite the institutional complexity of the education sector, models have been adapted which result in greater engagement by the primary stakeholders (children and parents) along with the co-operation of other groups, including school directors, Woreda education offices and the sponsoring agencies.

The main objective of the BESO project is to strengthen the involvement of communities to bring about improved quality and equity in education. It is particularly concerned to increase the participation of girls in schools. The project strengthens Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and establishes Girls’ Advisory Committees in each of the schools covered by the project. The project is also expected to increase Woreda administration awareness of the role communities can play in development of schools and education programmes. At present the project is underway in nearly 1000 schools and it eventually aims to cover a total of 1500.

BESO aims to achieves its objectives through training and mentoring of the different local stakeholders that can have an impact on improving the quality and outreach of their schools. In particular, the PTAs are expected to play an active role in the project. Members of the PTA receive training, as do Woreda officials and the community, to raise awareness of their own role in the promotion of education. Issues covered involve gender, resource mobilization and the accountability of PTAs to the community. The PTAs are provided with grants (between 3000 and 5000 birr) to undertake specific mini-projects within their schools with a 25% contribution from the community itself. They are mentored by the project’s School Development Coordinators who act as a bridge between the PTAs, the Woreda education offices and Save the Children US.

3 A similar programme is also being run by World Learning also with USAID support.
The funds provided by the project have been described by stakeholders within the community as having served as a type of stimulation. Being given responsibility for planning and implementing projects is seen by them as an empowering approach. Building up psychological assets, the project has helped communities to see that they themselves can bring about change. BESO appears to have encouraged self-confidence and real interest amongst the PTAs: members drop into the school to see for themselves how initiatives are progressing. Whilst the mini-projects generally revolve around improvements to physical infrastructure, efforts have also been made by the PTAs to undertake advocacy with communities on the abolition of harmful traditional practices on girl children, early marriage and abduction. Contributing to national decentralisation processes, the involvement and influence of parents and the community marks a considerable shift away from previously dirigiste attitudes towards schools and education programmes on the part of the local authorities.

The Jijiga Area Program of Alternative Basic Education (ABE) support is attempting to counter the principal problems of the education sector in the Somali region. Levels of participation in education are critically low, mainly because of the inappropriateness of the formal education system for the children of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist families. Furthermore, most formal schools are to be found in urban areas, thus further limiting pastoralist children’s access to education. As a response to this, Save the Children UK, in conjunction with the Regional Education Bureau, designed an alternative basic education project relevant to the culture and lifestyle of Somali pastoralist communities. In particular, this has meant introducing a flexible school timetable and calendar, building new schools that are more easily accessed by pastoralist children, training teachers in new, participatory teaching methods and introducing more relevant and appropriate teaching materials, including some in local languages. The project has had particular success with the retention of new teachers drawn from local communities. The curriculum was tested and reviewed by a multi-stakeholder team that involved community members, students, teachers and subject specialists.

Of particular interest is the way in which communities have been involved in the education programme, the sustainability of which is seen to depend on a community sense of ownership of the schools and ability to manage them. Building awareness and capacity amongst communities is reported to have been time consuming. This was attempted through sensitisation workshops, experience sharing visits and training on roles and responsibilities. However, as a result, communities have supported the renovation of school buildings as well as contributed to the construction of low cost classrooms for ABE schools. Perhaps more importantly, their own ideas and local knowledge have influenced the project, including in the review of the curriculum, and they now also play an active role in the monitoring and managements of daily school activities. The researcher notes that as a result of this involvement, parents have actively encouraged their children to attend the schools and there has been a significant growth in enrolment and attendance. Whilst girls’ enrolment in particular has increased, there is still considerable gender disparity in provision of education: the number of girls attending ABE schools is below half that of boys.

The ABE programme has had an impact on communities, students and on teachers but has also drawn in local administrations, which, according to the researcher, had never previously been involved in educational issues. Also recipients of capacity building, the local administrations are now playing an active role and allocating resources for teaching staff in the new ABE schools. The project has also played an advocacy role in that it has increased awareness within the Regional Education Bureau of the need for a special approach towards children of pastoralist families.
The ability of different stakeholders to work together in these two education programmes are interesting examples of the potential of multi-stakeholder programmes, where no single group lays claim to a monopoly of control or ideas over the education of children. The case studies show how the different authorities have accepted alternative approaches to the management of schools and development of educational programmes that set out to achieve a better education system. This is potentially a difficult area, in which both local political and professional interests could insist on their pre-eminence. However, these programmes have managed to bring local communities and parents into management, resource allocation and other decisions regarding education. Perhaps the key to the success of these programmes, is that they seek to encourage local participation in enhanced governance of schools whilst, through improving access to funds, also allowing schools and communities to make decisions locally, based on local need.
5. Analysis of Key Issues and Recommendations

This section looks at key issues arising from the case studies and analyses these through a comparative analysis of different initiatives. Leading on from this, each section provides recommendations for future programme work in Ethiopia. The key issues covered are:

5.1 Agency and Opportunity
5.2 Empowerment
5.3 The Role of the State
5.4 Flexibility and Customised Approaches
5.5 Focus on Gender
5.6 Approaches to Capacity Building
5.7 Working at Intermediary Level

5.1 Agency and Opportunity

It seems clear from the evidence of the case studies, that where levels of agency are already high, progress towards development goals is more rapid and these are more likely to be sustainable. The cases of indigenous initiatives would seem to illustrate this conclusion. However, these cases also show how opportunity structures can encourage local people’s initiatives to flourish. This is often dependent on the local government’s willingness to accept alternative approaches, or to seek ways around legal inadequacies. Thus where agency meets opportunity a positive environment for local level development is created. One can surmise that where agency has met with obstruction the reverse is the case.

The research process did not cover cases where high levels of agency had been met by totally negative and destructive reactions on the part of local authorities or other powers, sealing off opportunity structures to the extent that people were frustrated in their self-help ambitions. However, a number of initiatives demonstrate that community actors have had problems with local government. This is both because legal systems can be inadequate and because local authorities may wish to control all development initiatives in their locality. The frustration of local efforts is noted in the case study on the Dalocha Women’s Water Association, where local authorities tried to shut down and then take over the programme, and in the experiences of the Unions of Idirrs in Dire Dawa, where inadequate legal systems could not cope with new forms of organisation.

The accompanying study on Associations in Ethiopia produced by INTRAC and the World Bank has shown that where formal structures are not supportive, local agency can still achieve a considerable amount, but this will be constrained to what local people feel they can achieve without the support or acceptance of higher authorities. The authors note that many local associations, and even government employees, utilise a risk aversion strategy by trying to avoid contact with local authorities, on the assumption that these will hamper or try to control their activities. However, the same groups often do mention that local authorities can also provide support.

The case studies that form the basis of this report do provide examples of support for community initiatives from local authorities. It is not the case that opportunities are never provided by local authorities. The case studies of educational programmes show how, with sufficient will and resources, multi-stakeholder programmes can
flourish. Elsewhere researchers note how sympathetically authorities have supported informal associations by, for example, assisting with disputes, providing resources, and helping community members access services and training.

In the examples where local authorities have not provided this type of assistance, the case studies suggest that local authorities should be encouraged to consider how they can promote local initiatives and alternative approaches to development, rather than how to control or even frustrate their activities. There is perhaps a need to remind local government officials that their role is to serve the citizenry. Furthermore, a common theme of the studies is the adequacy of current legal structures at the local level. Some rules on local registration are left over from an earlier now irrelevant age and could probably be revised relatively easily.

5.2 Empowerment

As noted in the methodology section of this report, there are many dimensions to empowerment. The cases studied here cover a great number of these. In some of these studies, particularly those of indigenous groups that initiated their work without the stimulus of external funding, empowerment has come about as a result of collective awareness of the group’s potential to bring about positive change. In other cases, such as the Meket Development Programme, Hundee’s Cereal Banks, SIDA’s Amhara rural development programme and REST’s initiative in Tigray, a preliminary focus on ‘economic empowerment’ has been a first step towards more deeply embedded ability amongst these groups to deal with structural impediments to their collective development. Without this type of ‘follow up’ action, these programmes would represent little more than marginal increases in income for the groups involved. Whilst this is important, the study sought examples of efforts to strengthen communities that had gone beyond the income generating aspect of a project or initiative.

Organisational empowerment is to be found in many of these programmes, for example, Hundee’s Cereal Banks, Dire Dawa Iddirs, Borena Forest Management, Dalocha Women’s Water Association and IHA in Addis Ababa. Here a great deal of effort has been invested in organisational sustainability so as to maintain other services and programmes. This in turn has encouraged members to work collectively towards further development goals. The organisational development work was usually tied to longer term capacity building at different levels which included, where necessary, improving basic education, plus specific programmes on managing organisations, chairing and governance etc. depending on specific needs. In some cases, training had also been provided for local authorities, to improve their ability to engage with community groups. The existence of many local indigenous forms of association no doubt provided fertile ground for some of this training work, as some of the managerial concepts are not totally alien. An element of success in organizational empowerment as shown in a number of case studies, is the strategy of building on existing experience and working practices, and then enhancing and improving these. This avoids the categorisation of this type of work as the transplanting of ‘foreign’ models.

Psychological empowerment was also common to many of the cases and is specifically mentioned in the studies documenting Dalocha, Awra Amba and IHA and IFSO in Addis Ababa, amongst others. This is a difficult concept to measure and describe, and although few agencies set out to systematically monitor empowerment
in this manner, there are references throughout the case studies to improved
degrees of psychological empowerment. In some cases such empowerment is little
more than remedial, for example, the counselling and work with raped children in the
IFSO programme. Elsewhere a more instrumental approach to empowerment can be
found, where it is recognised that improved self confidence and capacity to engage
with different stakeholders will permit the achievement of other goals. Whilst for other
programmes psychological empowerment is their underlying goal, and the
programme become the means to achieve this. It is important to understand the
distinction here, as the instrumental view centres around reaching a specific goal and
regards empowerment as one of the ways of achieving this. But if empowerment is
the goal, then the activities to strengthen self confidence may need to be set in a
more flexible framework where activities change depending on responses to them
and the development of the engaged population. An example of this would be the
IFSO programme to reintegrate families affected by the stigma of HIV/AIDS into their
community. Thus the activities and packages of inputs may need to be amended as
the programme progresses. Finally, we see other cases where, by default,
empowerment is regarded as a positive consequence of a programme. Thus for
example, the Yeka rubbish collection programme dwells on the difference between
the group involved and their peers, in that their success in an income generating
initiative has bred self-confidence and the ability and willingness to negotiate with
officials, clients and others.

5.3 The Role of the State

Where local authorities have been supportive, there have been some remarkable
results, most notably in REST’s Tigray project, the two education programmes
(BESO and ABE), the SIDA Amhara initiative and others. However, a negative
reaction on the part of the authorities such as that against the Dalocha water
programme and the Guaraghe can be damaging. The findings in these case studies
also reflect those of the study on Associations,4 which notes that there is still a strong
residual suspicion of the state amongst most community and civil society groups.
Local authorities tend to act more as though they are representatives of the state and
the ruling party, rather than working in the service of their electorate. However, a
number of positive cases show that the negative attitude of and towards local
government is not insurmountable. It is understood that the local authorities are
themselves very under-resourced, a fact which is also illustrated in the study of
Associations, but this should not be used as an excuse to attempt to control all
community resources, nor to disrupt local initiatives. The under-resourcing of local
government and state entities should, however, serve as a reminder that even with
the greatest of wills, it is unrealistic to expect authorities to respond to all the needs
and demands of local communities. The issues concern both the shortage of
financial resources and a severe failure to recruit and retain staff, even where posts
are approved. As has already been mentioned, this is not a society which has
resources that are inequitably distributed. What can be concluded is:

a) Where the local authorities are provided with resources, (as in the example
of the SIDA Amhara initiative) they will need help in dealing with these, whether
through technical support, or training in more participatory and democratic
approaches.

4 A study of organisational association of citizens. Anne Muir et al (INTRAC/World Bank
2004).
b) Local authorities must internalise the concept of service rather than control. This may require senior political leaders to reinforce this message right through the system.

c) Authorities should be encouraged to promote local initiatives. Whilst some regulation is necessary for the public interest, only a light touch is required, otherwise there is a danger that local initiatives will be stifled and constrained.

As noted in the Associations study and reinforced in many of the cases analysed in this report, the strength of communities lies in the degree of trust they have in their own organizations and the access to capital, labour, skills and leadership that these organizations can provide. Programmes should therefore be geared towards enhancing this potential, not constraining it.

5.4 Flexibility and Customised Approaches

The case studies included in the Annex draw upon initiatives in SNNP, Somali, Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, Guaraghe, the cities of Addis and Dire Dawa, and elsewhere. What is clear is that programmes that have had significant success have achieved this because they have adapted to the locality: for example, the focus on traditional management systems in the case of the Borena forest management programme, adapting education to the nature of pastoralism in Jijiga programme, and understanding the specifics of urban poverty in the IFSO and IHA programmes. What is clear in these and other cases is that standardised approaches to local level development are unlikely to be successful. Those recognising and adapting to differences in needs, culture and approach are far more likely to have an impact and to be sustainable.

In the context of Ethiopia, the need to localise responses is a major challenge for those attempting to design national level programmes. The need for adaptation must therefore be written specifically into any design. Frameworks of intentions and overall goals can be agreed nationally, but there should be flexibility to allow adaptation of initiatives that respond to the needs of specific groups. It is clear that, for example, an initiative that functions in a city will not be easily transferable to a pastoral area, especially if the population engages in pastoralism. Attempts in the past to introduce standardised solutions have largely failed, whilst the work with pastoralist children and communities documented here shows how a customised programme has already had more impact on education enrolment and participation than previous programmes. Flexibility within a national programme will create a major challenge for management and monitoring to ensure flexibility is not used as an excuse for poor accountability. This is not an insurmountable challenge however, and one counterbalance solution to this problem is support for local governance, of the sort demonstrated in the BESO education programme.

5.5 Focus on Gender

Careful reading of the case studies reveals an emphasis on improved gender equality in the majority of them. However, even with a great deal of commitment to the issue, there is no pretence that fundamental change is easy to achieve (see the Jijiga Alternative Basic Education Programme for example, where there is a marked increase in the enrolment and retention of girls in school, but at levels still well below
those for boys). There are some promising examples of cases where traditional systems have been adapted and used to promote gender equality and justice (Hundee, Awra Amba), but also an acknowledgement that working with traditional institutions will often mean an initial engagement largely with groups of men. Similarly, several of the cases note the lack of women in leadership positions. Whilst women in Dalocha control their association, it is probably the case that the external pressure they have been under from the local authorities was linked to their gender, and the influence over community affairs that their positions in the association had given them.

Specific issues around gender raised in the case studies included:

a) Because of their general lower levels of schooling, women will often need basic education in numeracy and literacy if they are to take leading roles in governance and management of community initiatives.

b) Specific support to women through capacity building will then be needed to assist them in taking on roles such as chairing or financial management.

c) Cross community/gender/generational programmes are needed to deal with controversial issues (circumcision, domestic violence, land rights etc), which, where possible, could build on traditional law making practices in a gender sensitive manner.

The case studies analysed here show that women’s leadership of community initiatives in Ethiopia is not only possible but also potentially very successful. However, considering the general context of women’s low social status and levels of education there is still considerable need for programmes that work specifically with women, rather than an approach that ‘mainstreams’ gender into all existing or proposed programmes. The work of Esther Mehbrahtu\(^5\) recognises that poverty is pervasive in Ethiopia regardless of gender, generation or ethnicity, but clearly states that women are in a particularly vulnerable position in society and suffer multiple forms of exploitation and prejudice. Ethiopia cannot afford to neglect such a major national resource.

5.6 Approaches to Capacity Building

In terms of capacity building methodologies, a number of initiatives in the case studies are particularly notable for their approach that understands the need for a consistent and ‘step by step’ methodology. This is employed to develop both individual and group capacities. The SOS Sahel, IHA and Dalocha case studies, amongst others, stress the process of working with groups over time to enable them to take control of their own development programmes and future initiatives and to engage with a combination of other stakeholders. It is clear that these processes cannot be cut short. And again, as noted in the Meket Development Programme, a flexible attitude is needed, to ensure that the pace of training does not overtake the ability of beneficiaries to absorb information.

One problem that has arisen in the Dalocha Women’s Water Association is the shortage of women available to take up key positions. Having trained local staff and

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\(^5\) Making the connection between Power and poverty: Ethiopia case study, Esther Mehbrahtu, INTRAC/ World Bank, March 2004
board members, good practice would encourage the rotation of office bearers and other elected officials, but despite intensive and extensive training programmes, there are still not enough women to replace those who have gained from the long term training and are able to run the water association. This study highlights the need for follow up work to ensure a second generation or cohort of women are able to assume responsibilities in the programme and perhaps suggests the need for training of local trainers.

5.7 Working at the Intermediary Level

Although many of our cases document initiatives undertaken in very specific local communities, we should not forget the value of working at a higher level. The CIDA/OXFAM Canada programme on capacity building in the Horn of Africa appears to be responding to an important need in its work to assist a range of agencies in their capacity building programmes. In general, there have been a lack of attempts to date to work across communities and encourage second level organisations that in turn can provide community level capacity building. Any programme to support civil society initiatives in Ethiopia will have to reply on this type of organisation if it is to both scale up and maintain quality. The experiences of mass capacity building programmes in other parts of the world show that these can often quickly deteriorate into standardised packages of training modules that are poorly adapted to specific contexts and groups of people. The solution to this problem is the use of specialised support groups that can adapt wider lessons and experiences to local language, needs and contexts. The delivery of capacity building will require considerable skills and experience of working at this level. These skills need to go beyond the rather narrow and stilted forms of internal training usually delivered in cascade form through the civil service. More flexible approaches are at present also relatively uncommon in the private sector in Ethiopia, including in non-governmental organizations.

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6 A similar programme run by Pact Ethiopia was mentioned by many of our contacts as having provided them with important capacity building services.
6. Issues for Future Capacity Building of Civil Society

In light of the government and donor interest in capacity building, this section presents recommendations for future capacity building programmes for civil society drawn from the case studies.

- Firstly there is a need to develop the capacity of local authorities and bring about a change in attitude so that they are more supportive of and positive towards community initiatives. This will require clear messages from senior government officials if it is to counteract the culture of years of centralised command and control of public services. Many local authorities also suffer from severe capacity and resource constraints. It was outside the remit of the studies to question whether it was even economically realistic to maintain some services at Woreda level, whilst there is such under-capacity. The pretence that services existed appeared to raise and then frustrate expectations unnecessarily. Instead, it might be more appropriate to focus on achieving a smaller number of priorities at this level, rather than for Woreda authorities to continue to under-perform across the board.

- Many of the cases have shown that for capacity building to be effective, time must be invested, and a carefully planned strategy developed, rather than relying on an unconnected and unplanned assortment of training courses. Future programmes should also take into account the case for capacity building to address different levels – the community, the organisation and the individual, plus technical support in certain cases – and to be adapted to local cultures and conditions. This approach would argue against the use of standard packages rolled out nationwide.

- Whilst many of the initiatives in the case studies deal with capacity building in terms of service delivery and other development interventions, a smaller number attempted to build the capacity of communities to deal with improved governance. Where this did take place, it was often hindered by the absence of matching programmes in the public sector (with the exception of the education programmes and the SIDA Amhara work). However, several of the cases did record impressive programmes of improved governance of local initiatives and projects through experiences of self-management (see for example the studies of Hundee, Dalocha Women’s Water Association and the Dire Dawa Iddir councils). Here citizens were exposed and participated in a more genuine form of local democracy. These cases and the Associations study show the strength of trust and internal democracy within the community groups reviewed.

- The most positive examples of empowerment and local development clearly started from specific community focused strategies, rather than universal or blueprint solutions. They were based on the assumption that communities would engage in an initiative that was formulated in a language and a set of ideas that they could relate to. But it was also emerged that most, but admittedly not all, of these community initiatives were based around existing groupings rather than new or introduced configurations. There have often been problems in the past when outside agencies have tried to form groups rather
than build on local types of association.\textsuperscript{7} It may be ‘tidy’ and less complex to establish new groups, but evidence from the case studies suggest building on local groups and traditions can be a very positive experience.

- Delivery of services can be a strategy through which participants in an intervention both make tangible gains and are encouraged and aided to build confidence and other longer term capacities. However, the danger is that the preoccupation with demonstrating success in service delivery results in the sidelining of other, less tangible, social development goals. For example, elsewhere in the world, micro-finance was seen by many as a potential entry point into community mobilisation. In reality it has been shown to be difficult to comfortably balance the two aims.

- There is a great deal of international experience in what has been called “local institutional development” (after Uphoff). Organizations such as the Aga Khan have also used this model in their programmes. However, working to strengthen local organizations requires serious investigation of what actually constitutes ‘institutional development’ in each specific context. This should not involve attempts to over-formalise people’s movements or groups or to attempt to override their own internally generated solutions.

- Within Ethiopia there appears to be a shortage of good local intermediaries organizations who could become involved in local capacity building. The majority of the case studies showed groups working to specific programme goals, where capacity building was only one aspect of their work. Some of these groups could conceivably transfer their focus and skills to the areas of capacity building for improved local governance and empowerment, given that they already have experience of service delivery and development programmes. The need for more intermediary capacity building services should not be underestimated.

\textsuperscript{7} NGO responses to Urban Poverty, service providers or partners in planning. Dr. Carol Sahley and Dr. Brian Pratt, INTRAC 2003, chapter 3, and section 4.3 Case of Addis.
Summary Conclusions

1) The case studies show many examples of indigenous agency. These require nurturing and support but often meet with constraints and can suffer from attempts by external actors to take control of them. Because of this, in some cases the population has sought to avoid ‘official’ recognition and involvement.

The state still needs to work hard to realise the goal of serving its population. The tendency to control remains, but where authorities have softened their attitude towards the innovations and alternative development approaches of local communities there have been some remarkably impressive results.

In order to promote a supportive environment, local implementers of programmes should engage with the local authorities so as to encourage attitudinal change. However, a degree of realism when working with local government is important. There are many unfilled vacancies in local authority offices, both because of lack of resources and a dearth of adequate candidates. Planned programmes should not, therefore, assume that local governments are fully staffed and able to collaborate in development initiatives.

2) There are high degrees of trust at community levels within local institutions and civil society associations. These are often based on well tested models and forms of local governance. Programmes which have built on this have shown positive results. However, this level of trust does not easily transfer to the state.

There is a clear need for improved governance within local authorities. This would include making a clearer distinction between paid civil servants, locally elected officials and the party structures. In the minds of many local people, these distinctions do not exist. This weakens governance and undermines confidence in the ‘state’ apparatus. Recent moves towards democratisation and decentralisation should be encouraged as a way of achieving more transparent governance and allowing local initiatives to flourish.

3) Programmes that have tried to build on local traditions have found a more ready acceptance from local people. There is evidence that engaging and working with traditional structures can be productive, as long as certain minimum standards are maintained (particularly with regards to gender). One approach can involve trying to reform traditional systems from within, by working with traditional law making practices.

Bringing about this type of far-reaching change at local level can be very time consuming. However, programmes that ignore or reject traditional attitudes and organisations are less likely to achieve longer term acceptance. Furthermore, any interventions with traditional organizations need to carefully planned: in some cases, traditional forms of organisation seem to have thrived despite, not because of, external ‘assistance’.

4) There is a need for specialised capacity building suppliers who have experience in participatory methods and community development. Client based models do exist and are used in Ethiopia, but there is a need for greater commitment to these approaches. External interventions that are based on an instrumental view of community participation where beneficiaries are recruited to help the programme succeed, are far less likely to flourish.
The examples in the case studies show that positive, sustainable change is more likely to come about from a longer term and ‘stepped’, flexible approach to capacity building. Short term, poorly coordinated and managed interventions will not produce the same results as those that centre around the two key variables of time and flexibility.

5) The majority of the cases underline the need for specific support to women. This will often involved the practical upgrading of basic education, if they are to participate in higher level activities. Women will need numeracy and literacy skills before they can be trained in organizational management and accounting. This type of capacity will need to be built up over an extended period, given the time pressures and other burdens faced by many Ethiopian women.

6) Despite the assertions of some critics, this study has shown that there are good examples of innovative and creative approaches to development in Ethiopia which can be used to plan future programmes. The slow, even negative, national development indicators could possibly be reversed if the lessons of some of these models were used to direct future interventions.

It is, however, important to be realistic about capacity for innovative and responsive development work within the country. It is not unlimited. There is a need for exchange programmes between capacity building suppliers so that they can build up a wider range of experiences and approaches. This should assist front-line workers to improve analysis of local need and deliver the kinds of support required. This will include further training and exposure visits to successful programmes.

7) In conclusion, there is little evidence to suggest that universal programmes with standardised indicators will have much impact in Ethiopia. What is shown by the case studies analysed in this report is that any future programme should both be client based and flexible to local conditions and needs. Thus large national programmes must take the local context into account and find ways in which support can be carefully tailored to meet particular needs. A key indicator of future success will be the degree to which this is achieved.
Implications for operationalising capacity building of civil society in Ethiopia

Any approach to the capacity building of civil society must be adapted to the context, culture, history and underlying needs of Ethiopian peoples. Approaches that have worked in one society will not necessarily be effective in another. It is also important to be clear about the exact needs that capacity building interventions are attempting to address. In Ethiopia, perceived capacity building needs vary according to the interpretation of different sets of actors. Thus whilst some would call for more focus on the economic constraints that hinder poverty alleviation, there are others who are more concerned about further deepening of the process of democratisation throughout the country. These concerns centre around both formal political structures and the performance of the fragile state system and its ability to deliver services. Other actors see the need for greater focus on ensuring ethnic, gender and other forms of equality.

This summary addresses the following areas
(i) The tools used to develop citizen and organizational capacity for fulfilling potential roles.
(ii) The structures, mechanisms and processes established to ensure successful engagement in governance, service delivery and development initiatives
(iii) The assets (human, financial and organizational) required to both initiate and sustain engagement.
(iv) Key elements in the local and state environment which support or inhibit engagement, including informal and formal institutions and linkages with other organizations.
(v) Indicators used to assess (a) processes of engagement (b) effective engagement.

(i) The tools used to develop citizen and organizational capacity for fulfilling potential roles.

Organisational capacity

Enhancing organisational capacity will require:
1) Sustained levels of work on organisational development, over a prolonged period (rather than spasmodic irregular inputs). Thus a well scheduled series of support interventions will have more impact than those that are poorly co-ordinated and irregular.
2) An organisation-wide process of capacity building. This will require a series of different interventions geared to individual and organisational needs and existing capacities as well as the ability to absorb new skills and ideas. These interventions could include training, mentoring (director and other levels), support on organisational strengthening, through the identification of specific weaknesses across a wide range of competencies (leadership, basic organisational and financial management, recruitment of staff etc).
3) Identifying specific organisational weaknesses. This requires the adoption of an appropriate organisational tool which will permit assessments to be made of an organisation utilising the perceptions of a range of stakeholders. PACT has experience of such organisational assessment tools and has adapted them for use with Ethiopian civil society groups. Once an organisational assessment has been carried out, it can
provide the basis for a tailored programme of capacity building, taking in several areas of concern:

a) The core of the organisation, including its overall strategy, vision, mission, through to the mechanics of the organisation (procedures, systems, structures); b) The actual capacity to maintain programmes, deliver services, or advocacy; and most importantly,

c) The organisation’s ability to make and maintain relationships with different (appropriate) levels of stakeholders.

Once the organisational weaknesses are identified within these areas then an action plan can be drawn up with specific interventions rather than expending resources on unfocussed activities which may not provide the organisational enhancement necessary.

4) In some circumstances it may be necessary to improve the general level of education and skills of a specific population before they can assume roles within organisations as office holders, members or staff. Experience in Ethiopia has shown that such programmes are particularly useful where it is important to increase the participation of women. This type of programme may also be important for groups in more isolated areas or specific socially excluded communities. Normally such basic education will include literacy and numeracy as prerequisites before introducing candidates to wider organisational and community skills.

Citizen Capacity

Interventions that aim to improve general literacy and numeracy skills of a particular population may also prove to be an effective strategy for improved citizen capacity in other areas, such as promoting greater participation of individual citizens at a general level (as voters, members of co-operatives or peasant associations) or as future office holders in democratic organisations.

If basic education can be assumed, then capacity building can be focused on the skills required to engage with and manage community based groups and to work with other actors within the community.

This will require:

1) Training and development of experience in leadership skills and understanding basic finance, including how to compile and read simple budgets and accounts. Leading from this, training can cover how to balance financial priorities, with available resources.

2) Training on how to run and chair meetings, take and review minutes, and make decisions based on consensus. This type of basic training can also include courses on public speaking, or how to write letters of representation.

3) Facilitating engagement with local democratic structures. This can include basic help with running elections at different levels, but it is often necessary to ensure follow-up of democratic processes. This can involve agreeing and managing systems for consultation through mechanisms such as public meetings, monitoring the work of local paid officials and issuing statements/written calls for comments (where appropriate in semi-literate populations).

4) Specific understanding of local government structures and policies or of a particular sector (health or education). An example from the case studies show the need for parents to appreciate educational and related policies before being able to take up their full obligations in parent/school committees.
Examples from Ethiopia, and elsewhere, have shown that confidence building is a key step in the development of an engaged populace. Confidence can be built both in terms of individual capacities or assets as well as through strengthening general faith in the system. Building up individual capacities often involves a psychological challenge: people need to see proof that they do have the capacity to speak up, or to engage in community action or local democracy. Strengthening faith in the system involves showing to people that their views do count and that their civic engagement can lead to concrete change for the better, in terms of improved services, reduced corruption and so forth.

Whilst it is possible, to some degree, to “train people” or educate them, experience shows that this alone will not suffice: what makes the real difference is people seeing the positive results of their actions. It is crucial that capacity building is directly linked to real and direct needs, so that people can build confidence from knowing that they are indeed being listened to and that change can come from their own actions and influence.

Therefore the scheduling of events, actions, and training needs to be done in such a way as to build confidence of previously excluded populations. Where people mobilise and invest in actions which are then thwarted and ignored, this can lead to frustration, conflict or apathy. Any major capacity building programme must monitor for local obstacles being placed around civic action which may work against the developmental aims of the programme. A number of the empowerment case studies from Ethiopia cases illustrate how initial obstructions and resulting frustrations were successfully resolved, allowing some impressive results to emerge.

(ii) The structures, mechanisms and processes established to ensure successful engagement in governance, service delivery and development initiatives

Engagement in governance, service delivery and development initiatives requires:

1) An accepting and enabling environment (openness of government officials, both elected and paid).

2) Adequate legal structures (see the problems identified in the case studies caused by an absence of legal regulations for community groups).

3) Transparency, openness and commitment to accountability at all levels, from the state down to local NGOs and community groups.

4) Citizen understanding of the structures, limitations and resources at the disposal of the state. They must be clear on their rights and obligations as well as the systems of governance. Further, they must be informed as to how they can voice concern, ask questions and find redress. Clarity is needed on the distinctions between governance
processes, and more concrete service delivery systems, and on how to access these. In order to ensure the above, there may be a need for guidelines for citizens, as well as public education for different stakeholders including awareness raising sessions for civil servants on their duties to citizens, and for elected representatives on the scope of their responsibilities and duties to their constituents.

5) Support to third level organisations such as NGOs, training institutes, umbrella groups, federations etc. These institutions can provide training and related support services to their members/constituencies and others. There is still a shortage of such facilities in Ethiopia: many regions of the country do not enjoy such support services and future programmes will need to take into account regional, not just national needs.

Where services of this type do exist they tend to be tied to specific implementation of programmes (water/health) rather than cutting across more general needs in governance, community and civic development. The scarcity of support service providers can be a major obstacle to capacity building programmes and it cannot be assumed that if resources are made available, good quality support services will be provided to meet demand. Development of capacity building services is often a prerequisite for further more generalised capacity building. Merely asking a local traditional educational establishment to provide such services will not resolve this problem as required facilitation skills are not necessarily found in traditional institutions of tertiary education. Capacity building programmes have floundered because they assumed that local civil service colleges, management and technical schools would provide capacity building services to communities, civil society and local authorities. Any programme therefore needs to begin by developing a range of capacity building service providers before attempting to provide services directly to clients. Experience of programmes such as those of Pact and Oxfam Canada shows the importance of long term support, and the advantages of graded approaches that address client group needs, rather than simple mass packages of capacity building.

(iii) The assets (human, financial and organizational) required to both initiate and sustain engagement

1) There is a need for a cadre of educated and articulate individuals who can facilitate engagement between government institutions and civil society and provide impartial analysis of relevant events and processes. This service could be provided by state or semi-state institutions (training centres/local colleges) or specialised local NGOs. The ‘honest broker’ can often play an important role in breaking down suspicions between different groups, and help improve communications and dialogue. The challenge is often how to provide financial support to such a body without it becoming overly formalised. NGO support organisations and think tanks, for example, can often provide the space for such a role without making it a part of statutory structures.

2) It is important to spread capacities within communities to avoid the appearance of dominant gatekeepers who represent sectional interests (gender/family/age biased). It is also important to introduce a ‘cascade’ of knowledge, so that all members of a cooperative, for example, have a basic understanding of governance, finance and other relevant issues that will enable them to function as informed members. At the same time, it is important to recognise that a smaller group within a cooperative will
need support to be able to dialogue with power, manage the cooperative and represent it to other authorities. However, if an organization is to be sustainable, more than one such cohort must be trained (see the example of the case study of Dalocha women’s water committee). A similar approach will be required in community based programmes such as water committees, and even for local government ‘councils’.

3) There is always a demand for good facilitators, trainers and organisational development specialists. There is often an assumption that existing educators and management consultants can be called upon, and although this may sometimes be the case, in Africa the shortage of such people has been a challenge for many capacity building programmes.

4) Financially, programmes need to confront the problem of how to compensate people for their time and other resources if engagement of local populations is to be sustained. Even where time is given voluntarily, civic engagement can easily absorb travel and related expenses (travel to local towns/attendance as elected officials of meetings).

iv) Key elements in the local and state environment which support or inhibit engagement, including informal and formal institutions and linkages with other organizations.

The two most important elements for an enabling environment are

1) a basic framework for participation that includes legal and procedural aspects and
2) a consistent commitment to civic engagement at all levels of the state, from the senior political levels through to the lowest level officials.

The empowerment case studies illustrated certain legal constraints on the activities of both formal and informal groups. However, some of these examples also show how legal structures have been adapted to enable new forms of organisation to flourish. This would suggest that with political will and the minimum of resources, legal obstacles can be resolved. However, not all the case studies present such a positive picture and the legacy of a less supportive state remains.

In order to combat this problem there needs to be

1) A strong, and regularly repeated message from central government, that the state is committed to engagement with civil society through mutual support and cooperative working practices.
2) Follow up of this message through the different levels of the state. This could be achieved through a familiarisation programme for officials (paid and elected) at all levels, including local government. This type of programme could be formalised through cascade training for local officials on the rationale behind the need for a change in attitude.
3) Publicity of ‘good news’ stories to raise awareness of changes that are taking place and to engender greater levels of trust amongst the population.

Progress will be made when citizens start to believe in the reality of change that is more than just government rhetoric. This will occur when local officials are seen to be
supportive rather than controlling in the face of new development initiatives and informal group activities.

(v)  
Indicators used to assess (a) processes of engagement

At the most basic level, these indicators would be broad and blunt and would be used to assess basic information such as the numbers of public meetings and civic education classes held, school committees formed and adults receiving educational training. These should also cover areas such as the numbers of elected officials at local level and the percentage of these that are women. Within civil society organizations, indicators should look at the rotation of office holders, whether meetings are held regularly and minuted, if these are publicised and if decisions made are acted upon. At this level, indicators could also focus on the gender, or kinship allegiance of office holders in civil society organisations and whether this affects their ability to represent members.

Indicators used to assess (b) effective engagement.

Real understanding of effective engagement can only be achieved through processes of participatory data collection that allow people to set their own indicators. This could involve posing questions such as whether people feel that they are now listened to, if they can influence local decision making, and if their representatives really do represent them.

At this level it is important to ensure that indicators used are meaningful to the subjects of the monitoring. Who chooses the questions can make a significant difference to the value of the information collected. If issues of governance and empowerment are taken seriously, then any attempt at monitoring must begin by enabling people to choose and then use their own indicators. It is through this process that outsiders can come to understand how local people perceive change. Outsiders may well surmise levels of change different to those of local people. If there are major differences between the views of different stakeholders then programme managers must seek to understand why these differences have emerged.
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Addis Ababa

Empowerment in Relation to Family Cohesion

The Integrated Family Service Organization

Hirut Tefferi

This local NGO has used several projects to develop an awareness of the potential of young people, including AIDS orphans. The methodology for the most part involves dealing with the immediate issues (poverty), medium-terms measures (education) and longer term confidence building. Even when dealing with rape victims, the same pattern is followed, where the immediate physical needs are dealt with, followed by counselling, as well as family and community education, to rehabilitate the victim and obtain recognition of their status as victim, avoiding further prejudice by community and family members.
General Information
The Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO) was established in 1995 and is located in Woreda 16, Kebele 11 in Addis Ababa.

IFSO was founded by an Ethiopian citizen, Mekdes, who has many years of experience of working with children in difficult situations. She was motivated to start a project in the area where she lived, because of the problems she witnessed among children and youth who dropped out of school and whose families were infected by or died as a result of HIV/AIDS. Many families were on the verge of break-down because of financial and health problems. The project started by helping 13 children.

At the initial stages of the project, attempts were made to draw in those who could promote improved opportunities for the community. These were representatives from line bureaus (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC). Community Based Organizations such as Edirs and Kebeles were engaged in PRA exercises to determine target groups and priorities. A Board consisting of prominent persons and professionals was also set up in order to guide and support the achievement of the goals of the projects, including fund raising and monitoring the implementation of activities.

Funds for running the project are raised internationally from organizations and individual sponsors; and locally from international organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children.

IFSO’s activities
IFSO’s vision is to integrate children and youth from under privileged families through integrated education and family counselling. Three projects are implemented by IFSO.

1 - Counselling centre for victims of rape: the Centre provides services to 138 victims of rape, out of which four are boys. The ages of the rape victims range from three and a half years to fifteen years. The main activity in the Counselling Centre is provision of counselling to victims and their families and where necessary, provision of financial support to families of rape victims. The Counselling program provides support to children and families who are going through crisis caused by rape committed on a member of family. However, if the particular family meets the requirements set by the training program, the child and/or other members of the family may be included in project activities that are relevant to the needs of the family.

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8 Kebeles are the smallest units of formal organizations in urban centers. They are organized according to geographical locations, which are established by the government. Officials of the Kebeles are residents of the Kebeles elected by the people of the Kebele but are paid by the government.

9 Rape is considered as a family crisis primarily because of its connection with HIV/AIDS. The cases are also identified and forwarded by legal aid agencies and clinics, which means that there is an amount of publicity concerning the specific case. As a result, relationships between the rape victim, the family and the neighborhood of the victim get strained in various ways. Families usually blame the victim for taking the problem into the open or for being exposed to the situation. The social environment around the family isolates and stigmatizes the child and the family. The issues are also influenced by gender relations in society. For example, despite the AIDS pandemic, females are not expected to openly complain about sexual abuses, and men that are victims of sexual molestation and abuse tend to be more stigmatized than women.
2 – Child Sponsorship Program focuses on providing financial support to selected children in families. 1,100 families are beneficiaries of the Child Sponsorship Program. A child is sponsored until s/he is able to complete her/his studies and be independent. Although financial support comes to the family in the name of an individual child, other members of the family are also indirect beneficiaries of the project.

Education is a very important component of the Sponsorship program. If a child who has been given adequate guidance and counselling, still drops out of school, s/he will be cancelled from the Child Sponsorship program. For this reason, families provide a lot of support to children’s education and they are encouraged to liaise with the schools about the child’s attendance and performance.

Most children that are orphans are left in the care of grandparents, who are aged, weak and uneducated. The condition of the grandparents, the experiences through which the children have gone through during the illness and death of their parents; and the generation gap is a challenge to many of the families.

Those who are orphaned and who do not have other relatives to care for them are placed in foster families, who manage the funds donated by the sponsors of the children. Part of the funds from the sponsors is saved in banks in the name of each individual family.

3 - Skills Training program: this program started as a pilot project with 17 girls in 1998. After the second year of training, the project was evaluated by the project staff, trainees and an external consultant appointed by the donors. It was then decided that the project should continue for three years.

In addition to the three projects above, credit schemes have been established to assist parents and guardians of children and youth engaged in the projects to start up small businesses. There are also projects that aim to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS that are intended to benefit all project beneficiaries.

All the above projects target children who are orphaned, from families headed by single parents who are affected by HIV/AIDS and children from destitute families. With the exception of children and families who are victims of rape, all the projects target the population that live in a specific part of Addis Ababa – Yeka Kifle Ketema.

In terms of management of day-to-day activities, the projects are independent. However, the projects are integrated and share resources, management and expertise. Funds are raised centrally by the coordinating office which also monitors the implementation of programs and supervises the activities of the projects in relation to the plans. There is a great deal of team work both internally within the organization and in collaboration with the beneficiaries of the project.

With the exception of occasional publications and coverage by the local media, there are no organized efforts to disseminate experiences from the project.

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10 It is estimated that about 75% of heads of families are grandparents, out of which the majority are women.
11 Kifle Ketemas are city administrative units. Yeka Kifle Ketema consists of 25 Kebeles.
The Case Study
The entry point for the project activities are individual children, with the inputs to the family intended to improve the lives of the families of the children. All three projects implemented by IFSO have components of empowering the population at various levels, ranging from empowering individual children and families to community level.

Based on discussions with stakeholders, observations and information gathered concerning the level of participation and empowerment of the targeted population; the Skills Training Project and the Sponsorship Project have higher level of empowerment than the Counselling Project. Even among these two projects the level of empowerment is different: the Skills Training Project addresses fewer children and youth than the Child Sponsorship project. However, the empowerment components are more pronounced in the Skills Training project, mainly due to the age and status of the population targeted for empowerment. The Skills Training project focuses directly on older children and youth who are being prepared for the job market. In the Child Sponsorship project, the empowerment targets primarily heads of families of sponsored children who are mostly elderly grandparents who are entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and controlling the upbringing and education of AIDS orphans. The children in the Child Sponsorship program are generally young school children.

This case study focuses on the Skills Training Project, although references are made to the Sponsorship Project because the projects are linked in many ways. For example, a family member of a sponsored child may benefit from Sponsorship while a sibling of the same child may be engaged in the Training Project.

Skills Training project and its effect on empowering communities
The goal of the Skills Training Project is to empower destitute families and avoid family breakdown among destitute families, thereby preventing members of those families from going out onto the streets.

Specific objectives set for the Skills Training Program for the three year period are:
- Improved economic status of 120 weak households
- Increased school attendance of children in the selected households
- Increased community awareness on family planning.

Criteria for selecting trainees for the Skills Training Program are:
1. economic conditions – poverty of the family, as defined by lack of employment or regular income.
2. family status - death of one or both parents, family destitution due to single parent being HIV/positive.
3. Existence of other children besides the one selected: in the case of the Training Project the selected child/youth must have at least three siblings who are below 18 years old.
4. Age – primary beneficiaries of the projects are children and youth whose ages range from 18 to 25 years.
5. Gender - most of the beneficiaries of the project are girls.
6. Geographical location – resident of the selected geographical area.

Training is provided in five subjects: Food preparation, food and beverage control, catering, house keeping & child care and family planning. In order to increase the chance for the trainees to be employed with international agencies and persons and to improve their chance for further studies, English language courses and counselling programs are provided.
The Skills Training Project has so far trained 128 children. 90 of those have been trained are now employed. The trainees that are trained have 578 siblings. Currently, 80 children and youth, 60 girls and 20 boys, are engaged in training. Some of the trainees are dropouts from as low as 5th grade, while others have completed high school education.

The training lasts for a total of 12 months – out of which 4 months are allocated for theoretical studies, 5 months for practical training and three months for apprenticeship in different organizations.

Certain characteristics of the Skills Training Project are identified as most relevant to analysing the empowerment of beneficiaries. These are a combination of people’s activities and the perceived impact of the projects. The characteristics are community involvement, children’s participation, restoration of hope, and impacts of the project on promoting family unity.

i) Community involvement
The involvement of the community has two elements: capacity development with the Kebeles and involvement of communities to benefit from and to participate in project activities. Capacity development with the Kebeles was started by pulling in representatives of local communities concerning identification of problems and potential beneficiary families. This was done through workshops, meetings and individual consultations.

The Skills Training and the Sponsorship projects are designed by IFSO. The types of activities to which a specific family may be involved are discussed and decided jointly by the project staff and the concerned family. The element of phasing out and handing over to the community is designed by IFSO and discussed at the initial stages of the project.

The capacity development with the Kebeles helped to get a correct picture of the problems in the communities and to carry out the project activities in a way that is transparent and open to the contribution of the community. This also helped in bringing about a shared vision and perceptions of success.

Children who are orphaned and destitute approach Kebeles and their parents’ Edirs for housing and other assistance. Enrolment in the project may occur as a result of a recommendation by Kebeles or Edirs or by the families themselves applying for assistance. Therefore, on the one hand, involvement in IFSO activities is perceived by the Edirs and Kebeles as a way of solving the problems they are forced to deal with. On the other hand, the coordination between IFSO and the Kebeles and Edirs has served to solve problems for the residents of the Kebeles. For example, the extent of the problem of housing faced by many AIDS orphans is being solved by the Kebeles, providing protection and authority; or waiving rent for orphans to keep the houses which were rented by their parents from the Kebeles.

The family status and economic conditions of potential beneficiaries of the projects are certified by Kebele offices. This is done according to the agreed criteria where needy families are defined as those families who live in rented houses (rents as low as $0.60 per month) or who do not have regular incomes. Most are engaged as daily labourers. The selection is then done jointly by the Skills Training Project, the IFSO
The different committees elected from among the project beneficiaries are involved in forwarding names of and selecting children who have achieved good results, or families, foster parents and community members who have contributed to the projects for appreciation and award in community meetings.

The community meetings called to discuss the progress of the projects, such as the educational progress of children, are used by IFSO to invite project beneficiaries and their elected representatives to take a more active part in the projects. The coordinating office of IFSO invites project beneficiaries to suggest ways of improving working methods, to look into organizational documents, etc. Despite the fact that this opportunity may not be utilized by the beneficiaries because of lack of knowledge and exposure of the beneficiaries to organizational work, community representatives and project beneficiaries said that they have powers to influence the way the projects function. Their ideas and suggestions are taken into account in assisting the children.

One of the impacts of the project is that the different committees elected by the project beneficiaries are discussing ways of organizing themselves in order to generate income for their community.

The beneficiaries of the projects are discussing the project and IFSO as their own. During meetings with government representatives that visited the projects to monitor the project implementation, the different committees requested that the City Administration provided a plot of land to build offices for IFSO; so that funds that are used to rent office premises may be used to assist more needy families.

i) Empowerment of youth and children

The primary beneficiaries of the Training Project are children and youth. During the period that the children are engaged in training, they receive financial support. The support they get, however, is not intended only for the consumption of the specific child in the family but to support the whole family, including siblings.

Participants of the Skills Training project are given the chance to select what they study according to their interests. While engaged in the skills training, children and youth receive counselling and guidance.

Family visits are conducted by Parents’ Committees and the project staff to monitor the home situation. This is considered an essential component of the project in ensuring that poor families support their children’s education and that relationships that potentially damage the chances of success for the child are prevented.

During the training, committees organized from among the trainees are involved in different activities of the project including purchasing and storage of food and non-food items. Once trainees complete their courses, IFSO tries to look for employment for the graduates by contacting different agencies in and outside Addis Ababa.

There are three types of organizations for the children and youth in the project:

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12 Edirs are self help associations set up by people in a certain neighbourhood for the purpose of funerals. However, due to the AIDS pandemic, Edirs are also increasingly taking the role of assisting orphans in their communities.
Alumni Association: all graduates of the Skills Training project are members of this association. IFSO has established a definite time plan (2007) to hand over the Skills Training project to the association. Preparations are underway towards this end.

Cooperative: The youth that completed the Skills Training program and could not find jobs are organized under a cooperative. They are contracted to provide catering services to different agencies including during functions held by IFSO.

Informal groups: Trainees and graduates are encouraged to be engaged in different kinds of informal neighbourhood groups and activities.

Capacity development aimed at children and youth focuses on issues relating to personal development, including family planning, prevention of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS; and the transfer of this information to members of families and neighbourhoods.

The acceptance of youth and families in their neighbourhoods is reported as increasing as a result of the involvement of youth in the Skills Training project.

iii) Restoration of hope among destitute families

Families that approach the IFSO for assistance are usually people that have lost hope in their ability to provide for their families. In some cases, the breadwinner in the family may have died and family members may be pushed to desperation, not only because of their economic loss, but also because they feel insecure due to the stigma of a family death suspected as caused by AIDS. The spouse may also be afraid that s/he may be infected, and looses interest in caring for the children and other dependents. The children/youth in the family may be known to be engaged in certain activities that are not considered suitable in the neighbourhood.

Economic pressures force families to withdraw from their membership in social activities such as Edirs or Saints Days associations. Thus the psychosocial status of the family unit, which is already made fragile as a result of economic problems, tends to be further aggravated. Most of the families are found to be in this type of state when they ask to be involved as beneficiaries of the project.

The project coordinating office is a place where community members drop in to seek consultations and relief for their problems. Most of the people that seek support from the IFSO office approach the office at the time they are most desperate; such as after loss of family member, destitution, etc.

The enrolment of a child/youth from a certain family into the Skills Training project or sponsorship program is one of the concrete steps that seem to trigger activities by the families resulting in restoration and/or improvement of the social status of the families. Economic support and family visits from the projects serve to stimulate the restoration of hope among families.

The conditions in individual families are studied and destitute families receive different assistance including improvement of housing conditions, and counselling and guidance to save some money to start small businesses that could improve their lives. Destitute people, people living with HIV/AIDS or those whose spouses have died of AIDS are provided financial and material assistance. However, it is believed both by the project staff and the beneficiaries of the project that the most important
element is the opportunity given to people to discuss their problems and have their hopes are restored.

Once the hopes of the families are restored, opportunities provided by IFSO are utilized to improve their social standing. Project staff and beneficiaries of the project agree that one of the most essential elements that is gained as a result of the opportunities provided by IFSO is “hope”. They also agreed that if the material inputs did not have the hope component, the beneficiaries might not have the energy to benefit as much as they have benefited from the projects.

Savings made by individual families are expected to reduce the chance of family breakdown due to economic reasons.

iv) Impact of the project on promoting family unity

It is agreed by all the stakeholders that the project has helped to protect families as units and prevent members them from going onto the streets. Some beneficiaries stated that the support provided by the project served to “resurrect” their families. There are examples of broken families who have managed to get back together as properly functioning families, with the children performing very well at school. What are the factors that promoted this kind of resilience and healing in the family unit? This is an area that could be further investigated and shared with other families.

The formal and informal groups that are created at different levels by families of children and youth that attend the Skills Training project are important in promoting family unity as they discuss problems, share experiences on different issues and support each other on different occasions.

The project also motivated people to be engaged in different income generation activities. Although the degree of success of these initiatives varies from one individual to another, it was clear that there are matters that are policy issues that require attention from government. During focus group discussions, parents’ representatives expressed that for the sustainability of the impact of the projects, the environment for small business enterprises in Addis Ababa need to be enhanced by the appropriate government agency.

The focus on youth and children as entry points to assist families is an issue that is not seen as a challenge for the time being. Children and youth who resist the sharing of resources that are provided in their names with other family members are referred to the counsellors for advice. However, regardless of the impacts of the project, a situation where there is no strong head of family, where the family depends for survival on the assistance targeted at an individual child or youth, and where weak, elderly and uneducated family heads are faced with the responsibility for raising, on average, three children, the promotion of family unity is likely to be a challenge. This may pose a situation where the project disempowers the adult, while empowering the child.

Appendix -1

The concept of agency may be described as:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social (social cohesion, collaborative ventures,)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational (literacy, numeracy)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological (perception of power, influence, self confidence)</td>
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<td>Spiritual (less fatalism, belief systems/faith)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic (increased physical/financial assets, income, credit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political (voting, political representation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational (creation of autonomous organisations, or access to others such as local government)</td>
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Case 2

Lalibela

Initiative to preserve cultural and historical heritage (Save Your Holy Land)

Ayele Zewge

This case was included in the overall collection to show what is possible with few external resources but strong local concerns. The area in question is a religious site which also acts as a source of tourist income. Building on cultural and faith based issues, young people have sought to "protect" the site from pollution and damage, and to regain the area from beggars and others. This has led to an alliance with elders and young people and the development of programmes in other areas of local concern, including HIV AIDS.
Introduction
This case study documents an initiative set up in 2000 by a group of sociology students. Having recently graduated, rather than concern themselves with applying for jobs, this group began to consider undertaking certain activities that would help to preserve an area of historical and cultural significance in Lalibela.

The leader of this group was Tewodros Alemu, a student who had grown up at Lalibela and at one point worked as a tourist guide at the site of rock hewn churches that are found there. He was joined in the group by four other students, two of whom were from the same region.

The Lalibela rock hewn churches are a source of pride in terms of cultural heritage for Ethiopians and are also a holy site for followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Although they appear as built structures, they are in fact cut from one piece of rock and surrounded by a trench. This form of construction is unique to this particular site. Their creation is dated to the rule of one of the last kings of the Zagwe Dynasty, Lalibela, who reigned around 1200 AD. These churches have been declared a world heritage site by UNESCO.

Despite the significance and global appeal of the churches, there is general consensus that the site is not being managed or handled the way it should be. It is a tourist attraction, and draws thousands of visitors from across the world each year. Although this attention is welcome as it contributes to the foreign exchange earning of the country, these particular students were concerned by the social problems in the area that were not being addressed, and the threat to the historical buildings themselves.

Firstly, tourist guiding is often done by local students who have only very limited knowledge of the history of the churches. Secondly, souvenirs sold in the locality are of a sub-standard nature, which undermines the true nature of local craft. Thirdly, a considerable number of poorer people from all over the region are attracted to the area, hoping to subsist on money given by tourists. This scenario has created a situation where the sanitary conditions of the areas surrounding the historical sites is deteriorating over time. Furthermore, the crowds of destitute people asking for money has begun to be considered a nuisance by the tourists and is undermining the image of what is otherwise a very attractive site of both architectural interest and religious devotion.

Despite the existence of these problems, the relevant Government bodies are not trying to address them. This is why the group of students decided to become involved. This issue appeared so pressing to them, that they decided to forgo looking for work, and instead concentrate on changing the situation at the site and averting the dangers that threaten it. Their commitment to this goal was such that they did not worry about the resource implications of the initiative, doing whatever they could within their capabilities.

The lack of external financial support was actually helpful for the students in the initial stages of their work, as it compelled them to focus on community sensitization and mobilization around their cause. Aware of their limitations, their strategy began by bringing the problem to the attention of the local communities, government entities and the religious leaders in charge of these churches. Such an approach at the start-up stage of their activity paid off as these students managed to win the sympathy and support of all of these entities within a short space of time. They thus won a mass
base for their initiative right from the start. The students recall that what had been an
issue of concern for them, became an issue of concern for the entire community
residing in and around Lalibela. In fact, some elders expressed their feeling towards
this initiative as significant in terms of saving their holy land. The association that was
established later adopted this attitude of the community by calling itself “Save Your
Holy Land”.

Becoming engaged in the public domain requires a legal mandate and formal
organization. The student founders managed to formalize their association in line
with the legal requirements whilst maintaining the momentum that had been achieved
through their activities to sensitize the community. Thus Save Your Holy Land, as an
indigenous NGO committed to addressing the above mentioned problems, was
formally established in December 2001 and was registered with the Federal ministry
of Justice on 11 March 2003. The time that elapsed between the establishment of
the organization and its official registration indicates the long bureaucratic process
required of NGOs before they can secure their registration. Had it not been for the
commitment of these founder students, the up and downs involved at the start-up
stage could have made them abandon the whole effort. However, these students
recall with pride that they managed to overcome these initial obstacles.

However, in the course of time, the students were forced to face up to resource
constraints. The lack of funds has proved to be a big stumbling block that has
seriously affected their progress towards the realization of their objectives. They have
now managed to secure funding from external donors for only one of their activities.
Their financial difficulties are therefore ongoing.

Structure
Save Your Holy Land (SYHL) is a membership organization. It currently has six
founding members, 387 associate members and 12 honorary members. The
association’s honorary members are notable historians, academics and journalists
residing in the USA, United Kingdom, France and Ethiopia. Generally, these
honorary members came to know about this association after visiting the site as
tourists.

All associate members are selected from the association’s operational area, from
Amhara Region, North Wollo Zone, Bugna Woreda, Lalibela town and its surrounding
areas of Shumsheha and Nakuteleab. All of these associate members are actively
engaged in the work of the association through their club membership.

Activities
The association, in order to realize its objectives, has organized a Culture, History
and Heritage Friendly Club, an Anti HIV/AIDS, a Reproductive Health Club, an Arts
club and a Share Your Experience club. The last club, which is innovative and
creative, strives to bridge the apparent generation gap by creating a forum for elders
to share their life experiences with the younger generation. The idea is, that by
recognising shared values amongst different generations, continuity and dynamism
of social development will be achieved. Besides this, the forum provides a space for
elders to talk about emerging social problems and unwelcome changes that they see
occurring in their environment. In the Share Your Experience Club, the association
has managed to create a forum where elders share their experiences with the
younger generation. This forum is believed to have won the sympathy of both the
elders and the younger people as it has revealed the gifts and capacities of both
groups. Immense wisdom is to be found in the accumulated indigenous knowledge in
the case of the former and immense potential for change in the case of the latter.
The Anti HIV/AIDS and Reproductive health clubs were included in the project as the founder members of the organization became aware of the degree to which the younger generation was at risk from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The students argue that there is no point working to save the legacies of previous generations, if future generations are not around to inherit them. With respect to its Anti HIV/AIDS and Reproductive Health activities, the association has so far accomplished numerous tasks that range from awareness creation activities through drama, poetry and educational seminars to the deployment of peer educators.

Through its "Adolescent Reproductive Health Project" that is financed by Packard Foundation, SYHL has managed to expand its outreach capabilities so as to reach young people both in and out of the school environment with matters pertaining to combating HIV/AIDS and further boosting the awareness of youth on family planning. In conjunction with this project, the association has established one youth center at Shumsheha where reproductive health club members are provided with different IEC materials on the subject. Training is also given to a number of peer educators on the subject of HIV/AIDS and the ways to prevent it.

**Achievements**

During the last few years of its work, the association has made visible achievements, of which community awareness creation is the most significant. As a result of this, notable elders, church leaders and members of the business community now constitute the governing Board of the association.

Besides this, through its clubs, the association has mobilized thousands of young people from the surrounding area to participate in its activities. Repeated campaigns have been waged to clean the areas surrounding areas the historical site. These campaigns have produced an impressive result. However, the association is currently engaged in working out regular and lasting cleaning arrangement for the purpose. Furthermore, plots of land found adjacent to the buffer area delimited around these churches are planted with various tree seedlings so that the general vicinity of the historical and cultural heritage is better preserved and becomes a tourist site that is commensurate with its national and international significance.

**Funding, sustainability and future activities**

The association has achieved modest results, mainly through the mobilization of volunteers. However, most of the major tasks it hopes to undertake have remained unaddressed, mainly due to financial constraints. The only funding it has so far managed to secure is from the Packard Foundation for its Adolescent Reproductive Health Project. Besides this, PACT-Ethiopia has also given assistance to the association by conducting organizational capacity needs assessment and helping to prepare a strategic plan document. The association leaders say that these measures have been a great help, as they have helped them to see their future direction more clearly.

The association's major concern of better preserving the historical sites and addressing the social problems of the people that live around them still remain to be addressed. In terms of tackling these social problems, the association is currently considering the possibility of engaging able-bodied people in various income generating activities. From their preliminary studies, a sufficient market exists for the selling of various types of souvenirs. They have also noted that there is sufficient local know-how for training and production of these.
The founders of the association continue to be enthusiastic and devoted to their prime objective of creating an appropriate environment in the vicinity of the historical site. However, there are still numerous issues that worry them. In their quest to make the scenery of the surrounding area green and attractive, they have planted a number of tree seedlings. But they are not sure as to the long-term implication of this measure on the rock-hewn churches. Their effort to be advised by the relevant government department on this issue has not so far produced any result.

Besides this, they aspire to give relevant training to tourist guides and other people engaged in providing tourist related services so that the quality and manner of providing these services can be improved and in turn contribute to better preservation of the heritage site. Again, to their dismay, they have not found any organization to assist them in this area. This is particularly worrying to the original founder of the association, who himself was trained as a guide by Finnida (Finnish Development Agency). He believes that this sort of training has a big impact on improving the quality and service of tourist guiding.

**Conclusion**

Despite these limitations, SYHL enjoys tremendous support from practically all the local government bodies. These officials believe that the problems the association has set out to address are real and genuine and are understood by the entire community. The Woreda Administration has now set up Steering Committee to coordinate government and NGO activities within the Woreda, and was quick to designate SYHL as the chair of this association.

However, due to lack of relevant expertise and funds, such support from the Woreda Administration can not help the association in the area of training, financing and proper preservation of historical heritage sites. Unfortunately the multiple Federal Government bodies dealing with cultural and tourist issues cannot be of any help to community initiatives.

Despite all these limitations, the effort of these committed students has already produced impressive results in sensitizing and mobilizing local community members around their cause. Given the zeal and determination of these pioneers, there is great potential for a better future for this historical site, as the people residing around it have risen to these challenges with new sense of responsibility and determination.
Case 3

Dukem Town

Basic Education System Overhaul - Save the Children US

Hirut Tefferi

This initiative is one of a couple of large programmes designed to improve the local governance of schools, by encouraging greater involvement of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and pupils. The case shows how the local government (Woreda education office) has managed to work well with local communities (specifically with the PTA), external technical assistance and the school staff, plus other community groups, to improve the "ownership and commitment" to the education system.
**Introduction to the Programme**

The focus of this case study is the Basic Education System Overhaul (BESO-2), a programme initiated by Save the Children Fund US. Save the Children implements the project, and it is funded by USAID.

The programme aims to reach 1,500 schools in 4 Regions. Currently, the programme covers 959 schools which are organized in cohorts: 419 schools in Cohort 1 and 540 in Cohort 2. The remaining 550 schools will be included in the programme as Cohort 3.

The main objective of BESO-2 is to strengthen the involvement of communities to bring about improved quality and equity in education. The programme is particularly concerned to increase the participation of girls in schools. BESO-2 is also expected to result in the Woreda Administration recognizing and appreciating the role of grassroots communities in education.

Strategies to achieve these objectives include strengthening the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA). PTAs are expected to play active roles in the development of the schools. To this end they are supported through training and mentoring.

**The Case Study**

This case study looks at two schools in Akaki Woreda, Dukem Town: Odda Nebi School and Dalota School. These schools provide services to a total of 3353 students. Both these schools are in the first phase of the programme, which means that they have been part of BESO-2 since 2002.

Dukem Town is situated 37 km from Addis Ababa. In terms of the ethnic background of the local population, the majority of people in the area are from the Oromo tribe, mixed with a few other tribes. The people themselves are mainly engaged in farming and are organized in Peasant Associations. The Woreda in which the schools are located, Akaki Woreda, is estimated to have around 70,000 residents, organized in 30 Farmers’ Associations. The main religion is Orthodox Christian, but other religions are also practiced. In general, almost everyone living in the Woreda is influenced by the program, in one way or another.

**Implementation/organizational structure:** The BESO – 2 Coordination office is run by a Head of Mission and staffed by education specialists, gender advisors and capacity building staff, who provide inputs at different levels. In addition, consultants are called in when required.

School Development Coordinators (SDC) who are staff of the Woreda Education Bureau are assigned for each Woreda to be the main link between the project, PTAs and schools. The SDCs also take on the role of mobilizers and motivators of development; for example by stimulating the organization of girls’ clubs in schools and monitoring the process of planning and implementation carried out by PTAs. On average, each SDC is responsible for 10-12 schools in a Woreda. In some cases, SDCs are provided with motorcycles to enable them visit the schools. SDCs are also responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

Girls Advisory Committees are organized in each school with membership from mothers, PTA members, women teachers, elders and sometimes girl students.
School Improvement Grants, which range between 3,000 and 3,500 birr are given to each PTA depending on the viability of their plans. To utilize the grants, PTAs must go through a process of planning in which problems faced by the schools are prioritized and a matching contribution of at least 25% of the School Improvement Grant is raised.

Activities
The following are the major activities in the project:

1 - Training is given to Woreda officials, community and PTA members so that they have a better understanding of the role they play in promoting education and their roles in the larger national education scheme. Trainings are provided on issues such as gender, resource mobilization, accountability of PTAs to the communities and creation of community-based plans which the community can support and implement.

2 - Mentoring: SDCs follow up the activities of the PTAs and the impact on the development of schools in bringing about increased equity and quality of education.

3 - Improved implementation of educational programs: this is done through various activities such as building more classrooms, monitoring and supervision of school staff, increased enrolment of girls, etc.

4 – Fund raising: PTA members make plans to raise funds from parents, residents of the locality, businesses, and others so that they can raise funds to improve their schools in terms of buildings, equipment and furniture.

5 - Advocacy with communities: School administrations and PTAs advocate with communities for the abolition of harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and abduction of girls for marriage.

6 – Mentoring and monitoring by SDCs: the SDCs serve as link between different PTAs, the Woreda Education Bureaus and the coordination office of the project in SC/US.

Programme methodology
The program is planned on the participation of communities that are found around the schools. However, the project does not interfere with the daily running of the schools and the type of planning carried out by PTA members. As a result, the schools in which BESO-2 is being implemented have unique lines of development. For instance the PTA in one school is concentrating on putting up extra buildings while the other school is concentrating on planning for infrastructures such as electricity and water and on income generation activities.

The funds provided by the BESO-2 project to the schools were described by stakeholders as having served as a stimulation. There is an increasing understanding that the communities themselves can bring about change. There is however, expectation by the communities that once they manage to achieve success with the allocated funds, there will be more involvement from BESO-2.

The most important element that BESO-2 has provided appears to be the leadership that it attempts to stimulate around education. PTA members drop in to their schools at different times to check how things are going. This is no longer considered the task of the school director.
**Capacity development:** The capacity development element includes training, provision of resources and mentoring. The start of the project coincided with the decentralization and the New Education Policy issued by the Ministry of Education, which gives considerable power to PTAs. The intention of this capacity development is to contribute towards the decentralization process planned at a national level and for the Woreda population to be more involved in education. This process also requires that all stakeholders, including Woreda administrations, work closely and recognize the authority of the population in their localities. This is a shift from the strictly defined authority and directives passed to schools from administrative bodies. One indication of the achievement of the capacity building element may be that PTAs enter into negotiations with the Woreda administration in order to discuss development issues, such as allocation of additional land or demarcation of school land.

Improved equity and quality of education, especially providing access to girls and other vulnerable groups of children, is an important aspect of capacity development.

Schools are increasingly being involved as central figures in development. For instance, in one of the schools, a Farmer’s Association near the school has promised to transfer large amounts of funds (around 70,000) to the school if the school manages to negotiate for the installation of lighting and water services. This decision was made for two reasons: one reason was that the farmers were convinced that the installation of water and electricity for the school will be easier, rather than asking as individual households. Once the services are installed to the schools it will be easier to get access to the services for households. The second reason is that the school was believed to be a trustworthy establishment where funds are not embezzled.

Advocacy for children’s rights, especially the rights to be protected from harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and abduction are becoming important issues around which PTAs conduct awareness raising programs.

The project requires PTAs to develop their own action plans. The process of planning and implementing the project is seen as empowering. Primarily, channelling resources to the schools was seen by most stakeholders as important stimulation and input to encourage the exercising of transparency and accountability.

The availability of a strong SDC is related with improvement in the quality of education and increased community involvement in schools. The involvement of the SDC is also expected to be a key factor in enhancing the sustainability of the projects.

**Analysis of agency:** Although the project provides a lot of training and a certain level of supervision through SDCs, it does not interfere with the day-to-day activities of the schools. The involvement of the SDCs’ staff, who are from the Woreda administration itself, enhances better working relations between schools and the Woreda administration.

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13 Guidelines are provided by the Ministry of Education concerning the powers and responsibilities of PTAs.
The concept of agency used by the external organization is largely the stimulation of collaborative ventures targeting the improvement of education. As a result, psychological assets such as perception of power and influence in matters relating to education are realized. The project has also resulted in development of organisations which have a common vision for education and increasingly taking more responsibilities.

**Indicators** - Indicators for specific schools are designed by the PTAs during the action plans, thus indicators vary accordingly. However, the following may be considered as major indicators for the project in general:

- Achievement of an improved quality of education and equity in terms of increasing the number of students and especially girls in the schools.
- Better managed schools in terms of participation of children.
- Better educational setups as defined by availability of furniture, school materials, classrooms and other facilities in adequate quantity for the students.
- Evolving of PTAs that are empowered to manage the affairs of their schools.

Beneficiary perceptions of achievements against agreed program objectives vary widely. Some believe that the role of providing basic education is the duty of the government and that beneficiaries should not be required to contribute with finance from their meagre resources. Others are of the opinion that as long as their children are provided with adequate level of education and their children spared from the risks that they encounter while going to schools further from their area of residence, this is a worthwhile effort.

**Sustainability:** Educational support to communities through the BESO-2 project is likely to be sustained after the external input is phased out. The main agents in ensuring sustainability of the processes that are initiated are likely to be the SDCs, who are part of the local education bureau.

The SDCs, through their community mobilization stimulated the creation of a certain level of leadership for children and commitment to issues that are crucial to children such as abduction and early marriage.

There is a strong sense of ownership, control and organization by the PTAs, as opposed to the perception that education is the role of the central government. The project also benefits from the process of decentralization of the educational system that enhanced the participation of communities in education.

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14 In one of the schools visited, there were widespread concerns that once students complete grade eight, they have to travel about 10 kms to attend grades ten and above. This has exposed girls to considerable risk including sexual abuse. It was reported that two girls were killed as a result of being pushed from trucks they boarded.
Case 4

Jijiga Area

Alternative Basic Education Support (*Save the Children*, UK)

Astir Abirke

This educational initiative is very different from the Basic Education System Overhaul programme documented in this collection, because it focuses on a pastoral area. It aims to reverse poor attendance rates and other indicators of low educational attainment. By adapting the education system to the reality of pastoral life, the programme has begun to achieve results. It has had a marked success with girls’ attendance, although their participation in the education system is still below that of boys.
I. Introduction

The Government of Ethiopia and its federal structures are committed to the provision of primary education in order to achieve the goals of Universal Primary Education by 2015. The government formulated an Education Development Sector Programme (ESDP) in 1996 in line with the Millennium Goals. The major concerns of the government's programme are inadequate quality and standard of education, the low participation rate, low internal efficiency and gross inequalities.

As part of the overall decentralisation process that is being followed by Ethiopia, all education systems are also being decentralized and the regions have been given the mandate to plan and manage their own educational systems. One of the main challenges faced is the glaring inequality among the regions. There is a need for greater capacity at regional levels in order to promote the quality and balanced growth of the education system in the country. Somali is one of the most disadvantaged regions of the country in this respect.

Some of the main problems facing the education sector in the Somali Region include lack of access to education and the relevance of the existing education delivery to the reality of the region. Equitable access to education for citizens of the region has been the most pressing issue of all, with not much progress made during the years 1991 to 2000: the average participation rate stands at 14%. The most critical causal fact for this state of affairs is the inadequacy of the formal education system in terms of its flexibility and appropriateness to the livelihood and practices of pastoral and agro–pastoral children. In addition, existing formal schools are mostly confined to urban locations leaving out the vast majority of children, and the curriculum was designed for a sedentary population, not for rural, pastoral, nomadic communities.

With a view to tackling these and related problems of rural pastoral children in the Somali Region, Save the Children UK (SC/UK) jointly with the Regional Education Bureau designed an alternative basic education project in early 2000 that took into consideration the culture and the lifestyle of the Somali pastoralist communities. Moreover, the programme was designed so as to promote teaching and learning processes adapted to the concrete realities and lifestyle of the pastoralist communities. One means of rendering it appropriate was a flexible school calendar, which has positively contributed to increasing the enrolment rate and reducing dropout rate in Alternative Basic Education (ABE) schools. In a similar way, the system has adopted an accommodating timetable, where children are taught at the time of day considered most convenient, as agreed upon by teachers and parents.

II. The Project

SC/UK ran a primary education project between 1995 to 1999 with the aim of improving access to and quality of basic education in the region. The work focussed mainly on formal education in three zones, namely Jijiga, Shinile and Fik. Based on lessons learned from this initial phase of the project, SC/UK recognised that the region faced severe educational problems which could not be solved only through formal education. The Alternative Basic
Education Support, Jijiga Area Program is part of a resultant project run by the NGO in Somali Regional State.

**Aim**

The project aims to improve basic educational services to pastoral and agro-pastoralist children in Jijiga Zone of Somali Regional State, Eastern Ethiopia.

**Specific Objectives**

In order to achieve the aim of the project, Save the Children-UK focussed on a couple of objectives: up-grading the skills of community teachers, developing a curriculum for primary level alternative basic education, improving the school environment, establishing community management systems and promoting access to basic education for girls and pastoral children.

**III. Approaches**

The project utilised a number of strategies in order to ensure the success of the program with impacts that could be sustained. Some of the main ones are highlighted below.

- High participation of the community by **building their capacity** was a key strategy, since at the end of the project these community members are expected to manage the ABE schools.
- Assessing, understanding and utilising **indigenous knowledge** and positive **cultural practices** contributed strongly to the acceptance and thus effective management of the centre by communities and local partners.
- Use of **teachers from the local community** was a key factor in retaining teachers and promoting their commitment and support.
- **Linking** the ABE programme with the existing formal education system was a crucial step, ensuring that students were able to continue their education.
- As a new area of intervention for the NGO and the Children and Regional Education Bureau and because of the impact it was able to register, the pilot project made an important contribution in terms **advocating and thus influencing** existing attitudes and policies, which previously did not favour pastoral and agro pastoral children.

**IV. Critical Factors by the Project**

The project was able to address some very critical factors that had acted as deterrents to the education of pastoral and agro-pastoral children, some of which are highlighted below.

1. **Lengthy travel to access schooling:** The project was able to bring the schools to the communities rather than communities going long distance in search of schools.
2. **Rigidity of the formal school calendar and timetable:** A flexible school calendar and timetable were introduced to make it convenient to all groups of children attending the school and with a view to reducing the dropout rate and absenteeism.
3. Absence of appropriate and relevant curriculum and instructional materials: Relevant and responsive curriculum that takes the lifestyles of pastoralist communities into consideration was developed and implemented.

4. Need to empower communities: Communities were empowered and their ideas and practical knowledge used to influence and improve the project.

5. Teacher retention in remote areas: Recruitment of teachers from within the target community enhanced mutual understanding in the working environment and contributed to facilitated and effective communications.

6. Capacity building: The project was able to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders such as the local government and communities so as to enable them to sustain pastoralist education programs.

7. Education needs and low government ability: Alternative Basic Education is a low–cost and cost–effective mechanism to provide quality and appropriate education.

8. Inability of girls to access education: Efforts were exerted so as to make education more accessible to girls through the ABE schools, by introducing flexible school time and mobilizing communities to send their girl children to school.

9. Weak regional capacity in alternative basic education: At the start of the project, the region had very limited capacity to plan, implement and monitor alternative approaches to basic education. Through the joint implementation, the region's capacity was built in effectively planning and implementing education programmes in general and ABE programmes in particular.

10. Time factor in school construction: In the case of ABE schools, low–cost shelters are constructed which take maximum of two to three months to be ready, unlike the formal education physical infrastructure which takes a minimum of a year to complete construction.

V. Activities

a. Up-grading the skills of ABE School Teachers

Twenty-three teachers were provided with various types of first time and refresher training, so that they could enhance their capacity in the required subject matter, as well as the corresponding participatory teaching methodology that would enable them to effectively implement Alternative Basic Education in ABE schools. In addition, the training equipped them with basic skills in school management, community mobilization, management of student affairs and evaluating and analysing students learning performance.

Upon completion of the three year consecutive training programme on subject areas and participatory teaching methodology, the ABE schoolteachers were awarded with certificates.

In addition to the training provided, common forums and experience sharing visits were organized, where participants shared successful practices and lessons learned, which directly and positively contributed to the betterment of the quality of education. Moreover, better performing schools were selected for sharing their experiences in teaching methodologies, documentation of school record and working strategies with parents and communities. As a result of this programme, teachers were highly motivated and a more conducive working environment was
created for them. This atmosphere has contributed to better performance of teachers in their respective schools.

Subsequent to the three years’ refresher training programmes, the teachers improved their knowledge and practice in teaching methodologies, including classroom management, active learning and subject matters. Supervision findings indicated that there have been improvements in many areas that include, among others, increased levels of awareness on all aspects of education, confidence building, attention to students’ performance through continuous assessment and mobilisation of communities.

Generally speaking, ABE teachers were the major actors in sustaining the programme whilst participation and involvement of the community increased gradually. In line with this, the project invested in the development of teachers’ professional achievement and improving their attitudes. The project was able to prove that local teachers with low levels of education can be trained and can do an effective job of providing quality education to children in remote areas.

b. Curriculum development

The lack of relevant and appropriate teaching materials and curriculum has been one of the major contributing factors towards the low enrolment and high dropout rate of pastoral children.

SC/UK jointly with the REB, organized training programmes for curriculum developers and editors, that in turn have been selected by the Regional Education Bureau to develop more relevant and appropriate curricula for alternative basic education targeted at pastoral and agro pastoral children. In the training sessions, a lot of emphasis was placed on writing, editing, reviewing and evaluating curricular materials.

The ABE curriculum was developed in three stages, where each level was tested for a year and then reviewed in order to continually improve and enrich the materials and process. To complement these efforts, different workshops were conducted to review the ABE curriculum with the aim of assessing the strengths and limitations of the curriculum in terms of its quality and relevance to the context of the pastoral and agro pastoral environment, community needs and cultural context of the specific region. A multi-stakeholder review team examined the four areas for their quality, relevance of the contents and illustrations, consistency and whether they corresponded with student’s age and mental capacity, consistency with the syllabus, terminology appropriateness, clarity of the materials, etc. In addition to the curriculum, other supplementary reading materials in the vernacular language that were culturally, social and politically appropriate were prepared and distributed to schools. Students were also encouraged to write short stories, poems, and puzzles to enhance their creative expression.

c. Community Management

The main strategy for sustaining alternative basic education is through the community. For this it is important to develop the community’s sense of ownership, so they can manage these schools after the project has ended.
The project, through the community, selected seven to ten community members for the School Management Committee, to represent education and be able to manage schools. In each School Management Committee, there are two female members. The number of these School Management Committee members varies according to the needs and wishes of the communities that select them, in some cases going as high as 15 to incorporate more representation of target beneficiaries.

Building the awareness and the capacity of the community up to a level such that they were able to contribute fruitfully was a time–consuming and a challenging task. Nonetheless, because communities are central to this alternative approach to education, various strategies were employed, amongst which were sensitisation workshops, experience sharing visits and training on roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, interactive events like parents’ day celebrations were organised in each of the eight ABE schools as part of community sensitisation.

As a result, significant growth has been registered in most of the ABE schools with an increase in their attendance level and minimization of the drop–out rate. Furthermore, parents have actively encouraged their children to attend schools and have also provided support to the teachers.

As a direct result of the extensive sensitisation work undertaken, the communities were able to support various activities including renovation of formal schools and construction of low–cost classrooms for ABE schools. They also play an active role in the monitoring and management of the day-to-day school activities. It can thus be concluded that community schools are run much better than the government–owned schools because of the various roles they play.

The sensitisation workshops also facilitated the achievement of programme goals and convinced the communities to provide material support towards the sustainability and institutionalisation of the program.

d. Support to Educational Planners and Supervisors

Nine educational supervisors and planners were selected and trained on basic school supervision so as to assist the implementation of alternative basic education.

To strengthen the performance of the supervisors, a joint team composed of both Save the Children and representatives from different level education offices supervised the schools during the project period. This developed their capacity to undertake school supervision and give the necessary technical support for the different members of the schools.

These supervisors undertake frequent supervision of schools and facilitate the understanding of various challenges and identification of corrective measures towards improving educational activities. They also mobilise the community for similar supervisory support activities.

e. **Improving School Environment**
One of the comparative advantages of alternative basic education centres is that it is appropriate and possible to construct low-cost shelters to serve as schools for alternative basic education. These are very cost effective particularly when compared to formal public school buildings, which require a substantial amount of capital. In fact, the amount of money needed to construct one formal school can be used to construct 10 low-cost alternative basic education shelters, which is as beneficial, if not more, in terms of meeting the basic education needs of the community.

Furthermore, the type of shelter built has made it easier for communities to participate in its construction and maintenance in the future because it is made from locally available materials. It has also had the effect of changing the perceptions of the community, that the only means to provide quality education is through high cost and complex buildings.

The project has supported the supply of basic education materials necessary for running the schools. The materials help the schools to improve the quality of education delivered to the children. It has also motivated parents to send their children to school and teachers to undertake the teaching process in a highly facilitated manner. Besides this, it has developed the responsiveness of schools to children’s needs and interests in education, which in turn increases their learning capacity.

VI. Major Indicators

Access to Education

Annual average growth of enrolment in the alternative basic education schools is 13.5% whereas that of formal education in the region is only 2%. To date the total number of students that have benefited from this project stand at 1591.

357 students have completed the ABE cycle, out of which, 102 (89 boys & 13 girls) have joined and continued their education within a formal education school. This is about 29% of the total number of students who completed the programme. There are a lot of factors that affected the linkage, which is being closely followed up in order to jointly discuss and arrive at a more beneficial and sustainable solution.

Girls’ enrolment in education is very low in the nation as a whole and markedly so in the case of Somali Region and, by extension, Jijiga. The enrolment of girls has been increasing from year to year. This shows that girls’ attendance has been increasing at a rate faster than that of boys, although the number of boys has always been greater than girls in this particular case. Therefore, this effort made by different school communities is a very encouraging phenomenon that has a lot of potential for scale-up.

Gender Equity in Education

The project has tried to put a lot of effort into increasing the enrolment and retention of girl students in the alternative basic education centres, which has shown tremendous success. However, in spite of this encouraging trend, there is a lot of disparity in the ratio of boys to girls – a glaring inequity in
providing education. As it stands now the number of girls attending ABE schools is below half of that of the number of boys.

Efficiency

The indicator of efficiency in education can be accounted for in a number of ways. Some of the main ones are stated as follows.

Drop out

The proportion of dropouts was high in the first year of the project and then in subsequent years showed a decreasing trend. The drop out rate decreased from 24% in the first year to 5.5% during the 4th year thus indicating that a lot of effort was made to make the system more efficient and retain students. A significant number of children suddenly dropped out during 2002/2003 because of the severe drought that occurred. Girls' drop out percentage was higher than that of boys, but has been showing a decreasing trend during the project period. All this points to the fact that concerted efforts are still needed to combat the effects of both manmade and natural disasters.

Pupil Teacher Ratio

This ratio is one that is used to assess the efficiency of educational services. It is a qualitative indicator which points to the fact that a teacher should have a manageable number of children in the classroom and should not be overloaded. This has a lot of benefits, including that it would make following up students' progress much easier. It would also help the teacher accommodate different learning abilities and pace studies in a creative and participatory manner.

The pupil teacher ratio in the 8 ABE schools is 1234/33 which is one teacher for 37 students. The national average is one teacher for 50 students. Therefore, relatively speaking, there is no shortage of teachers in the ABE schools.

VII. Lessons Learned

In implementing this project, there were many experiences gathered. The most significant have been highlighted as main lessons learned.

1. When there is meaningful participation and involvement of communities in community service management, it directly contributes to enhancing their level of commitment and sense of ownership.
2. By engaging the local governance structures in the whole design and implementation of the project, the local administration, that previously had never been involved in education activities, has come to be conversant on educational issues and is now allocating resources to the non-formal centres for teachers' salaries.
3. One major lesson learned has been that locally recruited teachers can be trained to become effective teachers. This can be achieved through continuous short courses based on identified gaps during supervision and experience sharing forums among the teachers.
4. The multi-stakeholder involvement of community members, teachers, students and subject specialists in curriculum development and its review has made an important contribution to the relevance and quality of the materials.

5. Adjustment of the academic calendar and school timetables to fit the specific life style and pattern of communities has been one of the most, if not the single most important factor for the high participation of students in the ABE schools, particularly that of girls.

6. The project has shown that the relationship between schools and community is a factor that can promote or hinder the ability and willingness of children to attend. In this case it was clearly shown that if schools are brought closer to the community, children are interested and able to attend school.

7. The involvement and level of participation of women in school management as members of school committees assists in their ability to closely monitor girls’ attendance and performance and also in confidence building.

8. As opposed to the physical construction of the formal schools, the project has shown that low–cost shelters can be constructed within 2-3 months and be ready to efficiently meet community’s needs.

9. Lastly, involving different and relevant stakeholders in the project planning, implementation and review has significantly increased their capacity and confidence to plan and implement similar programmes in the future.
Persons Interviewed

Elizabeth Mekonnen  SC-UK Head Office
Mohammud Mohammed SC-UK       Jijiga Office

Reference Materials

1. SC-UK, July 2002, Review of the Alternative Basic Education Project in Somali Region
3. Save the Children's Experience in Alternative Basic Education in Ethiopia, 2002: Learning for Life
This unusual initiative is an entirely local experiment to set up an alternative society which fits local culture but tries to improve on it. It has clearly captured the imagination of many people in Ethiopia. It is also an interesting case as it shows the failure of some of the external inputs directed at it. Despite the strong leadership and culture of the community, these were insufficient to protect it from poorly thought out external development programmes. Indeed Awra Amba flourished despite these programmes, rather than because of them.
1. Introduction

The majority of the over 16.5 million people living in the Amhara Regional State are Amhara nationals who are known for their conservative attitude with regard to traditions. The people of the Amhara nation are living intact with their religious, social and cultural practices that have been transmitted over many generations. These cultural, religious and social practices have become tourist attractions along with the natural endowments and historical attractions of the state. However, it has been argued that some of traditional practices have negative impacts on the economy of the people since they take up a lot of time and money that could be used to improve the lives of the people.

It is also argued by many that these practices have positive points in that they strengthen the feeling of brotherhood among the people, encourage the habit of helping each other and give people the chance to get together and exchange views, amongst others. It is common among the Amhara nation to hold feasts for various occasions, such as religious festivals, weddings and baptisms as well as during periods of mourning.

A different ‘community’ which has its own principles and value systems has emerged in one of the woredas in Amhara region. The objective of this report is to assess the empowerment of the Awra Amba community and its achievements and challenges.

2. Establishment and Location of Awra Amba Community

The Awra Amba community was established in 1980 with the aim of solving common socio-economic problems by working together and helping each other. Awra Amba is located in south Gondar Zone, Fogera Woreda\(^{15}\) some 73 kms East of Bahir Dar, the seat of the Amhara National Government. According to the information obtained during the discussion with members of the community, there were only 19 households in the community at the initial stage. The membership has now increased to 90 households with a total population of 343 people in the community.

The chairman of the development committee, who does not want to be called a chairman but a member of the community, had made efforts in convincing people to follow the principles of equality, humanity, honesty and integrity in their livelihoods. In 1980, most of the Awra Amba community members were convinced and started practicing the unique lifestyle. Earlier, most of the Awra Amba community members were followers of Islam, with some Orthodox Christians. However, the residents of Awra Amba have argued that, “What else God does want us to do if not fulfill all humanitarian deeds?” The Awra Amba community gave up religious practices with a view of making use of the time they might consume (waste) fulfilling these expectations in order to carry out developmental activities.

Although the Awra Amba people instigated this communal culture prior to the Derg\(^{16}\) regime, the Derg forcibly changed it into a cooperative. Despite this fact, the community has been able to retain its principles and ways of life. Towards the end of the previous regime in Ethiopia, the chairman of the community migrated to Southern Ethiopia because of unrest and security problems. Interestingly enough, most of the

\(^{15}\) A Woreda is equivalent to a district.

\(^{16}\) Derg refers to the group of military men who ruled the country between 1974 – 1991.
members of the community followed and lived temporarily in Bonga woreda of Southern Ethiopia – this incident indicated the commitment of the community to the new lifestyle. In 1982, they returned to their village as peace and stability had been restored in the country, and in particular in the area. Unfortunately, however, the land of the community had been distributed to other farmers. The local governments (the regional and woreda) took some land back from the farmers and allocated about 17.5 hectares to the Awra Amba community, to be used for housing construction and some cultivation.

3. Engagement

The Awra Amba community area is one of the food insecure areas of the Amhara region. Moreover, the available cultivable land is not sufficient for the community members. Therefore, although agriculture is one of the means of livelihood, the community members are striving to diversify their sources of livelihood and they have made great efforts to get alternative means of subsistence by engaging themselves in handicrafts. Their major off-farm activity is weaving, using both traditional and modern weaving machines. They also strive to generate additional income from the three grinding mills which were provided by Regional Micro and Small Scale Enterprise Development Agency (REMSEDA).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The community development fund</th>
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<td>The leader of the community stated that Awra Amba weavers are not beggars, and there is no entrance fee to the community. However, he explained that they would welcome contributions to the community development fund, which will help them to improve living conditions and support the future of the village. Currently, they are saving to improve the sanitary conditions of the village, the water supply and irrigation and the road. They would also like to establish a small fund for medical emergencies and an education fund for the children.</td>
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4. Structure of the Community

The unique administrative system of Awra Amba people is organized under nine sub-committees. There is an overall development committee, the chairperson of which is the leader of the community. There are sub-committees for specific purposes, such as, education, for keeping lost and found belongings, for receiving guests, taking care of patients, elderly and children, community health, curbing individual and community problems and for agriculture. The members of the committee and sub-committees consist of men and women and are elected by the community members.

The members call the system a development structure of the community. The development committee coordinates the various activities of the sub-committees. The structure as a whole is illustrated below. The broken lines between sub-committees indicate that the sub-committees have equal status, operate in harmony and share information. There is also a strong link between the sub-committees and the community at large. If there are problems in the operations of the different sub-committees, the problem identification and solving sub-committee consults and discusses with the respective sub-committees.

The education sub-committee has been following up the adult and child education matters. The community has established a literacy campaign for adults and almost all
the members can read and write. They have also established a library, a service centre for the elderly, and a pre-school for the children. When children reach school age, they are sent to a school in Woreta which is about 13 kms away.

In 1989, the community developed its own memorandum of understanding, without any external assistance. The community members who can read and write prepared the document in a participatory fashion – members actively participated in articulating the memorandum of understanding and the major issues, especially their principles, were incorporated. However, the members who participated in the focus group discussion reported that the memorandum of understanding is not as good as it could be and they wish to have a better one in the future.
Structure of the Awramba Community

- Development Committee
- Problem identification sub-committee
- Elderly sub-committee
- Planning sub-committee
- Lost and Found sub-committee
- Reception sub-committee
- Hygiene sub-committee
- Security sub-committee
- Education sub-committee
- Mothers help sub-committee

Community
5. Principles and Values

The researcher visited the community and conducted a focus group discussion with five members of the community, including the chairperson, youth and a woman. It was interesting to learn that the participation level of the different community members was very high despite age and sex difference among them. The community has developed principle that all are equal in the community and expressions of feelings and opinions are allowed.

The principles of the community include the following:

- Equality including gender
- Self-help
- Honesty
- Transparency
- Work loving

The chairperson explained, “First of all we asked ourselves what the most valuable thing on earth is and we found that it is man. Then we interrogate what we should do for man and decided to ensure his well being while living, encouraging consideration and help for one another.” He went on to say that they denounced in their statute stealing, provocation and telling lies. It was on these conventions that they identified development as their main agenda, according to him.

He noted that “it is showing consideration to and helping one another that we call religion,” said an elderly, adding, “These are the teachings of Christianity as well as Islam.” The man did not deny that they were denounced for refraining from going to mosques and fasting. However, he said that the community had abandoned these practices owing to the understanding that priority should be given to day-to–day activities. The leader of the community emphasized that the community is not totally against religions, but the practices associated with religion should not be barriers to development.

Members of Awra Amba community do not practice clearly recognized religions. But they appreciate good things such as loyalty, sympathy, good ethics and working disciplines, moral value, taking risks and sharing problems, equal treatment of members and fair distribution of production, maintaining peace, social security and other useful life principles.

They do not waste their time and resources in preparing banquets for weddings, funerals and other cultural and religious ceremonies. They seriously condemn social disorder such as theft, corruption, illiteracy, telling lies, quarrelling, gender difference, and other aggressive behaviour and reflection of backward culture.

The community lives and works together in a confined area of land. They construct uniquely designed huts and make special household utensils utilizing materials available in their locality. They developed rules and regulations by which each member of the community is governed. They also formed 12 committees with different duties and responsibilities.

Women and children are allowed to work in both productive and reproductive activities. They plan their work daily, weekly, monthly and annually. Discussion is
their conflict resolution mechanism. Their decision-making approach is participatory. They are involved in afforestation for environmental protection within the community.

All members are capable of reading and writing and calculating arithmetic at rudimentary level. Children above three should be sent to kindergarten for their basic education. They have a school with one class, and a library equipped with textbooks (grade 1-5) borrowed from nearby educational institutions.

6. Division of Labour and Culture

The Awra Amba women can engage in cultivating, in weaving and in producing industrial goods and participating in different responsibilities. The men participate as well in fetching water, caring for children, in threading cotton and collecting firewood, activities which in most other parts of country are left up to women.

The women said that they have equal rights. As one of the women said, “Our men do not oppress us and we have established a tradition of correcting one another’s mistakes through discussions.” Unlike in other communities, the Awra Amba women are given three months maternity leave. With regard to this, Wiro Enani Kibret, who is the wife of the chairperson, explained that the community assigns individuals who will take care of the women during maternity and menstruation leave. “We used to watch over them for ten days from the time they gave birth which, of course we have now given up and we have not faced any problems in relation to abstaining from watching over women in child bed,”.

The people have different ways of conducting marriages as compared to marriage performances of nearby communities, as well as in most rural parts of the country. Early marriage is practiced in Amhara State whereas, Awra Amba has banned early marriage, having decided that girls should marry when they reach 18 and above while boys are married at and above 22 years of age. It is not by holding feasts that they celebrate marriage in the locality but through a simple cultural wedding ceremony.

The other admirable aspect in this regard is that marriage is arranged with the full consent of the bride and the bridegroom. A newly wed couple told a national TV reporter that parents do not choose their children’s spouses The community of Awra Amba attribute the fact that divorce is not common in the area because they arrange marriage with the full consent of the spouses, who, most of the time, conduct a thorough investigation of one another’s behaviour.

The Awra Amba community has a unique style of housing. Although they look very ordinary from the outside, inside they are quite special. The houses are made so as to be easily partitioned and suitable for cleaning and decoration. Their beds, stools, shelves and the like are made up of mud, bricks and wood. Their kitchens are also modern. Speaking of their kitchen, a woman said that it saves fuel and protects their skin from being exposed to the flame and regulates heat.
7. External Assistance

Because of the unique life style and hard work of the Awra Amba community, some NGOs and governmental organizations are showing interest to assist the community. The Awra Amba community members strongly believe that hard work and self-help are among their principles and they do not expect external assistance. However, recurrent drought in the woreda has affected the community like many others in the food insecure woredas of the Amhara region. Thus, the Disaster Preparedness and Preventions Bureau (DPPB) had provided them with food aid for immediate help. Although there are some governmental and NGO efforts to assist food insecure communities, there have not yet been any structured development projects or programs with objectives and strategies for the Awra Amba community. However, some governmental and non-governmental organizations have assisted the community in various ways as indicated below:

- The Finish International Development Agency (FINNIDA) has provided them with vocational skills training in producing firewood saving stoves.
- The Amhara Development Association (ADA) has provided them with three grinding mills which are providing services for the surrounding communities.
- The Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund (ESRDF) constructed a house as a shade for weaving.
- Three improved weaving machines and improved looms were provided by REMSEDA
- Amhara REMSEDA facilitated a two-month vocational-weaving and spinning skill training for 27 members of the community in collaboration with FEMSEDA.
- A seven-day management skill training was given to 5 selected members of the community by Amhara ReMSEDA.
- The Bureau of agriculture provided beehives on credit
- The bureau of agriculture has distributed goats on credit for women
- DPPB distributed oxen on credit

8. External Assistance and Empowerment

The reflections of the community members on the assistance are given below:

- The training programs, provision of modern weaving machines and improved looms as well as the shade for the weaving were highly appreciated by the community since these inputs were based on the needs and priorities of the community. These inputs are contributing to the economic empowerment of the community.

- With the introduction of modern weaving machines and improved looms, they have been able to produce materials with better quality. However, they could not get better prices for improved quality at the local markets; and the community is not empowered on how to access better markets for their products.
• The beehives were provided without consulting with the community and without appropriate technology and as a result, the bees flew away.

• The oxen were provided without taking into account the fact that the community members do not have land to cultivate. The community could not sell them because they were on credit and all the oxen died as reported by the focus group discussants.

• Goats for women were distributed on a credit basis and although the community demanded to participate in the purchase of the stocks at local markets, the bureau of agriculture bought the goats and distributed them. As a result, they received stocks that were affected by livestock diseases, all of them died and the women did not benefit.

The failures of most of the external assistance were related to the fact that the beneficiaries were not consulted and their needs and priorities were not identified in a participatory fashion. Now, the beneficiaries are highly indebted and are reluctant to accept any inputs on a credit basis. This situation is very serious since NGOs and GOs provide assistance to communities on a credit basis, not for free.

9. Conclusions

The experience of the Awra Amba community can be defined as ‘agency with some opportunities’ as the community took several initiatives by itself. The community started with 10 people and the membership has now increased to 343, due to inter-marriage with other communities and conviction of others about the principles and values of the Awra Amba community. The community has its own bylaws and principles of lifestyle and has impressed the local government and institutions. The Awra Amba community has managed to practice its principles and value systems in the culturally and religiously conservative part of the country. The community is within a resource-poor woreda, which means it is almost impossible to diversify livelihoods and manifest the comparative advantage of its principles and value systems. Despite all this, the attitude of the neighbouring communities has been positively changing – thrust, equality and hard work are the identities of the community which have attracted the interests of its neighbours.

The Amhara regional government appreciates the values and principles of the Awra Amba community and has expressed its determination to protect it and even replicate the principles to other communities where possible. The main principles of the community include honesty, hard work, integrity and transparency, humanity and equality which are geared towards development. The community avoids any cultural and religious barriers that affect the above principles and value systems. The community has developed its own memorandum of understanding without external inputs, has established a library, service centre for the elderly, adult education centre and a pre-school centre for their children.

The community has performed tremendous tasks in the conservative society of the Amhara region although, with its different principles and values, it has been isolated and not recognized by other communities. Recently, Awra Amba has been getting recognition from neighbouring communities as it has proven its strong and valuable principles in terms of providing services, and the relationship within the community itself. The community has grinding mills and is providing services to the adjacent communities as a result of which they have built up a good reputation their honesty.
and hard work. The adjacent communities are requesting the Awra Amba to provide more services such as grain banking, and this is now under discussion.

In recent years, some NGOs and government organizations have begun to show an interest in assisting the community and some assistance has been given. However, while a few of the external interventions have contributed to the empowerment of the community, most of them have had adverse impact on the economical empowerment of the community. The failure of the interventions was caused by lack of community participation and the interventions were not based on the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. For instance, the community does not have sufficient land for cultivation, but the Disaster Preparedness and Preventions Bureau (DPPB) distributed oxen on credit – now the community is indebted for oxen and other such interventions and has rejected any developed orientated credit facilities which are bad for the economic empowerment of the community.

The community has already shown great initiative and it is possible, were there more opportunities, that levels of empowerment could increase further. However, there is a concern among some government officials that external assistance might result in dependency syndrome and destroy the community value systems. However, the chair of the community strongly expressed the opinion that the value system of the community would not change at all as a result of external assistances.

It should be noted that attitudinal change is the major element of empowerment in the Awra Amba community – the members are committed to the values and principles of the community. Therefore, in order to replicate the empowerment process of the community to other communities, attitudinal change should come first, which requires a lot of effort on the part of various stakeholders.
10. Annex: Methodology of the Case Study

The researcher has discussions with various governmental and non-governmental organizations in Addis Ababa and in Amhara national regional state who are knowledgeable about the Awra Amba community. In particular, the researcher contacted the REMSEDA, ESRDF, Bureau of Trade and Industry and Bureau of Agriculture. In addition, focus group discussions were held with the Awra Amba community members including men, women and young people.
This is an example of a complex initiative that is based on the use of traditional governance systems (Gada), linked to community needs and to the local Ministry. The case study documents an attempt to use this linkages as a way of improving natural resource management in a forest area.
List of Acronyms

BCFMP - Borena Collaborative Forest Management Project
CDF  - Community Development Fund
DFID  - Department for International Development
DoANR - Department of Agriculture and Natural Resource
EPRDF - Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU    - European Union
FUGs  - Forest Use Groups
JEFB  - Jarso Eja Fina Bada (traditional forest management institute)
MoFA  - Ministry of Federal Affairs
NGO  - Non-governmental Organization
NRM  - Natural Resources Management
PFM  - Participatory Forest Management
PTD  - Participatory technical development
PIM  - Participatory Impact Monitoring
SNNPR - Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region

Definitions of Local Terms

*Ganna* - Main rainy season in Borena (March – May)
*Gedaa* - A generation class that assumed political and religious responsibilities for an eight-year term of office.
*Magaya* - Short rainy season (September – October)
*Medda* - Locations where pastoralists settle and named after a permanent water source
*Olla*   - Village
*Woreda* - District
1. Background
1.1. Pastoralism in Ethiopia

Pastoralism is one of the oldest socio-economic systems in Ethiopia. For pastoralists, livestock husbandry in open grazing areas represents their major means of subsistence. Pastoralists occupy 60% of the territory and constitute about 12% of the total population of the country. There are about 29 different ethnic groups belonging to the Kushetic and Nilotic groups. The majority of the pastoralists are the Borena Oromo, Somali and the Afar. There are also other ethnic groups living in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ (SNNP) region, in the eastern, western and the northwestern part of the country. Livestock herds have been estimated at 27 million cattle, 24 million sheep, 18 million goats and 1 million camels. Pastoralists produce about 42% of the total livestock population of the country.

Pastoralists in the past have depended heavily on livestock and livestock products for their livelihoods with seasonal small-scale cereal production. Thus, some Ethiopian pastoralists in one way or another are engaged in both livestock and crop production. Crop production is an emerging system supported by government extension agents. Such expansion of cropping, in recent years is considered to compete with livestock husbandry. Traditional bottomland grazing areas are used for growing maize and other crops. As a result of this situation, grazing resources are shrinking. In Borena, for example, non-pastoral groups from other areas cultivate even the wet grazing areas. As a result, livestock are forced into a smaller given area, and this is causing overgrazing. This situation has led to land degradation or change in vegetation cover from grassland to woody vegetation.

In order to cope with this vegetation change, Borena pastoralists are increasingly changing from cattle to camel husbandry. This is because camels are good milk producers even in a period of drought and are used to transport water and food aid in times of crises.

Pastoralists are among the neglected segments of the population in the Horn of Africa and in Ethiopia in particular. Development policies and programs in Ethiopia have ignored pastoral systems despite the fact that they contribute to the country’s economy. This is mainly because the policy makers do not have enough knowledge about the system as they do not have a pastoral background - their views and perceptions have been highland biased. It is argued that lack of representation and participation of the pastoralists in policy making is partly the cause for their marginalisation.

Some positive changes towards pastoralism have been taking place in Ethiopia since the early 1990s - the policy of the EPRDF favours the marginalized groups of the country, including the pastoralists. Accordingly, a super ministry, Ministry of Federal Affairs (MoFA), has been established which deals with the emerging regions, and mainly the pastoral regions. Government development policies and strategies are also being pastoral sensitive. The MoFA has also developed a pastoral development policy, which is in fact under discussion. Pastoral community based development
projects are also being promoted by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

This paper is concerned with the one of the pastoral communities in Ethiopia, Borena zone of the Oromiya region and it attempts to explore how pastoral community empowerment is taking place through a forest management project implemented by SOS Sahel.

1.2. Location

Borena zone is one of the 13 zones of Oromiya regional state in Ethiopia, located at the southern edge of the country. The Borena zone has thirteen districts or woredas. The altitude of Borena is 1500 metres above sea level in the north, dropping to about 1000 metres near the Kenya border in the south. The zone is divided between two agro-ecological zones – the semi-arid lowlands to the south and the more humid lands at higher altitudes to the north. The average annual rainfall is 600 mm and is bimodally distributed.

The Borena speak the Oromigna language which is the official language of the Oromiya regional state and they practice the gadda system and not Christianity or Islam. The agro-pastoral Guji Oromo clans (and pockets of migrant Gedeo communities) dominate the northern woreda of Galana Abbaya, Oddo, Shakkiso, Bore, Hagermariam, Uraga, Adola and Wadera. The natural vegetation in these districts consists of relatively dense forest and interspersed grassland.

Within the Borena zone, the Borena are the demographically dominant ethnic group. They inhabit the Borena lowlands to the south where there are six woredas in the Borena lowlands (Liben, Arero, Yabelo, Talteli, Dire and Moyale) and extend across the border into northern Kenya.

The southern area of Borena is the focus of the SOS Sahel project. The annual rainfall of the area is less then 600mm per annum and surface evaporation is high. There are two rainy seasons: the main season, ganna (March – May) and minor season, magaya (September – October). The land is largely covered with light vegetation of predominantly pod-yielding Acacia of low forage value. The ecological conditions favour pastoralism more than farming.

1.3. Engagement of the People

The Borena are primarily livestock husbanders and are also engaged in some cropping activities. They identify themselves with meddas which are generally associated with specific social groupings. They live in meddas and stay up to 8 years in the same localities. A medda consists of an average of 35 ollas (villages) with each olla having an average of 10 households. The average household size is 5 people.

Cattle were and continue to be the primary focus of the Borena pastoralism, although browsing animals (camels and small ruminants) are increasingly kept within diversified herds. This change is principally a reflection of recent changes in range ecology, which has affected fodder type and availability. In addition to pastoralism, some Borena are also engaged in agro-pastoralism, practicing some cultivation on river banks. The average livestock holding is estimated at 15 cattle and 6 small ruminants. Camels are owned only by some households in the area.
Movement of animals for pasture and water is the common characteristic in the study area. For instance, previous aerial survey results show that during the wet seasons, average densities of livestock per square metre are 20-95 cattle, 6.6 small ruminants and 0.84 other livestock including camels. These densities drop down during the dry season when the animals disperse for better pasture and water.

2. The objective of the project

The collaborative forest management project started in 1999 and has been jointly funded by European Union (EU), DfID and Comic Relief. The project aims at achieving environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation through supporting the development of innovative participatory forest management plans that secure the rights, revenues and responsibilities of the forest users in Borena zone.

3. Direct Beneficiaries

In Borena, there are different groups with which SOS Sahel works: pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, cultivator and urban/peri-urban poor. The total number of direct beneficiaries is estimated at 109,844. In addition, 17 villages that surround the forest (an estimated population of 66,000) are expected to benefit from a sustainable flow of forest products and water for small-scale irrigated crop production and domestic use. The total direct beneficiaries are therefore estimated at 234,844 people.

4. Project Rationale

The forest management project was intended to address issues of declining capital assets, specifically social capital and social responsibility, caused by the erosion of people’s institutions, rights and roles in self-governance and decision-making, and consequent local resource management capacity. The Borena pastoralists and other ethnic groups of the Borena area are experiencing growing livelihood vulnerability and rising levels of poverty. Much of the situation is catalysed by social and political exclusion of these groups and undermining of their traditional institutions and local management systems. These factors, in turn, result in reduced intra-group social cohesion and increased inter-group conflict and competition.

The major problem is the ignorance of the policy-makers and replacement of the roles and responsibilities of local level institutions by local governance. The impact of this is a shift in control over resource ownership and use, and the disabling of communities in their pursuit of sustainable livelihoods, resulting in uncontrolled and unsustainable levels of resource exploitation. Examples include; a break down in traditional grazing management systems; increasing conflicts over water; uncontrolled forest clearance and conversion of pasture to cultivated land. The current situation, with no planning or co-ordination mechanisms (those imposed by government and external development having all but completely failed), is one of rapid resource degradation and increasing human destitution. Without urgent action to re-develop and re-institute systems of self-governance and local level management (particularly of natural resources), the poverty spiral will deepen, and the critical livelihood opportunities that revolve around self-management for pastoralists will be lost. Developing and promoting new systems of shared common property management through revitalized traditional institutions and local management systems is an appropriate way of addressing these problems. These issues represent crucial changes occurring in pastoralist societies and will determine the future of pastoralist resource management systems. Both livelihood and
environmental sustainability rely on appropriate governance and management systems being in place.

5. Approach

The collaborative forest management project has a community empowerment component. Accordingly, the opinions and views of the local communities are the basis for the planning and implementation of the project. Borena local communities, Elders and Gada representatives have identified the undermining of their traditional institutions and resource management systems as central to the problems of diminishing livelihoods. Demands that development interventions be based around existing local governance structures have been all but ignored until now, despite support and recommendations from research and development over the past decade.

The fact that past interventions in pastoral areas have predominantly ignored local structures and systems is increasingly recognized as a core reason for the limited impact of development in pastoralist areas. During SOS Sahel's relief and rehabilitation work in 2000-2001, the opportunity was taken to investigate strategies for development with key stakeholders at the local level. During this work, which was carried out with government departments, the role of the community, not only in terms of their participation, but also, in recognition of the structure and function of their social systems, was continually put forward as the key to improved development practice in Borena. Given a voice in these initial interactions, community groups are demanding to be heard, their views respected and their roles as development partners accepted. Community interaction and demand, as well as analysis of development issues and literature have, therefore, shaped this initiative.

6. Project Activities

The major activities of the project are the following:

- Promote local resource management and decision-making system, fostering a wider understanding and appreciation of their capacity and potential through awareness raising activities like mobile pastoralist exhibitions, targeting urban centres i.e. zonal/Woreda seats of power.

- Build the capacity of key pastoralist institutions with particular focus on strengthening traditional natural resource management institutions and systems, through institutional analysis, participatory field work, local level workshops, and strengthening links and information flows between groups and associations.

- Facilitate the negotiation of rights, responsibilities, relationships and revenues within and between the pastoralist communities and different ethnic groups. This will involve the facilitation of community-based
negotiations between different user groups for shared resource management and management planning that targets forest resources. Participatory fieldwork will involve resource assessments and resource sharing/decision-making.

- Facilitate the establishment of a governance partnership between the Gada and the zonal Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DoANR) by promoting dialogue, organizing meetings and setting up joint working groups to co-ordinate new Natural Resource Management (NRM) systems development. This will include capacity building and support to both parties in conflict management and mediation, participatory fieldwork, participatory land-use planning, and holding governance meetings.

- Promote equitable community level management over resources, including recognition of women's roles in decision-making and NRM, through participatory field work investigating relationship and equity issues; supporting women's sub-group formation and assimilating their skills, knowledge and experience in decision-making processes.

- Promote pro-active management of pastoral civil society change by pastoralist groups themselves. Traditional institutions will be facilitated to conduct pastoralist transition impact analysis and action planning, including land ownership/use mapping exercises and knowledge and information work e.g. “Know your Rights extension”. Exchange visits will be undertaken within Ethiopia (Afar, Kereyou, Nuer, Hamar).

- Support the establishment of functional resource based conflict management systems and practice through facilitation of participatory conflict analysis and resolution. Participatory fieldwork will be carried out to ensure focus on traditional institution role building and community/government partnership in conflict management.

- Promote institutional development through the establishment, capacity building and support of Forest Resource User Groups (FUGs). This will include guidance in group formation, dynamics and functioning, skills training in communications and management, participatory fieldwork, institutional development, and self-mobilised development and enterprise.

- Improve terms of trade by legalizing forest goods through the establishment of local level forest product certification systems. This
will involve the facilitation of the development of community based legislation to manage and control resource-use flow and develop local labelling and monitoring systems.

- Support the establishment of participatory impact monitoring systems (PIM) that enable communities to monitor impact and change in relations to this and other development initiatives and actions. This will involve the identification and ongoing monitoring of community indicators, through local level workshops and participatory fieldwork.

7. Gender Equity

Gender inequality is one of the problems in the study area. Therefore, gender roles and issues (practical and strategic) have been carefully considered in the design of the collaborative forest management project. Gender issues, roles and positions in Borena are, as in many pastoral societies, highly defined. They represent a central pillar of the cultural dynamics of Borena communities. Men have clearly recognized single-productive and management roles, while women have less recognized multi-productive, domestic and reproductive roles. It is therefore important to understand the impacts of interventions in terms of their gender implications. This is partly because of the need to target inequality in current gender roles, as a key constraint to equitable development. Furthermore, within the current development context, pastoral societies are in a state of transition. This transition seems to have a mainly negative impact, and this can be linked to its perceived uncontrollable nature. Managing societal change is of great importance in the determination of future community potential and capacity in development.

The challenge is to enable pastoralists themselves to guide the change process, rather than allowing it to wash over them. Shaping gender development is a critical part of pastoral society transition. In strengthening the Gada and associated traditional institutions the project will initially engage with a mainly male group. The project will promote gender equality and understanding, as a valid and relevant part of any new governance/management system, and will impact on strategic gender needs such as women’s rights to common property and women’s roles in decision-making. This will be done with the formation of women’s sub-committees within forest management groups (as key users of forest resources).

Conservatism was confronted through the activities of the project and gender issues will be used as a key example of the need to shape internal change. In understanding the conservative resistance to societal change from certain quarters of pastoralist society (particularly change that is perceived as coming, at least in part, from outside) gender issues will be approached from a needs, rather than power, basis (World Neighbors 2000). By this we mean that issues of gender equality will be raised and resolved by enabling dialogue and understanding between social sub-groups. Facilitated review of gender roles will be based on participatory tools that enable analysis of the logic of better communication, shared workloads and consensus decision-making. The training program conducted in the study area below shows the male and female ratios of trainees. Females constitute 22% of the total
number of trainees which is a good start and encouraging in pastoral production system.

### Community/Partners Trainings and Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTD</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63 (partners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF/Experience sharing</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights and responsibilities</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>525</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>1005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. **Progresses on Community Empowerment**

Reflections on the project at various forums indicate that the project has become the responsibility of the community as a whole and community empowerment is in progress. The community forest management has been strengthened and the following are some of the indications of this:

- Charcoal burning has been minimized as has farming and settlement, as a result of community management,
- High level of forest patrolling and awareness raising and increased control over illegal forest product users,
- Increased community commitment to use forest products in a sustainable way – through close consultation with the JFEB (traditional forest management institute),
- Exclusion of endangered species from harvesting,
- Community trust and ownership of the Participatory Forest Management (PFM approach),
- Increased level of participation from the community side and sector offices.

9. **Organizational Structure of the Project**

The relationship between different partners of the project is provided in the diagram below. The communities are the major partners and skill and knowledge transfers are also well considered as part of the empowerment process.
Various organizations are engaged in the project. There are a number of International NGOs as well as bilateral support (GTZ) assisting Government of Ethiopia Line Ministries in development, working in Borena. The focus of SOS Sahel is on Participatory Natural Resource Management (NRM), Institutional Capacity Building, Government Decentralization and Community Relations and is most complimented by that of GTZ. Both organizations share the philosophy of people-led development and the need to move away from welfare-based approaches. This initiative does not overlap with that of any other organization and has been developed to fill an important gap in development action in the area.
10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The project document states that monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken at different levels. It is designed in such a way that assessment of impact and achievements is undertaken at the organizational level – FARM Africa, SOS Sahel and government partners will measure the performance against set aims and objectives. It was stated in the document that a community based participatory impact monitoring system will be established as part of the process to enable communities and governments to measure their own development achievements. There is an indication that an internal review was conducted by a consultant. However, the researcher could not have access to the document during the preparation of this report. Instead, progress reports, workshop papers were accessed and used.

11. Financial and Institutional Sustainability:

The financial and institutional sustainability of the project has been well designed in the project document. It is stressed that the project invests in people, their skills and capacities. After the completion of the three year project phase, continuity of the activities that have been undertaken will remain the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DoANR) and the relevant community institutions, as well as the community as a whole. The DoANR will continue developing and monitoring working partnerships and government-community relationships as part of its development strategy (decentralized resource management).

The project plans to establish basic skills and productive relationships into partner practices, resulting in their being better able to seek additional support and services for themselves. This will include skills and capacity to seek and secure resources including funds by civil society groups. Capacity building of the communities and traditional institutions will be an important element for sustainability. To this effect, the project will act as an advocate and link between the community and government, channelling information and creating working space, until the community-government working relationships are established. All activities of the project are geared to this aim, developing modern skills in management and governance partnerships, in conflict control and resource use regulation. The role of government with respect to the community is as; regulator, advisor and supplier of services. The role of the community is to link up with parallel government structures in a complimentary way in order to establish management partnerships. The role of SOS Sahel is to act as facilitator, bringing information, experience, systems and resources. The project team will work closely with DoANR EP staff so as to transfer and develop skills and resolve problems together. As community institution and DoANR skills of facilitation and process increase, SOS Sahel intervention/assistance will decrease.
12. Conclusions

Participatory development approaches are relatively new in the Ethiopian context. Although the rhetoric of people-led development is now established, actual practices are poor in both spread and depth. Moreover, past governments of Ethiopia did not recognize the pastoral traditional institutions or communities as vehicles of development and there were no efforts towards enhancing their capacity. It is only since the late 1990s that the country has been undergoing major socio-economic transformations and that participation of stakeholders in development has been considered as one of the development strategies of the country. In pastoral areas, pastoral traditional institutions played important roles in the lives of the pastoralists even before the government of Ethiopia introduced the concept of community participation. Pastoral traditional institutions are established by the will of the communities and are very strong in managing socio-economic problems in their jurisdictions. The lessons learnt from the SOS Sahel forest management project in Borena concur with this fact. The SOS project has recognized the traditional institutions and the voices of the communities as a result of which the empowerment process has been successful.

The following are the lessons learnt from the project:

• The importance of recognizing traditional institutions and management systems, ignorance of which is repeatedly cited as the causes for the failure of development initiatives in the past. The community with their traditional institutions can best manage the forest and challenges at the community level can easily be managed by the community itself.

• The communities have the enthusiasm to take back their roles, and rights in the management of their lives, resources and systems. Thus, the role of Borena Community Forest Management Project is only facilitation and the community should play the leading role.

• That current problems have principally been, and are increasing being caused by the undermining of the traditional governance system.

• Replacement of local ownership by state ownership has been ineffective, resulting in local communities increasingly unaccountable for their actions and unable to control resources.

• Putting people and their institutions at the centre of approaches towards sustaining livelihoods and poverty reduction has proven its potential, particularly in fragile environments.

• The forest management institutions can be the entry point for community development like introduction of Participatory Technical Development,
beehives, goat husbandry, agro-forestry, horticulture, livestock trade, credit and savings.
Annex: Sources of Information for the Study

The researcher used different primary and secondary data sources for the preparation of this report. He contacted and discussed with various people who are directly or indirectly engaged in the Borena Collaborative Forest Management Project. Specifically, the technical advisor of the project who is stationed within FARM Africa, and the country representative of SOS Sahel in Addis Ababa whose perceptions and views were gathered.

In addition, project proposals, progress reports and other relevant documents were accessed at the SOS Sahel Office in Addis Ababa which were very important sources of information for the preparation of this report. Some of the previous study reports prepared by the researcher on relevant subjects were also used as sources of information.
Case 7

Amhara Region

SOS Sahel – Meket Development Program

MOHAMMED MUSSA

THIS STUDY DOCUMENTS A PROJECT TO INTRODUCE NEW TECHNIQUES OF BEE KEEPING. IT SHOWS HOW THE USE OF ECONOMIC INTERVENTIONS CAN ENCOURAGE LOCAL LINKAGES AND HELP TO DEVELOP OVERALL COMMUNITY CAPACITIES.
List of Acronyms

CBOs - Community Based Organizations
DAs - Development Agents
FHI - Food for the Hungry International
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
MEM - Micro-Enterprise Management
MDP - Meket Development Program
MMFI - Meket Micro-Finance Institute
MoA - Ministry of Agriculture
NGO - Non-governmental Organization
RDCs - Rural Development Committee
ToT - Training of Trainers
WASP - Wollo Agricultural Support Program

Definitions of Local Terms

Belg - Short rainy season
Kebele/PA - The smallest government administrative unit
Meher - Long rainy season
Woreda - Equivalent of district
1. Background

1.1. Amhara Region

Amhara region has a population of approximately 16.5 million people, living in eleven zones and 105 woredas (of which 98 are rural). The population has an approximate growth rate of 3%. 89% of the population lives in rural areas. The region is vast, covering a total area of 170,052 km².

The region is characterised by a varied landscape of high mountains, deep gorges, and rolling plains. The altitude varies from 500 metres above sea level at Matebia to 4,620 at Ras Dashen. The northern and eastern parts of the region are the most highland, with the lowlands lying in the Northwest.

Nearly all agriculture in the region is subsistence farming, and the vast proportion (approximately 93.4%) is rain-fed. In most of the region rainfall is extremely unreliable, with those areas depending on the Belg rain particularly vulnerable. The west of the region has high rainfall, exceeding 1200 mm annually, and it is this area, Agew Awi and the East and West Gojam zones, which generally have greater food security and in good years produce a crop surplus. The northeast finds the lowest rainfall (Wag and North Wollo).

The whole region experiences the highest rainfall during the Meher season, but the quantity of rain is greater in the west of the country. The Belg rain only falls in the east of Amhara, but is critical for those living in the highland areas where planting must be taken early in the year to allow a long growing season and to avoid the frosts in November/December.

Average landholdings in Amhara are only 1.7 ha, which on the basis of per capita land requirement, fulfils only 94.4% of need. This land shortage not only affects crop production, but also limits livestock numbers, as feed is in short supply. Livestock rearing is an integral part of the farming system, but although livestock numbers are high, productivity is low.

Unreliable rainfall combined with small landholdings limits investment in agriculture. Farmers cannot afford to invest, nor can they take the risk of credit for fertilizers, improved seed and other inputs.

Although the great majority of the population is living in rural areas, agriculture only contributes about 45% of the region’s GDP. For those living in rural areas, agricultural production is often the only source of income. For the reasons mentioned above, agriculture is far from a secure means of livelihood and this is compounded by the absence of other opportunities. The result is that, apart from the populations in the western, surplus producing areas, most people in Amhara region experience annual food deficits. In 1999 it was estimated that 14% of the population were in need of food assistance, by the end of 2000 this figure had risen to 22%.

1.2. Meket Woreda
1.2.1. Woreda profile

Meket Woreda is one of the food insecure woredas in Amhara region. In the 1994 census, the population of the Woreda was estimated at about 188,922 people (44,142 households). This represents an average population density of 76 people per square kilometre, but actual densities are probably considerably greater in the mid to highlands than in the lowlands of the Woreda. As the current rate of population increase in the region is estimated at 3.2% per annum, the population will double in about 20 years. The people of Meket are Amharic speaking and almost all are Orthodox Christians with the exception of some scattered Muslim communities in the lowlands. The woreda has 35 kebeles or sub-districts.

1.2.2. Engagement of the People

The people of Meket Woreda are dependent on traditional, low-input, subsistence agriculture. Livestock production is probably the most significant component of local agriculture but traditional grazing and hay-making systems are under threat from arable cultivation. There is little investment in commercial agriculture, very limited secondary processing of agricultural products and therefore few opportunities for other sources of income outside subsistence farming. Moreover, the potential of economic enterprises like beekeeping have yet to be fully exploited, mainly due to economic, technological, infrastructural, institutional, policy, market and information constraints and barriers. As a result, policy makers and development actors are faced with the challenge of managing limited natural, financial and human resources in a way that supports sustainable rural livelihoods.

Non-governmental organizations have been making efforts towards addressing the food insecurity problems in Amhara region, in particular in Meket woreda. During extended drought and famine, food aid distribution in the form of food for work is common in most woredas of the Amhara region. Some international NGOs are already introducing food security interventions in selected food insecure woredas of the region. SOS Sahel is one such international NGOs actively engaged in the Meket Woreda of Amhara region.

2. SOS Sahel and the Meket Development Program (MDP)

SOS Sahel initiated the Wollo Agricultural Support Project (WASP) in Meket Woreda in 1994 with funding support from the Dutch Government. This was followed in 1997 by a second phase of the project called Meket Development Project (MDP) which was an integrated rural development project focusing mainly on agricultural development, water supply, income generation, and infrastructure. There was also an EC supported project as a complementary intervention to MDP that was operational from April 1999 to April 2001.

SOS Sahel-Ethiopia aims to improve the economic status of people living in food insecure areas, by improving their and their institutions’ capacity to manage their own resources in a sustainable way. SOS Sahel has been working in Ethiopia since 1989
and currently implements three projects: The Integrated Food Security Support Project in Southern Region, the Meket Development Programme (MDP) in Meket Woreda, (work with subsistence farming communities who face problems of land degradation and declining food security) and the Borana Collaborative Forest Management Project (which works in a largely pastoral and agro-pastoral area, and seeks to find a solution to the current problem of central but ineffective control over the Juniper forests in Borana). The experience developed by these projects, and particularly the Meket program in beekeeping, working in partnership with government, private sector and developing community institutions will be used in the implementation of this program.

The Meket Development Program has been working intensively on beekeeping and the introduction of Top-bar hives from 1999. This involvement has resulted in the development of a beekeeping technology that is affordable and appropriate to local social and cultural contexts. This field level practical engagement also enabled SOS Sahel to develop key institutional competence and skilled human resources in this sector.

3. Objectives of the MDP

3.1. Program purpose (immediate objectives)

1. To enable the people of Meket Woreda to find sustainable solutions to their environmental, social and economic problems through their own endeavours.
2. To promote the transfer of successful methodologies for community-based, self-reliant development, from MDP to other Woredas in North Wollo.

3.2. Long term goals (the program’s wider objectives)

1. Increased capacity (self-reliance) of the people of Meket to meet their needs through their own autonomous development.
2. Improved food security resulting from sustainable increases in agricultural and livestock production and off-farm income.
3. Sustainable conservation and enrichment of the Woreda’s natural resources resulting from appropriate land use practices being adopted.
4. The people of Meket protecting themselves from disease through the establishment of appropriate community and public health services and water development.
5. Improvements in the quality of life and socio-economic status of women in Meket Woreda.
6. Institutions in other Woredas (whether governmental or non-governmental) adopting and developing methodologies used by the MDP.

3.3. Overall strategy

To achieve the programme’s two immediate objectives, a five-pronged strategy has been developed, comprising a series of outputs, which can be grouped under the following general headings:

1. Community empowerment, which aims to equip the people of Meket to develop and carry out their own initiatives to address their prioritized problems.
2. Improved service delivery, which aims to strengthen the public services of the Woreda to better meet the needs of the people.
3. Integration relief and development, which aims to develop relief responses that can both meet short-term food gaps and contribute to sustainable improvements in self-reliance.
4. Institutional framework, which aims to establish a permanent structure that can effectively manage the program.
5. Dissemination and replication, which aims to support other organizations to use lessons learnt from Meket in other Woredas.

4. Approach of the Program

Community empowerment is an important component of the MDP. In the MDP, the term ‘community’ is used to refer to the resident population of the woreda in general. The question at hand is, how to mobilize the community to participate in the development process? Community participation is different from the term “Community Based Organizations” (CBOs) which refers to a clearly defined group of people who have organized themselves internally, through their own initiative or cultural by-laws, to undertake a specified set of functions. Most NGOs use CBOs as vehicles of development.

The methodology of the MDP is based on the respect and use of such CBOs as a means of generating the initial trust needed to successfully animate people into initiating their own development. While this is considered as an essential first step in the mobilization and animation process and is the so-called entry point into the community, it must be understood that MDP is not necessarily aiming to empower the CBOs themselves. There is a feeling that CBOs may or may not be democratic, desirable institutions: they may or may not have a place in the longer term development strategy of the Ethiopian government, but they cannot be ignored at the initial stages of any attempt to strengthen the self-reliance of the people. This is because they represent an integral part of people’s identity and life. If we ignore them, whether we “approve” of them or not, we will never win sufficient trust from the people to introduce new ideas and approaches. GOs or NGOs, face considerable difficulties in promoting the degree of responsibility needed for community-led development without this initial trust and confidence.

5. Structure of MDP

As community empowerment is an important component of the MDP, the structure of the program also attempts to trigger community participation and empowerment. Thus, the following division of responsibilities is established for the implementing partners:

- Program planning, based on the feedback from defined and transparent monitoring and evaluation systems, is undertaken by a general assembly of MDP’s implementing partners (the Woreda Council plus government Office and NGOs)
- Coordination at Woreda level is undertaken by a permanent, government structure representing the different sectors of activity (in this case the Woreda RDC) and at Kebele level by committees representing all existing organizations found in each kebele. For communities to gain access to program resources, final approval must be given by the Kebele and Woreda RDCs (following consultation with the relevant government Offices).
- Implementation of the defined service delivery activities and facilitation of community empowerment activities is undertaken by the different implementing partners (in this case the woreda administration, woreda
sector offices, community based organizations and NGOs) all of whom should be represented on the program’s general assembly.

- Identification, design and implementation of community based projects remains in the hands of the emerging interest groups within the target population.

The MDP must endeavour to introduce this institutional model at an appropriate pace- allowing the capacity of defined partners, especially the community, to grow into roles that gradually demand greater and greater responsibility. It is here more than anywhere that the process approach will have to be embraced by all program partners, to ensure that the development of the model is determined not by pre-set goals but by the rate at which local structures can establish their managerial capabilities.

6. Components of MDP

The MDP has several components. However, for the purpose of learning lessons on community empowerment process, we are considering two of the components of the MDP: beekeeping as one of the income diversification components and the Meket micro-finance institution.

6.1. Beekeeping

6.1.1. Program Process

Resources for Apiculture in the Amhara Region are good. The honeybee population remains plentiful and disease and predator-free compared with other parts of the world, and the climate and vegetation enable beekeepers to harvest worthwhile crops of honey and beeswax. However, the full potential of apiculture to improve farmers’ livelihoods in the region is not yet fully harnessed and the main factors limiting beekeeping productivity are poor product quality, poor prices and lack of market access.

Over the last nine years, The Royal Netherlands Embassy Supported SOS Sahel Development Program in Meket Woreda has promoted the use of Top-Bar Hives with the direct involvement of farmers in development of the technology. Using the top-bar hives, honey production per hive has increased significantly compared with local-style (fixed comb) hives. Farmers’ participatory evaluation has revealed that the technology is affordable and appropriate to local social and cultural contexts. The project has found that it is possible to increase the beekeeping productivity by using top-bar hives, however, this in itself is not enough to ensure improvements in farmers’ income levels and standard of living, unless they have access to better marketing opportunities both in-country and overseas.

The purpose of the Apiculture Development Program is to improve the economic status and well-being of small-holder farmers by selling value-added bees’ products, stimulating the local economy and creating the social capital of small-scale beekeepers through the development of producers cooperatives/union. This project specifically focuses on creating marketing opportunities for bees’ products both in-country and overseas, and enhancing the capacity of farmers institutions to produce, process and market quality honey products that meets both national and international standards. The project aims to create private sector oriented viable farmers institutions, create new market niches/outlets for value-added bees’ products and
facilitate the creation of a regional beekeeping resource centre. These three approaches contribute not only to an increase in income for small scale producers, but should ensure that this income is less vulnerable to external shocks, as it comes from a source vulnerable to drought, but also exploits markets niches, which are less susceptible to regional weather patterns.

SOS Sahel has achieved tangible success with its beekeeping interventions in Meket Woreda and replication of the technology to other 14 woredas in Amhara region. Farmers involved in the program have seen increases in income of 100 to 200 Birr per colony, through the adoption of a cheap, locally produced, modified Top-bar hives, accompanied by improved bee husbandry. The Amhara regional government is keen to build on the successes of SOS Sahel, and have been asking for increased support from the organization. They have committed themselves to dedicating over 100 staff to the support and promotion of the improved beekeeping technology in the region. The proposed program builds on these achievements to date, and focus more on creating markets, formation of private sector oriented farmers’ institutions and facilitate the link between local honey producers and in-country and overseas potential buyers. SOS Sahel is requesting the Royal Netherlands Government for 10,324,597 Birr for the implementation of the proposed program over a period of three years. The greater proportion of this fund will be used for direct execution of the programs, mainly for creating marketing opportunities for bee-products, facilitate the formation of farmers institutions, support creation of private sector supply and marketing chains and network of suppliers.

6.1.2. Beekeeping Technology Development

Top-bar hive technology was used as an intervention in the area and the results achieved were beyond the anticipated targeted output for the MDP first phase. As a result of the high demand from beekeepers in the Woreda for technical support, an additional bee unit was established comprising 3 field staff that are working entirely on top-bar hive and improved apiculture practices in the field. To date a total of 2541 beekeepers are using top-bar hive technology and have adopted improved apiculture practices in Meket Woreda.

Table 1: Apicultural Activities and achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No. of demonstration apiaries</td>
<td>3 (1 closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No. of trainers trained (DAs, Supervisors, core farmers)</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No of households received 10,000 top-bars manufactured by locally organized carpentry</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No of beekeeper groups received 600 veils made by locally organized women groups</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of participants/beneficiaries (households)</td>
<td>2541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Training of trainers has been delivered to 482 core farmers, MOA development agents and supervisors. In addition to training delivered to beekeepers in the Woreda, training and technical support have been given to other organizations upon request.

A local women’s group has been trained and organized to produce protective materials for beekeepers and to date have supplied 600 veils. A group of local carpenters has been organized and trained to supply top-bars. To date, more than 10,000 top-bars have been manufactured and supplied to beekeepers. The two input
supply units have also received orders outside Meket Woreda so that they are able to raise incomes for their household. The price of one top-bar is 2 birr and the price of one veil is 15 birr.

A comprehensive evaluation and impact assessment was carried out at the end of the MDP first phase (March 2000). The team comprised of the North Wollo zone department of Agriculture, woreda office of Agriculture experts and MDP staff with a total number of 12 people. A checklist was formulated and sample size identified by the team. One week was set aside for the collection of field data and another 4 days used for compiling and write-up. These findings showed that beekeepers who started using the technology have achieved an increased production of honey, from 100 to 200 birr in additional income per one top-bar hive per year.

6.1.3. Beekeepers and Gender

Both men and women are involved in the beekeeping sub-component of the program. Women tend to make hives, and fumigate them with smoke, which attracts the bees. They also tend to do most of the day-to-day husbandry (weeding the entrance of the hive, keeping the hive free from ants and spiders). Men tend to be the ones who capture a swarm, stay around the home to manage the swarm if it appears that a colony is going to split (because of the creation of a new queen), and will harvest the honey. Decisions about the marketing of the honey are generally either done by men or jointly.

However, the relevant documents indicate that women are playing an increasing role in all areas of beekeeping, which is then giving them greater control of resources. While this project does not aim to explicitly target beekeeping interventions at women, it will provide support to women who wish to take up beekeeping as an alternative economic activity. It may be possible to ensure that women are amongst the small-producers who are members of beekeepers’ associations benefiting from all economic opportunities created by this project.

Women will be specifically targeted for the making of certain beekeeping inputs, protective clothing and the improved hives. Our experience from Meket shows that particularly women living in peri-urban areas can benefit from these employment opportunities and increased income earning opportunities, which provide a greater return for their labour than many other avenues open to them.

6.1.4. Replication of the Beekeeping Technology

In 2002, by using one-year’s funding from the Netherlands Government, SOS Sahel in collaboration with the Regional Bureau of Agriculture, was involved in replicating the Top-bar beekeeping technology to 14 woredas in the region. In this phase, the project reached a total of 1000 beekeepers and supported them in skills training, trained the government development experts in the new beekeeping technology and mainstreamed the approach and the technology into the government extension system.

The regional beekeeping support program for Amhara Region has been operational since January 2002 to scale-up beekeeping technology as continuation of MDP following the successful improvement in apiculture practices in Meket Woreda and
high demand of the regional Bureau of Agriculture to support other Woredas in the region.

About 1,000 beekeepers have been supported to adopt this technology based on Meket beekeeping experience in 3 administrative zones in 14 Woredas. These beekeepers have been organized into 125 beekeeper groups to transfer skills through each group leader.

6.1.5. Honey Marketing Cooperative

SOS has helped the producers to gain access to a market for their products. SOS Sahel's has previous experience in Meket with blacksmiths, in the development of associations to help small-scale producers market their products. In addition, SOS Sahel has undertaken a preliminary investigation into the marketing potential for honey. Samples of Meket honey were shown to buyers in Addis to assess the difference in price possible. 7 kilos of crude honey at a generous estimate can earn 84 Birr locally; the same honey processed and sold in Addis can earn Birr 126. Beeswax can also be processed and sold separately.

6.1.6. Beekeeping and Credit

SOS Sahel's beekeeping program in Meket is supported by credit facilities. Initially, this credit was provided directly by SOS Sahel, more recently it has been provided by the Meket Micro-Finance Institution (MMFI). Between 1997 and 1999, SOS Sahel provided credit to small-scale producers for a number of ventures including agricultural inputs, oxen credit and beekeeping. While there was a high rate of defaulting for both the agricultural inputs and oxen credit, money loaned for beekeeping had a 100% repayment rate. This partly shows that the beekeeping venture was successful and beneficiaries were empowered to work and repay the loans.

In this program, SOS Sahel has encouraged credit to individual beekeepers and cooperative societies by credit institutions for agricultural inputs and in the newer field of products processing and marketing.

7. Meket Micro-Finance Institution (MMFI)

7.1. Establishment

The people of Meket have been empowered to manage their own micro-finance institution and improve their income opportunities. Working on a modified Grameen Bank approach, the Wollo Agricultural Support Program (WASP) pilot has been developing a working methodology since mid 1996 for a community managed savings and credit scheme. The initial objective of the scheme was to assist women to have access to credit facilities. However, both men and women accessed the credit facilities in the woreda. One of the challenges of the credit facilities was associated with the risk of developing sustainable savings and credit schemes with clients who have little or no collateral in an area with unpredictable rainfall and annual food gaps. Despite the fears and challenges, the 100% repayment rate was encouraging in the woreda.

In 2002, the Meket Micro-Finance Institution (MMFI) was established. SOS has provided training on basic book-keeping and accountancy and capacity building to
allow the scheme to grow to a sufficient size to become a commercially sustainable enterprise. Kebele level accountants were being trained. A team of credit extensionists has been equipped to train new groups that wish to form new village banks and a senior official of the National Development Bank of Ethiopia has made two visits to the MMFI to review progress and advise on scaling up.

Now, the MMFI is operating as a legally licensed organization. New financial and operational manuals, guidelines and procedures have been designed and prepared, a board of directors established and consolidated and the institution strengthened through the recruitment of management and field staff. Training was given to them to promote their implementation capacity. By deploying the improved working methodology and procedures, credit provision has been under taken through the existing (old) and new Kebeles.

The institutional governing policy, procedure and system have been fully operational and generally progress has been observed as MMFI is becoming an independent and self-reliant institution. As indicated in the table below, the plans and achievements of the MFI are encouraging, especially in the training aspect of the institution.

Table 2: Plans and Achievements in MFI Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings and credit - planned outputs</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Change (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Services in 15 kebeles established and operational Communities</td>
<td>Kebeles</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>using savings and credit services</td>
<td>clients</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,358</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Transitional revolving fund established</td>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>750.00</td>
<td>407,101</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 Kebele banks established and operational</td>
<td>Kebele</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banks</td>
<td>banks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.4 Community managed MFI established and operational</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operational</td>
<td>entity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.5 MFI assisted to expand quality of service</td>
<td>Capacity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delivered</td>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* TOT In Micro-enterprise Management</td>
<td>Trainees</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Training Manual For Illiterate Women</td>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Evaluation</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants/beneficiaries</td>
<td>Household</td>
<td>2,328</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2. Micro-enterprise Management (MEM) Training

During the course of phase 1, the development of micro-enterprise management (MEM) skills was identified as a priority activity to complement the delivery of the purely financial services of saving and credit. Micro-enterprise management training was designed to help the female clients of saving and credit schemes in MDP who were running petty trading. An additional output was added therefore to design and deliver appropriate training programs for illiterate women (and men) to enable them to maximize the new income generation opportunities generated by their access to credit. Accordingly, a training manual was produced based on the actual situations of Meket by an expatriate consultant and is further developed and translated into Amharic by a working group in Addis Ababa.
Training of Trainers (TOT) was given for 14 individuals from SOS-Sahel and line offices so that they would serve as facilitators and co-facilitators of the training. To date, training has been delivered to a total of 78 women, with positive indicators of the added value accrued by participants. Trading women who received the training had relatively better skills in managing their small business and their credit and savings, than those who did not get the opportunity.

7.3. Achievements

An independent, legally registered “Meket Micro Finance Institution” (MMFI) has been established and is operational. To date, it is helping 2,358 clients from 12 kebeles to improve their income opportunities. On-going evaluations are indicating that as a result, clients are able to significantly strengthen their household economies. Although the clients are not yet registered as shareholders, this aim is explicitly stated in the articles of association of the MMFI. However, in line with the Grammeen Bank approach, clients do have responsibility to manage savings and credit transactions at “centre” Level (20 clients/centre).

Monitoring and Evaluation

There was an external evaluation of the development programs in north Wollo zone of Amhara region that included the MDP. The evaluation was conducted by external consultants commissioned by the Dutch Government. In addition, SOS had undertaken a terminal review of its Meket Program which was carried out by SOS Sahel.

8. Conclusions

The beneficiaries in Meket woreda could be defined as agents with opportunities. The woreda is one of the food insecure woredas in the region and donors and NGOs decided to bring opportunities to the woreda. To this effect, SOS Sahel with the assistance of the Dutch Government initiated the Meket Development Program (MDP). It was learnt that with the commitment of the SOS Sahel staff and the innovative approaches, the program was successful in empowering the communities of the Meket Woreda. The success of empowerment was also caused by the strategy that the community directly participated from the beginning of the project. According to the discussions held with SOS Sahel staff in Addis Ababa and in Amhara region and also the available documents, the people of Meket are equipped with the necessary skills and resources on organizational capacity to identify, develop, implement and evaluate their own projects. Community empowerment is manifested in the beekeeping component and the micro-finance institute.

Beekeeping

Beekeeping is one of the efforts made under the Meket Development Program (MDP) and firstly started as a sub component of the livestock sector. The following achievements were made during 1998-2000:

- 1 397 beekeepers in the Woreda directly supported.
- 350 beekeepers, 45 zonal and Woreda MOA experts in the region and 72 Development agents received training.
- Local supply units for top bar and beekeeping protective materials established.
- Different locations of the hive in different agro-ecological zones tested.
• Migratory beekeeping techniques practiced in two major agro-ecological zones. (i.e lowland and highland)
• Experiences shared through discussion and demonstration to 102 mekele University students, 28 staff and farmers from the Organization of Relief and Development for Amhara, 8 North Showa MOA experts, 7 South Wollo MOA, 110 farmers and experts of FHI, 52 experts of North Gonder MOA and experts, and 12 members of Kobo-Girana Project registered in the visitors list. Others have applied to make visits.
• North Wollo zone beekeeping strategies developed based on the experience of Meket Woreda.

Evaluation of this intervention was carried out in February 2000 and these findings were very encouraging. Some of the results of the evaluation were the following:
• Farmers using this technology indicated that honey producing increased by more than twofold on average and as a result their household income started to improve.
• Most participants are able to construct their own beehives and topbars from locally available materials, as a result the technology becomes low cost.
• The number of farmers demanding the technology has increased significantly from year to year and they are empowered to adopt the new technology.
• Beekeepers started to realize other benefits of the top-bar hive. (e.g. colony reproduction and different techniques of swarm control)
• It is estimated that one farmer can disseminate information to four other farmers.

SOS Sahel established a regional beekeeping support program for Amhara region in 2002 to scale-up beekeeping technology as a continuation of the MDP following the successful achievements of the topbar hive technology and improved apiculture practices in Meket woredas and high demand from the regional bureau of agriculture to support other woredas in the region.

**MMFI – Meket Micro-Finance Institution**

The Meket micro-finance institution is another good example of community economic empowerment in Meket Woreda. The institution started as a saving and credit scheme with limited resources and has now grown to be a micro-finance institution. To date, it is serving about 2,358 clients from 12 kebeles to improve their income generation opportunities. Ongoing evaluations are indicating that, as a result, clients are able to significantly strengthen their household economies. Although the clients are not yet registered as shareholders, this aim is explicitly stated in the articles of association of the MMFI. However, in line with the Grammeen Bank approach, clients do have responsibility to manage savings and credit transactions at “centre” Level (20 clients/centre).
Annex: Sources of Information for the Study

At the initial stage, the consultant had discussed with Dr. Pratt to document the empowerment process of the beekeeping project in Meket woreda of the Amhara region. It was however learnt that beekeeping is one of the components of the Meket Development Program (MDP) which was developed by SOS Sahel with the assistance of the Dutch Government. Thus, it was decided to examine the MDP in general and the beekeeping and the Micro-Finance Institution components in particular so as to learn about the empowerment process better.

The consultant had discussed with various people who are directly or indirectly engaged in the Meket Development Program (MDP). SOS Sahel staff members in Addis Ababa and Amhara region were contacted and some perceptions and views gathered. In addition, several documents were accessed and used from the relevant offices which were very important sources of information for the preparation of this report.
Case 8

Oromiya State
Cereal Bank Associations
Hundee-Oromos Grassroots Development Initiative
Ayele Zewge

The following study documents a well-known programme in Oroma which used Cereal banks as an entry point through which to work with communities. After success with these, the organization Hundee has gone on to develop a series of programmes which aim to improve local governance, and focus on issues around the rights of women. The use of traditional law systems has, it is claimed, led to an improvement in the status of women, including greater access to land, and freedom from violence.
Introduction
Hundee-Oromos Grassroots Development Initiative is an indigenous development and civic NGO that was established in 1995 and registered with the Ministry of Justice on April 13, 1998. Hundee is a membership organization of professional businessmen and other individuals interested in social and economic development of poor rural communities in Oromiya National Regional State. It currently has 93 members.

The vision of this NGO is stated as “Development of rural society in Ethiopia in which government and civil institutions at all levels take their responsibilities to empower and ensure the social, political and economic advancement of resource poor communities based on values of human rights and dignity, social, economic and cultural rights of all people and equitable access to and control over resource and its sustainable use”. Hundee has defined its mission as

- Enabling small farmers, women, older persons, youth and other marginalized groups to organize around common issues of concern for sustainable livelihoods and to revitalize proven community based traditional support systems and institutions.
- Reducing vulnerability of target groups to transitory food shortage and build their capacity to play active role in grain marketing.
- Empowering women to attain political, economic and social rights and to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against them and
- Relating with government, civil institutions and other NGO, at all levels to further the vision and where possible to implement its development aid activities together with them.

Based on the above-enumerated elements of its mission and the comparative competencies of the organization, Hundee has identified four core program areas that comprise.

- Cereal Bank promotion and Networking
- Environmental Protection.
- Older persons and women’s support programs and
- Civic education that primarily focus on women’s rights and protection against harmful traditional practices.

As Hundee uses cereal Bank Associations as an entry point and focal institution for its other interventions, having a better insight into their mode of operation and the basic rationale behind their establishment is of paramount importance.

The project
The main objective behind organizing poor farmers into Cereal Bank Associations, according to Hundee, is to ensure availability and accessibility of grains for consumption at the household level when critical food shortage sets in during the lean period or usually the rainy season.

Empowering poor households in the district to gain access to food by enhancing community management capacity of grain bank associations is another related objective pursued by this particular intervention. Towards realization of these objectives, Hundee will make start-up capital available to these associations that will
eventually be retrieved through gains achieved by grain transactions and member
contributions.

Such intervention was found appropriate as farmers are usually forced to sell their
grains during the harvest period to settle their debts such as land use tax, fertilizer
credit, and other social contributions. However, during the harvest period, grain
traders usually offer the lowest possible prices for the farmers’ grains. Then, these
same farmers are compelled to purchase grain at exorbitant prices during the lean
period. This scenario puts the farmers at a very disadvantageous position within the
agricultural marketing system by causing them further depletion of their productive
assets.

In order for the Cereal Banks to deal with this situation, they buy cereals from their
members during the harvest period at market prices, retain the produce within the
locality and sell it back to their members at preferential prices during the lean period,
thus helping them get better income for their products. Such an intervention assists
farmers not only in improving their income but also help them retain the grain within
their own locality for future use should scarcity of food occur.

Up to the end of year 2003, Hundee had managed to organize a total of 66 cereal
banks in four Zones and eleven Woredas of Oromiya region. Through these cereal
banks, a total of 7041 beneficiaries are reached.

An evaluation conducted on eight cereal Banks that were established at Welmera
and Ejere Woredas in West Shoa Zone had confirmed that these Cereal Banks, with
1146 members, had made a net profit of 47,636 Birr from their grain transactions
over the period of two years. A total of 23,264 Birr is gained by members as a result
of preferential price mechanism thus bringing the total financial benefit gained directly
and indirectly to a total of 70,900 Birr. This amounts to about 61 Birr per member
household.

These Cereal Banks have the storage capacity to retain about 8000 quintals within
their locality thus tremendously contributing to the availability of grains during the
lean period. The mentioned quantity, which is around 450 kg per member household,
is believed to be sufficient to meet the food requirements of the members for the
period of food scarcity.

In fact, as a measure of reducing vulnerability to seasonal food shortage, the Cereal
Bank’s approach of retaining sufficient amount of cereals within its locality displays
superiority over the government’s objectives of establishing the Emergency Strategic
Food Reserve. The recently issued Food Security Strategy of the country states that,
"the purpose of the Emergency Strategic Food Reserve is to cover emergency
requirements of food for about four months until food aid deliveries can be made
available from abroad". While the government’s measure relies heavily on uncertain
external assistance and is highly outwardly oriented in tackling an internal problem,
the poor farmers organized under the Cereal Banks are counting on their own efforts
to overcome food insecurity and are fully inwardly oriented in dealing with their
problem.

Training
Apart from assisting the Cereal Banks with start-up capital, Hundee provides training
for those elected in order to build their capacity of self-management. Such trainings
usually focus on the role and qualities of good leadership in cereal bank
management, grain marketing (quality control and store management, duties and
responsibilities of committee as is stipulated in their by-law, record keeping i.e. minutes, financial books, reports and facilitation techniques for self-planning and self evaluation exercises). In addition to these induction trainings, on the job training is given fairly regularly by Hundee's cereal bank animators, with an increased frequency of such assistance during the times of purchase and sales.

In conjunction with this activity, the development of internal systems by way of various formats like reporting, minutes, financial transactions and the like constitutes a significant measure taken by Hundee to help these Cereal Banks stand by themselves.

Hundee's strategy in giving technical support to the Cereal Banks envisages a monitoring visit once per month during the first year with a gradual decrease in its involvement, as the self-management capacity of these Cereal Banks increases. In full conformity with this strategy, the relatively older Cereal Banks have now reached a stage of handling bulk sales of their grain through officially advertised auctions and looking for a niche market within food processing industries.

After giving training to the Cereal Bank committee members, Hundee provides each Bank with a non-interest bearing loan fund and gives financial support for the construction of stores and purchase of materials that are necessary for grain marketing, such as sacks and scales.

**Mobilization**

In terms of constituency mobilization, the Cereal Banks in turn organize their members into "Qurnan Olla" and "Abba Olla", linking the lowest Qurnan Olla Unit with the Cereal Bank Committee. Qurnan Olla, or a group of ten neighbours, are linked to one neighbour’s representative "Abba Olla" thus tremendously boosting the capability of these associations for community mobilization. From all components of its implementation arrangements, such a mechanism of community organizing appears to be the strongest element of Hundee's approach.

These Cereal Banks exhibit great strength especially in the area of constituency mobilization and have already started to develop strong organizational identity. In the above-mentioned evaluated Cereal Banks, the evaluators reported that the Cereal Bank members initiated resistance to the Woreda Cooperative Promotion Office's attempts to make decisions about their own resources and also sought to demote Woreda chairperson who tried to usurp his kebele appointment to embezzle their resources.

Hundee, in its selection of operation areas, basically departs from its discussion with relevant government bodies (up to very recently, regional and zonal offices) on the nature of its interventions and expression of its interest to work in the area. Usually, two major factors determine the selection of operational areas for Hundee. The first and foremost factor is Hundee's commitment to challenge the myth that the further one goes from the capital the more marginalized the citizens. Hundee confidently claims that the study it conducted has shown that Oromos living relatively close to the capital city (40 to 50 km away) are just as likely to be lacking basic services as those living in more distant areas. A commitment to reverse this sad scenario constitutes the main rationale behind Hundee's selection of operational areas. Consideration for logistical resources, of course, constitutes the other factor.
Once official consent is secured from relevant government bodies, Hundee starts a series of consultation processes within the kebele and community forums like Iddir, Mahber and where possible, cooperative associations.

After holding a series of consultations with various communities, Hundee bases its identification of a specific locality for its intervention, on the number of volunteers registered, readiness to make contributions required and willingness to allot a plot of land for store construction. Subsequent to the consultation processes, Hundee usually calls a large public gathering attended by registered volunteer households that usually culminates with the formation of ad hoc community committee. This committee is expected to further register and organize willing farmers and develop by-laws.

**On top of their willingness, the candidate members of the Cereal Banks are required to meet criteria developed for the purpose, mainly elaborated by Hundee. These criteria seem to have been developed by taking two main factors into consideration. Firstly, enabling Hundee to reach its target group, which mainly includes poor households facing critical food shortages during the lean period and secondly, meeting the legal requirement for cooperative societies.**

Hence, residence within the catchment area and willingness to meet other Cereal Bank requirements, including membership contribution, possession of two or fewer draft oxen, priority for female-headed households and acceptance by other members of the association, are the main criteria employed for the selection of membership. In addition to this, their respective wives should endorse each male head of the household's membership.

As Hundee uses Cereal Bank Associations as an entry point and focal institutions for its other interventions, the Cereal Banks, through time, establish other committees with specialized tasks like Nursery Management Committee, the Dabaree council or committee, Women Rights Defense Committee and the like, as the locality requires.

**Dabaree councils**

One such specialized body formed by Cereal Banks is the Dabaree Council. The Dabaree Council is established both in conjunction with Hundee's older persons and women's support programs. One clear area where Hundee exhibits originality and creative approach is in this area of revitalizing traditional support systems in its quest to support these marginalized groups.

According to this revitalized, or rather, resurrected system, heifers will be given to chosen target beneficiaries. The beneficiaries will have full right to milk and milk products and the right to retain the consecutive generation of male calves. Female calves will be tended for a period of eighteen months and just upon weaning will be given out to other beneficiaries next in line. As this support system has a root in the communities' traditions, practically no problem has been encountered to date in its implementation. Through this rather popular program, it has so far covered 430 beneficiaries drawn from five Woredas.

Implementation arrangements made with respect to the proper delivery of the project under consideration, exhibits a number of strengths. An intensive process has been carried out in order to ensure community participation. The meticulously worked out implementation arrangement and strategy and, above all, the creative use of the wealth of indigenous knowledge are the strengths of the projects.
Afforestation program
The afforestation program mainly concentrates on establishing the central nurseries for production and distribution of seedlings. Nursery management committees are formed in each nursery site from the community that will eventually take over the operation of nurseries when the project phases out. Apart from running central nurseries, it also provides material and technical assistance to willing farmers to raise seedlings on their own private plots as a way of ensuring sustainability to the intervention. Giving environmental education to the community members and forming environmental clubs also constitute this line of Hundee's intervention.

In conjunction with this area of its intervention, it has managed to establish five central tree nurseries within its four catchment Woredas. About 3,574,000 tree seedlings were raised at these central nurseries and were distributed. Through 29 mini-private nurseries, a total of 446,000 seedlings of both exotic and indigenous races have been raised and distributed.

During the field visit made by the aforementioned evaluators, the reported the visible impact already made, as most of the forested plots observed in the locality are attributed to Hundee's intervention.

Through its civic education program, Hundee has covered about 19 Woredas and has managed to involve a total of 22,800 people.

Civic Education and law-making
Usually, the civic education activity of Hundee passes through a series of phases. As this line of Hundee's activity focuses on the rights of women, it starts with "Training of Trainers" to selected women activists who in turn encourage influential community members to participate in subsequent workshops. The first series of workshops are of women's workshop. The proceeding of the women's workshops usually start with prayers and guidance from the Oromo Waaqa (God) and these prayers and blessings by elderly women mark a unique opportunity, as women do not often bless and seek guidance in public gatherings.

Dialogue on the concept of equality is an important entry point for such workshops. Usually, the most probable outcome of the discussion on such points is the consensus that they reach on the fact that while not much can be done in terms of biological differences between men and women, other forms of differences arising from the way society is constructed can be tackled.

A profile of the daily activities of a typical woman in the locality will be set out in these workshops. This exercise usually brings about a common understanding on the crucial role played by women in the building of household assets. Consequent to this exercise, women's rights over family property and their decision making power at household level will be examined in view of the results of the activity profile done earlier. Such a comparison usually culminates with participants reaching a common understanding of the unfair nature of access to and control over family resources. In these workshops, the women involved also have discussions about some harmful traditional practices, so as to enable them see abuses and violations that are committed against them.

Likewise, the men's workshop will be separately organized so as to raise men's awareness of the need and obligation of honoring women's rights and protection. Securing the support of men towards institutionalizing women's rights and protection
through traditional law-making processes is also another objective behind organizing these forums. After the men's workshop, a joint workshop is organized to reach consensus on issues to be presented to the community conference, including practices that needs to be banned through the traditional law-making process.

Before presenting the jointly identified issues to the wider community conference, pre-law making consultative meetings will be held with Gada leaders so as to clarify whether or not what will come out of the conference is consistent and permissible in view of the culture of the people.

Once understanding is reached with these leaders on the conference deliberations, the Gada leaders respond to queries related to tradition while others tackle issues falling outside the domain of culture and tradition. The presiding Gada leader, upon being satisfied that a broad consensus has been reached, proceeds to the actual law-making process.

After the traditional law-making processes are carried out in different localities and the procedures explained above are followed, Women's Rights Defense Committees are established at Woreda level and are mainly composed of women, representatives of local government bodies, elders, representatives of farmers and representatives of Hundee, so that follow-up activities on community decisions will be take place.

Practices that were covered under this traditional law-making so far are abduction, early marriage, female genital mutilation, theft and alcoholism.

During the field visit and separate discussions held with female workshop participants at Wajitu, the women claimed that not a single abduction case has occurred in their locality since the law-making, thus suggesting the effectiveness of such a measure. The discussants also claimed the number of girl children going to school has increased during the same period.

**Conclusion**

Using the cereal bank associations as an entry point, Hundee is currently undertaking multi-faceted programs that, when taken together, suggest the emergence of a social movement that aims to eradicate poverty and strengthen the livelihoods of poor farmers.

Different types of training given and farmers’ participation in the day-to-day management of the Cereal Banks has contributed tremendously to the knowledge and skill of farmers involved in bringing about changes in the human capital of the concerned locality.

The tree seedlings distributed and other related environmental protection measures have brought about a significant change in the physical capital of the catchment area. As poor farmers embraced by Cereal Banks and other affiliated forums are learning to tackle their common problems through joint effort, it can be said that notable changes have taken place with respect to the social capital and community empowerment.

The formal establishment of cereal bank associations with their internally developed by-laws and other operational systems, along with the making of traditional laws that have been strongly enforced by a wider community, are signs of significant changes occurring in the area of structures and processes.
The communities’ capacity to become resilient to outside forces and their conscious effort to mitigate their vulnerability to the negative consequences of external factors and occurrences has tremendously increased. The most visible area where the project intervention has brought about an additional capacity in withstanding seasonal pressure is in the area of making grain available during the lean period. The additional assets created as a result of this intervention has provided poor farmers with a choice of strategies to secure their livelihoods. Poor farmers who are provided with heifers are now gaining additional income from the sale of milk and milk products, while those assisted in tree planting are now reaping the fruit of their efforts through additional income from the sales of their wood.

The previous scenario, where poor farmers were vulnerable to the dictates of forces outside their control, has now given way to a planned system of grain storage to be used during the lean period.

However, although these Cereal Banks exhibit strength in the area of member mobilization, organizational identity and commitment to their association, they do face formidable challenges on their way to attaining self-empowerment. One of the major stumbling blocks is the lack of an enabling environment. Up until very recently, NGOs were required to mainly deal with the regional state bodies in the areas where they were working and eventually with relevant zonal administrations. Likewise, Hundee, during the project designing stage had closely worked with these entities and had a working relation that eventually culminated in concluding the project agreement.

Administrative restructuring has been taking place across the country recently, and further decentralization of authority down to Woreda level has drastically changed the role of Woreda administrations in matters pertaining to development activities taking place in their respective localities. However, there has not been a smooth handover of responsibilities, once held by the zonal administration, to the Woredas. A large number of ‘gaps’ have appeared, that could temporarily affect the smooth operation of development work at the grassroots level.

Hundee area offices have submitted written reports to these Woredas that reflect on the essentials of what the organization is doing and on which basis legal arrangements have been reached. However, there are a few individuals who still prefer to disregard this on the grounds that they have not received any information from the zonal administration to this end.

Besides this, the Cooperative Promotion Office, especially the one in Bale Zone, has now linked the distribution of fertilizers with its established Multi-Purpose Cooperatives. This creates a situation where farmers embraced by the Cereal Banks face difficulties in getting this important input. According to this office, the moment the Cereal Banks set become involved with the fertilizer distribution, they lose their current identity and are presumed to be acting as multi-purpose cooperatives. As the law does not allow for similar types of cooperatives to be established within the same locality, the Office made it explicit that the Cereal Bank members will be required to merge with already established multi-purpose cooperatives. This is not necessarily what Cereal Bank members want or believe to be in their interests.

Another major setback encountered by these Cereal Banks is the partial erosion of capacity building measures, as new members are elected onto the committee. Such a riddle in any development endeavor is inescapable, as bringing new blood to the leadership is often a positive step that should not be avoided. Hundee needs to
continue with its strategy of extending the training to about 30% of the Cereal Bank membership. This measure is hoped to gradually solve this paradox.

Furthermore, flexibility in operations that Cereal Bank committee members need when undertaking their responsibilities, especially in a fast changing market environment, is lacking. Lack of information systems on agricultural marketing is believed to be the main cause for such problem.

Despite all these setbacks, the farmers that are organized under these Cereal Banks have already made great progress towards self-management. The idea of reversing this process has now become unthinkable.
Having looked at several water programmes in Ethiopia, it was decided to choose this particular example for inclusion, because it has emphasised a lead role for women in the running and governance of the water scheme from the very beginning. The sponsor, ActionAid, has invested heavily, not only in the infrastructure, but also, importantly, in developing the capacity of a hitherto illiterate group of women to manage the programme. Despite opposition from a male-led Woreda authority, the programme is surviving and planning to expand.
INTRODUCTION

This case study is about a rural women’s civic organization in Ethiopia known as Dalocha Women Water Development Association (DWWDA). The association was established in 1996 as an independent civic organization registered with the Southern Regional Government, which gives the association a full legal status according to the Ethiopian law of association. The main mandate of DWWDA is the management of a relatively large-scale rural water supply project constructed by Action-Aid Ethiopia (AAE), an international NGO headquartered in London. The area where DWWDA located is known as Dalocha Woreda (district), Silte Zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS). Dalocha woreda is located approximately 180 Kms Southwest of Addis Ababa.

The basic unit of analysis of this case study is DWWDA as an organization. The central focus of the case study is the analysis of empowerment and agency, participation and sustainability as well as DWWDA’s relationships with various stakeholders at the local level. In addition the case study provides basic information and a descriptive account of the characteristics of the association, its objectives, organization and activities, as well as a description of the AAE’s Dalocha Area Development Program and the water project with which the origin of DWWDA is closely associated.

The description and analysis presented in this case study is based on a triangulation of various methods and sources of data and information including: review of relevant documents, interview of various stakeholders and focus group discussion with relevant groups such as DWWDA leadership and ordinary members and beneficiaries, local government officials, AAE project personnel, etc (see Appendix II for details on methodology of the case study).

1. Basic Information about DWWDA

This section of the text contains brief descriptions of the origin of DWWDA and the rationale and motivation for its formation as well as a description of the nature and scope of the Dalocha Area Rural Development Program, especially the water sector project implemented by AAE.

1.1. Background: The Origin and Formation of DWWDA

“Water was the most critical need and priority of Dalocha community. Women were the most sufferers from traveling 6-8 hours to the Dijo river particularly during the dry seasons. The situation forced the community to put firm demands on ActionAid Ethiopia to facilitate the construction and provision of clean water. Ultimately, ActionAid had decided to construct a water scheme and meanwhile established DWWDA to ensure the management, ownership and sustainability of
the project. Consecutive community consultations had to take place to convince
the community to accept, trust and support the institutional initiative and choice.
The choice rested on the fact women, being bearers of the burden of water
fetching would be more concerned for its proper functioning and sustainability; it
gives them the opportunity to exercise decision making power; and it would
contribute to altering community’s unconstrically prejudiced mind-set towards
women. Here one can make inquiries whether the community and the local
government sincerely accredited AAE’s proposed institutional option or had to
accept it due to AAE’s strong position about it. Anyway, that was how DWWDA
came into being at the end of 1996 through an election process, which involved
all community members. (DWWDA Institutional Capacity and Sustainability
Assessment, By Regional Team, Action Aid Ethiopia South Region Office,
Unpublished Document, No Date, P.5)

The quotation above from AAE assessment document succinctly summarizes the
origin of DWWDA and the reasons why AAE strived to establish an independent
women’s organization to manage the water project it implemented in Dalocha. The
basic issues behind the origin of DWWDA can be identified as: (a) institutional: a
search for appropriate institutional arrangement for the management of the water
scheme to ensure continued access to clean water in a locality where water has
been a severe problem and priority need, and (b) women and gender issues

The origin of DWWDA was closely associated with the rural water supply scheme
implemented by AAE in Dalocha woreda (see section 1.2 for details of the program
and projects). The rational behind the formation of DWWDA and the transfer of the
management of the water scheme to a women’s organization was articulated in
terms of the following basic arguments:

(a) Women in Dalocha have been the main bearers of the burden of supplying water
to their families and used to suffer a lot transporting water from long distances, on the
average 6-8 Kms fetching unclean water especially during the dry season. Hence as
the main bearers of the burden of the water problem and as the primary beneficiaries
of the water project women would be more motivated to manage the water project in
a much more effective manner.

(b). The belief that the ownership and management of a relatively large water
scheme by an organization of local women would help change age-old attitudes
about the public role and status of women among the community and thereby
improve the status of women in the community by enabling them to participate in
decision-making processes that directly affect their lives.

Leaving the detailed empirical analysis of empowerment and sustainability for later
sections we can say even at this preliminary stage that, at least on the part of the
external agency which implemented the water project, namely AAE, we can discern
two mixed motives behind the formation of a women’s organization as an institutional
alternative to manage the water project, namely:

(a). The “instrumental” motive of project sustainability: the formation of DWWDA was
taken as an indispensable institutional arrangement based on the argument that
since women were the main bearers of the burden of supplying water to their
households and were the ones who suffered the most from the water problem before
the project, they would also be the main beneficiaries of the water project. As such, a
women’s organization would be most concerned about the project and would manage the scheme in a more effective and sustainable manner; and

(b) The “empowerment” motive, in the sense that the transfer of the control and management of the water scheme to a women’s organization will enhance the participation and decision-making status of women and in this way improve the status of women by changing the attitude of community members.

These arguments for the formation of DWWDA were mainly articulated by AAE as part of its institutional and community capacity building strategy for the transfer of the water project. However, although AAE was the main articulator of these arguments, the discourse has seeped deep into the grassroots level: it was repeatedly mentioned in focus group discussions and interviews with various groups at the local level including ordinary men and women beneficiaries of the water project as well as DWWDA leadership and coordination office personnel. The discourse has been adopted to such a great extent at the local level, that during the field work for this case study the investigator was repeatedly told that women have a deeper sense of responsibility, ownership, and honesty than men, for example, in terms of not only being more concerned about the proper management of the day to day operation of the water system but also in terms of financial probity and the proper handling of the revenue from the project. It was argued that men tend to be lax, especially in relation to financial matters, and their ‘bad habits’ were mentioned (such as drinking alcohol and chewing ‘chat’, - a mild stimulant widely consumed in Dalocha area).

1.2 The Dalocha Water Project: A Brief Description

In order to better grasp the opportunities and challenges that DAWWDA faces, it is important to describe the nature and scale of the water project it currently manages. The origin of DWWDA was directly associated with the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) undertaken in Dalocha woreda by Action Aid Ethiopia. AAE’s Dalocha program is one of the biggest rural development projects undertaken by an international NGO in Ethiopia. The program had 4 main operational sectors (food security, education, health, and water) and was implemented over a period of 14 years (1989-2003) at a total cost of 62 Million Ethiopian Birr (see Appendix for the budget allocation details).

The water sub-sector was the major component of the Dalocha Area Development Program. Review of project documents, interview of project personnel, DWWDA officials and beneficiaries indicate that water was a major problem for people in Dalocha. Residents traveled long distances (up to 8 Kms on average one way) especially during the dry season to collect unclean water from the Dijo river (the only permanent source of water in the area). The sufferings endured by households, especially women, due to severe water problem are still recounted in legendary manner by local residents (to the extent of pregnant women giving birth on the road to the river or a women killing her own child at the moment of anger because the child spilled the precious water, etc).

When AAE started its program in Dalocha in 1989, the population identified water as the number one priority and requested Action Aid to help the community in implementing a water project. Extensive consultations between AAE and the community were conducted and Action Aid finally decided to implement the Water project, which started in 1994 and was completed in 1998. In relation to the Origin of DWWDA, it is important to note that when Action Aid agreed to construct the water scheme, one of the major conditions it set was the formation of a local women’s
organization to manage the water scheme upon the completion of the water project. Accordingly DWWDA was formed in 1996 and took over the management of the water project in 1998.

Currently DDWDA manages an extensive water supply scheme consisting of two systems: spring and bore hole systems. The spring system is based on a 70 km pipeline network with 36 water supply points (known as water kiosks). The borehole system consists of 6 deep boreholes powered by generators and pumps with their own water kiosks. The two systems together supply water to 83 000 people in the project area.

2. Primary Characteristics of DWWDA

2.1. Aims and Objectives of DWWDA

The aims and objectives of the water sector project implemented by AAE in Dalocha and that of DWWDA are closely interrelated. Accordingly, the objectives of the water project are described below followed by a brief description of the aims and objectives of DWWDA as an organization.

The general objective of the water sector project of AAE Dalocha program was to: “create a reliable and self sustaining water supply system in the DA and to access safe and clean water to the DA population. Accessing of safe and potable water to the DA population within a maximum walking distance of 1 hour” (AAE, Dalocha Program, Water Sector Development Experience (1991 to 2002)

The aims and objectives of DWWDA are also associated with the water project. The objectives and functions of DWWDA as stated in its by law are summarized in text box 1 below.

Text Box 1: Aims and Functions of DWWDA

- Ensuring a continuous supply of clean water to the population in Dalocha woreda
- Facilitating the establishment of water use and distribution system and implement the system in the woreda
- Facilitate conditions for the use of water for health, income generation and development purposes in the community
- Facilitate the conditions for improved productivity of women by designing and implementing water related projects in the area
- Educate the community about the benefits of the proper use of clean water
- Facilitate conditions for improving womens knowledge and participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of water development projects
- Undertake other activities related to the above objectives of the association

(Source DWWDA By-Law (Amharic))
Organizational Structure of DWWDA

As a formal registered civic organization, DWWDA has a by-law that provides for an elaborate organizational and governance structure and detailed rules and regulation, as well as duties and rights of the various organs of the association (see Fig 1 for DWWDA organizational structure). DWWDA’s organizational structure is based on a number of core organs including the General Assembly (GA), Executive Board (EB), and Kebele Water Committees (KWCs). In addition, DWWDA has a coordinating office (CO) headed by a female coordinator and a number of permanent and semi-permanent technical and administrative staff. The CO is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the water system. Brief descriptions of each of the core organs of DWWDA are presented below.

The General Assembly

The highest governing body of DWWDA is the general assembly. As stated in the DWWDA by-law, the general assembly consists of elected representatives (178 women in total) of all women residing in the area covered by the water project. The Dalocha water project covers 16 Kebeles (out of a total of 26 kebeles in Dalocha woreda). DWWDA membership is based on residential or project area in the sense that all women residing in the project area and beneficiaries of the water project are deemed to be members of the association. Accordingly, the elected representatives of these larger underlying group of members make up the general assembly of the association. Although membership is area or project based, what distinguishes DWWDA is that membership and leadership of the organization is generally women
oriented and the broader membership is the foundation of the association, at least through the election of their representatives who sit in the general assembly. According to the DWWDA by-law, in addition to women residing in the project area, any person (male or female) who supports the objectives of the association can be an associate member.

**DWWDA Board**

The general assembly elects the executive board of DWWDA, which consists of 16 members, one each from the 16 kebeles. The board has a chairwoman, secretary, and treasurer. The duties and powers of the board are formally stated as implementing the decisions and plans adopted in the general assembly and to oversee the proper functioning of the water project in general. As can be seen from the formal organizational chart, DWWDA has an advisory board and this body, as its name indicates, is meant to have an advisory role. According to the by-law of the association, the membership of the advisory body should be drawn from various woreda level government and non-governmental organizations. Although the functions and membership of the advisory body are clearly stated in the by-law of the association, this body was never formed. This is one of the major lacuna in DWWDA governance structure because if the advisory body had been formed and made functional, it would have given critical stakeholders a chance to work with and assist DWWDA and would have averted some of the conflicts and disagreements the association had with, for example, the woreda government.

**Kebele Water Committees (KWCs)**

In each of the 16 kebeles there are kebele water committees (KWCs), consisting of 11 women members, elected by all community members of the respective kebeles. In effect, many of the members of kebele water committees from the 16 kebeles are on the general assembly of DWWDA, the highest governing body of the association referred to above. The basic function of the KWCs is to oversee the day-to-day operation of the water system in their respective kebeles. The KWCs constitute the crucial link with DWWDA and the grassroots, and work with the water point operators, kebele administration and elders to resolve problems related to the water system.

**DWWDA Coordination Office (CO)**

DWWDA also has its own Coordination Office (CO), led by a women coordinator. The CO undertakes the actual day-to-day activities of the association related to the management of the water supply system. It must be remembered that the Dalocha water scheme supplies water to about 83,000 people and has two major sources: a Spring system linked to 70 Kms pipeline network and six deep boreholes. In general both water systems have 8 pumps, 8 generators, 14 reservoirs with different capacities and 34 water kiosks. The relatively extensive nature of the water supply scheme under the DWWDA mandate means that the association has a relatively large number of salaried employees undertaking the routine financial and technical operations of the water supply system, in total 10 permanent and 48 semi-permanent workers.

2.3. Activities and Size of Program
The Dalocha water sector project implemented by AAE is a relatively large-scale rural water scheme. The major activities undertaken under the water sector project of the Dalocha program are indicated in Text Box 2:

Text Box 2: Dalocha AAE Water Sector Activities

- Drilling of Bore-holes
- Spring development
- Reservoir construction
- Distribution pipeline
- Construction of water kiosks
- Installation of pumps and generators
- Water system protection works
- Establishment and strengthening of DWWDA

(For more detailed and systematic information and data on the activities, assets, number of beneficiaries, etc of AAE Dalocha water project see Appendix I, Table1)

DWWDA formally took over the management of the water project from AAE in 1998, although the former continued to play a role in the operation of the water project in terms of capacity building support to DWWDA as well as activities related to the completion of the project in preparation for the phase out.

Activities of DWWDA

The main activity of the DWWDA since it took over of the water project has been the administration of the water project. In practice, this means overseeing the day-to-day operations undertaken by the CO of the association. In addition the following are some of the activities

- Annual Plan and budget prepared for the first time in the year 2002
- Expansion of the water distribution system (in Dalocha town)
- Pipeline protection activities through community mobilization and local government

Except for some vague intentions to start new income-generating schemes, the association has not undertaken any additional activity. This situation indicates that so far DWWDA’s main activity has been just managing the day-to-day operations of the water project.

2.4 Resources Used: (For the Water Project and DWWDA Operation)

The Dalocha water scheme is perhaps the only relatively big water project being managed by a women’s organization in Ethiopia. ActionAid Ethiopia had spent millions of Birr on constructing the water scheme. AAE has also spent substantial resources on building the capacity of DWWDA over a relatively long period, both
before and after the transfer of the project to DWWDA (see Appendix I, Table 2 for data and information on resources expended and the assets created in relation to the water project).

The total expense (direct and indirect actually utilized cost) for Dalocha water sector program over the 14-year period amounts to 10,106,333 (ten million one hundred six thousand and three hundred thirty-three) Ethiopian Birr. This is distributed into three major activity areas and in terms of direct costs the shares were: Civil Construction (6,440,683); Pipeline System Distribution and Protection (1,970,867) and Capacity Building for DWWDA (366,859)\(^\text{18}\). All of the costs were covered by AAE. No direct financial contribution was made by the community for the water project, although this is a critical issue regarding the sense of ownership and sustainability of water and other development projects. This issue has also been raised in ActionAid assessment documents (see AAE 2002). The water project assets created with this relatively substantial sum of money are now under the control and management of DWWDA. It is important to bear in mind the scale of these assets under the control of DWWDA to understand the relations between DWWDA and local government in Dalocha, which we shall discuss later in this case study.

### 3. DIMENSIONS OF EMPOWERMENT: DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

This section provides a more detailed description and analysis of the core areas and issues of the case study namely: agency and empowerment, relationships, participation, and sustainability issues in relation to DWWDA. Given the centrality of these issues for the case study it is useful to revisit the points indicated in section one regarding the motives and rationale for the formation of DWWDA as a bench mark for the analyses in this section. As was indicated, there were two underlying and mixed motives behind the formation of a women’s organization in Dalocha: the instrumental motive of project sustainability and the empowerment motive. Accordingly, there are some key and challenging questions in analyzing issues of empowerment and agency as well as participation and sustainability in relation to DAWWDA:

- To what extent local agency, especially that of women played a role in the establishment of DWWDA, as compared to the role of external agency.
- Whatever the role of women’s agency (even if it was limited and marginal in the initial formation of the association and the transfer of the water scheme), did women in the locality through DWWDA take the opportunity to further enhance the substantive empowerment of women?
- What are the major success indicators and sustainability challenges (organizational, financial, technical, political) for DWWDA as a rural women’s civic organization managing a relatively large-scale water project?

\[^{18}\] Since the exchange rate of the Ethiopian Birr (ETB) with foreign currencies such as USD, fluctuated and increased over time it is not possible to put it in USD for the period when the water project was constructed in the mid-1990s. Currently the Exchange Rate stands at about 1 USD=8.7 ETB
In this section, we attempt to answer these questions and in the final section we summarize the main implications and lessons to be derived from the DWWDA experience in relation to issues of empowerment, sustainability and capacity building.

3.1. Analysis of Agency

The main questions for the analysis of agency are to what extent and in what form women’s agency contributed to the formation of DWWDA and its formal empowerment, and to what extent the role of AAE was pivotal not simply in the implementation of the water project but also in the formation of DWWDA itself. In short is DWWDA an imposition by AAE on Dalocha community? It is important to bear in mind these questions in order to understand the analysis of the various dimensions of agency (social, cultural, economic, political) associated with the DWWDA phenomenon.

3.1.1. Social-Cultural Dimension of Agency

The elements of social and cultural agency addressed in this case study include: education, social solidarity, formal and informal women oriented institutions in Dalocha, as well as local cultural values and norms which may have contributed to the formation of DAWWDA as well as to its subsequent activities and experiences.

Regarding formal education, most ordinary members as well as leaders (general assembly as well as board members) were illiterate at the time DWWDA was formed. In fact, currently one of the major concerns regarding the organizational sustainability of DWWDA is precisely the low level of education of DWWDA leadership. This was one of the major issues that came out during interviews with the local woreda government officials as well as AAE project officers. It was felt that given the large-scale and complicated nature of the water scheme, the low educational level of DWWDA leadership means that it cannot provide effective leadership such as charting out strategic planning. There are suggestions to include more educated women in the DWWDA leadership.

However, it should be noted that the formation of DWWDA and its takeover of the management of the water scheme has opened up very important educational opportunities for many women in Dalocha, not only for DWWDA leadership but also ordinary women members. Through its basic and informal education program, AAE has provided many women with basic education (all general assembly and board members, kebele level women’s water committee members, as well as women operators of the water distribution points). In addition, as part of its capacity building program, AAE has provided continuous training programs for a relatively large number of women (see the section on capacity building for details). Our findings indicate that as a result of these educational and training opportunities, women’s level of awareness and involvement in community affairs has increased. The process has also imparted a great deal of confidence among DWWDA leadership about the management of the organization as well as about health, educational and gender issues.

Regarding social solidarity and informal local institutions, it is notable that both ordinary women in Dalocha as well the leaders of DWWDA denied that pre-existing women’s informal institutions and networks had any thing to do with the formation of DWWDA or its managing of the water scheme. However, it is clear that the formation of DWWDA has imparted a visible dynamic in terms of solidarity among women in
Dalocha. Not only DWWDA leadership but also ordinary women in the focus group discussion held strong opinions about the importance of solidarity among women to protect the water scheme and keep the management of the water scheme under women’s control, at any cost. This determination and solidarity has been practically demonstrated during confrontations with the previous woreda administration that challenged DWWDA, even closing its office. Women argued that the threat from the woreda government was averted, due mainly to the mobilization and firm stand taken by ordinary women as well as DWWDA leadership.

An important element of social agency among Dalocha women, which was frequently mentioned in interviews and focus group discussions, was women’s previous experiences in various AAE project activities, especially women’s saving and credit groups as well as management of grain mills. A particular case in point was an initiative to place grain mills under separate women’s and men’s cooperative management. While none of the 10 grain mills placed under the men’s cooperative are now functioning, 5 out of 10 mills under the management of women are still functioning. This was taken as proof that women are better managers of public projects than men. AAE used these experiences to argue during community mobilization and discussion that there was a need for women’s organization and the formation of DWWDA to manage the water scheme. As indicated earlier, on top of the argument about the importance of the water project for women, the discourse on the deeper sense of responsibility, sense of ownership, and honesty or trustworthiness of women is taken as an important contributing factor for the formation of DWWDA. This latter point was repeatedly emphasized by all groups, including men, at the local level to the extent of being turned in to a cliché or a stereotype.

Are there precedents and elements in local culture (values, norms, beliefs, whether religious or not) that can be taken as factors of cultural agency? Local culture in Dalocha is generally characterized as traditional in the sense of being strongly patriarchal with a great deal of emphasis on the domestic role of women as wives and mothers. The large majority of the Dalocha people are followers of Islam and polygamy is also practiced. The general impression from discussion with focus group members and elders is that local cultural patterns do not imply anything resembling cultural agency, in relation to women and their role and status in the public domain, which can be associated with the DWWDA phenomena. At the same time however, it is pointed out that the Silte ethnic group to which the Dalocha community belongs is generally characterized as open and receptive to new ideas and innovations, even progressive. This is partly attributed to long-standing and widespread mobility and migration by many members of the Dalocha community to urban areas and the strong rural-urban linkages. Dalocha people are also said to be pragmatic in orientation: For example during meetings and discussion for the starting of the water project and when AAE put the formation of a women’s organization as one of the conditions for the water project, the attitude was, ‘why not let AAE construct the water project first and let women mange it? After all, if women fail we (men) will take over!’

3.1.2. Political Agency

It cannot be said that women in Dalocha had any significant political leverage that can be taken as a visible agency in terms of enabling women to form DWWDA and take over the management of the water project. However, the information we obtained from various sources clearly indicate that the DWWDA leadership, through the support of ordinary women members, have successfully defended the association
and its mandate to own and manage the water project from several challenges including threats from the local government.

In addition, if we take political agency in its broadest sense, including external support, we can mention the following,

- The strong support and intervention of AAE has provided DWWDA with some political clout and protection both at the local and regional level. The firm stand AAE took on the matter of transferring the water scheme to a local women’s organization has tilted the balance and ensured the formation of DWWDA and its continued control over the water project.

- While the relation of DWWDA with the local woreda government cannot be characterized as healthy and supportive, the relevant zonal and regional level government bodies had a more positive and supportive attitude towards DWWDA. Interviews with all stakeholders indicate that these higher-level government bodies have consistently supported DWWDA and intervened in support of DWWDA, even during disputes with the local administration. This is partly because these higher level government authorities see DWWDA as a model of women’s organization in the area and support to DWWDA is viewed as a reflection of the overall government policy of encouraging local participation and women’s empowerment. In addition and more importantly, it should be noted that unlike the woreda administration, these upper level government bodies are far removed from the local level politics and do not have the interest or the relevance to stake claim on the ownership of the water project’s assets and income currently controlled by DWWDA.

- Finally, both AAE and DWWDA have undertaken a great deal of publicity and external relations work to promote DWWDA’s image: For example, a series of programs on DWWDA and the Dalocha community was aired on national TV in February 2004, depicting DWWDA as a successful model of a women’s organization, managing a large rural water scheme and the associated empowerment of women. DWWDA was also a topic of an extensive presentation in a national English-language newspaper (see The Ethiopian Herald, 7 February 2004, Under “Focus on Women” column, entitled “DWWDA in Changing the sentiment of the Society on Women”). DWWDA is now known nationwide and is the subject of visits by various governmental and non-governmental bodies. All these factors provide DWWDA with a significant amount of political leverage and protection, which is crucial for a rural women’s organization controlling a critical and large scheme.

### 3.1.3. Economic Dimension of Agency

The Dalocha water project under DWWDA’s control is a big project worth millions of Birr. DWWDA has also received substantial amount of project related assets including an office and equipment from AAE. The water project can generate, at least potentially, a substantial amount of revenue (see section below on problems of financial sustainability). In addition, DWWDA employs a relatively large number of permanent and semi-permanent paid workers. These facts indicate that DWWDA has a significant economic clout, which is rare for a rural women’s organization in Ethiopia. With proper management of the scheme and the addition of related projects, DWWDA could extend its economic position and contribute to the further improvement of living conditions for ordinary women in Dalocha. However, it is the
substantial amount of assets and potential revenues under the control of DWWDA, that partly explain the acrimonious relations it had with the woreda government, the latter being a potential rival for the takeover of the water project.

3.2. Relationships of DWWDA With Other Stakeholders

This section is devoted to a summary presentation of DWWDA’s relationship with various stakeholders including Government structures, especially local government in Dalocha, and relations with NGOs, especially AAE.

3.2.1. Relationships with Woreda Government

“Water is a Political Issue” – Dalocha Woreda Chief Administrator

“Water is Life”- Local Women Beneficiary and Member of DWWDA

The above two quotations taken from field-work interviews in Dalocha encapsulate important dimensions of the perceptions of two types of actors, regarding the water project, its management by DWWDA and relations with local government. Although DWWDA has some formal relationships with all tiers of government (regional Zonal, Woreda and Kebele levels), the most critical government structures in relation to DWWDA are the kebele and especially woreda levels of government (these two are the ones referred to as local government in this case study). We summarize below the nature of the relationships between DWWDA and local government with particular emphasis on the Dalocha Woreda Administration, based on the information collected from interviews with the Dalocha Woreda Chief Administrator, members of relevant woreda government offices, DWWDA leadership, coordination office personnel, AAE Dalocha program personnel and a cross-section of community members. The Presentation also draws upon a review of available documents.

It is important to note that as a registered association with its own legal status, DWWDA has both formal and informal relationships with different units and levels of Government. As mentioned earlier, DWWDA is registered with the Justice Bureau of the SNNPRS and accordingly it fulfills all obligations and requirements of similar organizations: it submits an annual audit report, activity plan and budget to the Justice Bureau. This is a rather formal relationship, but it is important to note it because, in spite of its legal status and fulfillment of the above mentioned requirements, there are still challenges to the legitimacy of DWWDA and refusal to recognize the association’s mandate to manage the water project, which has made relations with the local woreda administration, in particular, difficult at times. The relationship with the Woreda level government is so critical for the future of DWWDA and the water project it manages that this section mainly focuses on this relationship.

It is to be noted that prior to the formation of DWWDA in 1996 and upon the transfer of the water project to DWWDA management in 1998, some measures had been taken to facilitate the relations of the association with the local government and community in Dalocha, mainly through the influence of AAE. First, community mobilization and discussions have been undertaken to convince the population and local government that, upon completion, the management of the water project will be transferred to an organization of local women. Secondly, a four side formal agreement was entered between, DWWDA, AAE, the Woreda government and the Regional Bureau of Water, Mines and Energy. The purpose of this agreement was to
involve critical stakeholders at the local level and ensure the effective and cooperative management of the water project. In spite of these attempts however, the relationships between DWWDA and the woreda government have never been smooth or cooperative. The problem has been simmering for a while and the reasons for the difficult relationships between the two entities appear to be complex. Some of these are discussed below.

Confrontation with Previous Woreda Administration

The underlying misunderstandings between the woreda administration and DWWDA came to a head in 2001. The former Dalocha Woreda administrator closed the office of DWWDA claiming that he wanted to undertake a financial audit of the association. In our interview with DWWDA leadership, the leaders pointed out that prior to the confrontation, rumors were made to spread in the area by the administration alleging financial impropriety and incompetence in the management of the water system. The move was essentially one of questioning the legitimacy and capacity of DWWDA to manage the water project. In the final analysis the intention of the administrator was to disband DWWDA and replace it with some kind of a cooperative organization under the control of the woreda government. For three days the DWWDA office was closed and the distribution of water was interrupted. According to the information we gathered from different groups in Dalocha, DWWDA leadership took a firm stand to stop the distribution of water until the office of the association was opened up. The leadership of DWWDA and the coordination office personnel also managed to rally women and other supporters against the administration. Finally the regional government, through its Water, Mines and Energy Bureau had to intervene to resolve the stand-off, in response to the appeal of AAE and DWWDA.

Views of Current Dalocha Woreda Administrator

Although the immediate threats to DWWDA’s existence from the previous woreda administration were averted, the relationship between the woreda administration and DWWDA still remain problematic, if not confrontational. The attitudes of the current woreda administration towards DWWDA and its management of the water project appear to be mixed:

On the one hand, the current chief administrator indicated to us that the woreda administration recognizes DWWDA as an independent and legally registered association mandated to manage the water project. The administrator also accepted that so far DWWDA has managed the water project without any problems and on his part he believes that as long as the water system is well managed it does not matter which entity is managing it. In this context the current administration deplores the interference by the previous woreda administration and the confrontation with DWWDA. The administrator also noted that there might still be some people in the woreda administration who hold hostile attitudes towards DWWDA due to personal interests, but such attitudes do not represent the attitude of the current administration as an institution.

On the other hand the woreda administrator pointed out that the woreda council and executive committee (which he represents) have very serious concerns about DWWDA and the future sustainability of the water project under DWWDA management. It is in this context that the administrator uttered the statement quoted above, namely “water is a political issue”. When asked to elaborate, the administrator argued that in Dalocha water is a serious matter because the population has suffered because of the water problem in the past and if any problems and interruptions in the
water system occur, the population would immediately lay responsibility on the 
woredula administration. The woreda administration, as the most immediate and 
elected political and administrative body in the area cannot pretend to be indifferent 
to problems related to the water project. As elaborated by the woreda administrator, 
the problems and concerns in the relationships between the woreda government and 
DWWDA can be summarized in terms of the following two points:

1. DWWDA is an enclave: According to the woreda administrator DWWDA 
currently operates as an 'enclave'. The woreda administration knows very 
little about what is going in DWWDA and its operation of the water project. 
DWWDA does not consult, let alone report to, the woreda administration. The 
woredula administration has no clue about DWWDA financial status, day-to-day 
activities and problems of the association. The administrator lamented the 
lack of clearly delineated and institutionalized functional relationships 
between the woreda government, DWWDA and other stakeholders for the 
management of the water project. It was also noted that it is AAE which plays 
the decisive role in relation to DWWDA and the water project. The implication 
is that the woreda government has been alienated and excluded from 
DWWDA affair and the management of the water project.

2. Doubts about DWWDA capacity: According to woreda administrator, the woreda 
government has deep concerns and doubts about the capacity of DWWDA 
leadership and coordination office to effectively manage such a large-scale and 
complicated water project in the future. This is in spite of the fact that earlier on 
the administrator has admitted that so far DWWDA has managed the water 
project without problem. However, the administrator argues that it is because 
AAE is always there behind the screen and when AAE completely withdraws, 
DWWDA will not be able to manage the water project. This is a constant refrain 
on the part of the woreda government. There is a confusion of identity between 
AAE and DWWDA and the view that the latter is a shadow and creation of the 
former. In explaining the capacity problem of DWWDA, the woreda administrator 
gave special emphasis to the low educational qualification of most of the 
DWWDA general assembly and Board members. He suggested that in the future, 
more educated women must be included in DWWDA leadership.

Text Box 3: Duties and Responsibilities of the Dalocha Woreda 
Administration

1. Provide the necessary land for the construction of warehouses, kiosks 
and generators buildings;

2. Safeguard the pipes kiosks generators and other materials used for the 
construction and maintenance of the project;

3. Assist in the training and orientation of the members of the Womens 
Association for the proper use of the water and maintenance of the pipes, 
kiosks, generators etc.;
DWWDA leadership, its coordination office, and AAE project personnel accept some of the problems raised by the woreda administration but argue that the problem mainly arises from the woreda administration itself, due to indifference, lack of capacity to engage constructively with DWWDA, lack of understanding of the independent status of the association and hostility to the very idea of an independent organization of local women managing a relatively large-scale scheme. They argue that the woreda government tends to forget its responsibility with regard to the water project and the beneficiary population. For example, it was pointed out that the woreda government has entered into a formal written agreement with DWWDA and AAE for the management of the water project, a copy of which exists in its office (see Text Box 3 for the duties and responsibilities of the woreda administration with regard to DWWDA and the water project). But in spite of this the administration says there is a lack of any formal and clearly delineated basis for institutional and functional relationships. Over the past several years there has been frequent and rapid turnover of staff in the woreda administration and no one bothers to devote time and effort to follow up and familiarize themselves with DWWDA and the efforts made in the past to establish mechanisms of partnership. For the same reasons, the nature of the relationships between the woreda government and DWWDA have depended on a personal rather than an institutional basis, in the sense that they depend on the attitude and goodwill of the key persons in position at different times.

What ever the arguments and counter-arguments on both parts, what is undeniable is that the relationships between DWWDA and the woreda government are not healthy. As pointed out earlier, the woreda government is the most important tier of government for the future of DWWDA and the water project. For example, it is not farfetched to assume that given the scale and the complexity of the water scheme, any disruption and problem with the distribution system would be used by the woreda government as an excuse to pounce upon DWWDA and take away control and management of the project. As we have seen, there is a precedent for such an eventuality. Hence it is important to carefully identify the root causes of the problem in the relationship between DWWDA and the woreda government. Our assessment based on various sources is summarized below.

- The roots of the problematic relations between the Dalocha woreda government and DWWDA can be traced partly to the very initial efforts at creating an alternative institutional arrangement in the form of a local women’s organization to control and manage the water project. As we have noted earlier, AAE has made some worthwhile efforts to consult the community and the local government about the importance of an independent women’s association managing the water project. In addition, attempts have been made to establish a formal agreement between critical stakeholders, including the woreda government, for some cooperation in the management of the water project. In spite of these efforts, in retrospect, it is clear that the work done in terms of mobilization and advocacy to create real common ground and shared commitment among the community and the local government towards DWWDA appears to have been insufficient. The very fact that AAE made the formation of DWWDA a precondition for the construction of the water project implies a certain degree of pressure. This is because given the importance of the water project the population and the woreda government in Dalocha were liable to accept the precondition rather than lose the water scheme. In addition, the valuable efforts made in terms of establishing an agreement and an advisory board were nullified due to lack of commitment to make them functional.
• However, in the opinion of the investigator the roots of the problem go deeper and beyond those elaborated above. The issue of power and control over resources is a central part of the explanation for the problematic relationships between DWWDA and the woreda government. It should be noted that the very idea of a civic organization, and a local rural women’s organization at that, controlling a vital and potentially income-generating scheme is an unfamiliar idea. Water systems in both urban and rural Ethiopia are mainly controlled and managed by government institutions. Moreover, the conventional arrangement between NGOs (such as ActionAid) and the government is to transfer the ownership and management of project assets upon phase-out to the relevant government unit (although usually the term community is mentioned, which is a vague and nebulous idea for practical purposes). In any case, the bottom line is that control over a project, with substantial assets and income generating potential, is a source of power and prestige that the woreda government would undoubtedly like to get its hands on. Although this is never admitted officially, it partly explains the deeply engrained attitude of refusal to accept not only the capacity but also the legitimacy of DWWDA to manage the water project in spite of the fact, known to all, that DWWDA is an independent and legally recognized civic organization, formed for the very purpose of managing the Dalocha water scheme.

3.2.2. DWWDA Relations with AAE

“Such intensive engagement and support to DWWDA by ActionAid might be the reason for considering DWWDA as not a separate entity but as ActionAid by the community, government even by significant number of DWWDA members” (AAE, DWWDA Institutional Capacity and Sustainability Analysis)

The single most important formal NGO with which DWWDA has had strong relationships is AAE. Neither AAE during the implementation of the Dalocha program (including the water sector), nor DWWDA after its formation and takeover of the management of the water system, forged any significant relationships and collaboration with other formal CSOs or NGOs. Therefore this section describes the relationships between DWWDA and AAE.

Apart from transferring the entire Dalocha water sector project to DWWDA, AAE has put substantial resources into building the capacity of DWWDA. In fact, as the above quotation from one of AAE’s own frank assessment documents indicates, the role of AAE in the life of DWWDA is such that there appears to be a confusion of identities between the two organizations. The all-rounded and pervasive nature of the role of AAE in the life of DWWDA from its very inception up to the present makes it unfeasible to enumerate every detail. However, the details of the role and involvement of AAE are incorporated in various sections of the case study (e.g. in the Capacity building section). In this section, therefore, we identify and list some of the most important roles of AAE and its relationships with DWWDA.

• AAE initiated the very idea of a women’s organization, showed a strong commitment and devoted substantial resources to its realization. To this end, AAE initiated extensive mobilization and consultation with the community and local government to convince them of the rationale and importance of forming DWWDA as in the best interest of the community and the management of the project. All evidence indicates the central role played by AAE in the formation of DWWDA.
• AAE facilitated the formation of DWWDA and its legal registration as a formal independent civic organization with a mandate to control and manage the water project. AAE also facilitated the signing of a four-side agreement mentioned earlier. The purpose of the agreement was to ensure the legal foundation of DWWDA control and management of the water project. AAE also took the lead role in promoting DWWDA, mainly in the form of external relations effort.

• AAE covered the entire cost (with no financial contribution or cost sharing by community) of the water project and transferred to DWWDA not only the assets of the water scheme, but also project related facilities such as office, equipment, motor cycles, etc (DWWDA currently occupies and uses the former compound and some of the offices and facilities of AAE Dalocha program).

• Provided Extensive Capacity Building support for DWWDA with a focus on lengthy training programs for DWWDA leadership and employees (see section on capacity building)

• Seconded a female member of staff as coordinator of DWWDA, paying her salary up until 2001.

• Provided 51, 000 ETB in cash as a seed money when DWWDA started the management of the water system.

All of the above support and intervention by AAE shows such a strong bond between the two entities, that it is no wonder there is a widespread tendency amongst the community and local government to view AAE and DWWD as two sides of the same coin. This danger has been acknowledged by AAE’s internal assessments. Beyond the rhetorical question of whether DWWDA is a simply creation of AAE imposed on Dalocha community, there are clearly visible problems of confusion of identity, sense of dependency and problems of confidence in the relationships between AAE and DWWDA

The dilemma is that in spite of this pervasive relationships and extensive support by AAE to DWWDA internal assessments within AAE as well as our own investigations indicate that the degree to which the association has established its roots at the local level and the level of acceptance of its legitimacy and capacity especially by critical stakeholders such as the woreda administration is considered to be unsatisfactory.

3.4 Capacity Building

A significant amount of resources and effort has been devoted by AAE to build the capacity of DWWDA. By capacity building we are essentially talking about the support provided by AAE. Some of the issues relevant to capacity building have already been raised in the discussion of the relationship between DWWDA and AAE. The major aspect of capacity building provided to DWWDA through AAE assistance was in the form of training as elaborated below:

• DWWDA board members (16 women) receive training one day a month for 6 years on: management and administration, financial rules and regulations, water utilization rules and regulations, water and health, gender, and protection of the water network

• DWWDA general assembly members (178 women) are trained once every three months for 6 years in similar areas as those above, but including the management of water distribution kiosks
• Kebele water committee members receive similar training over a similar period of time as the assembly members
• Women water kiosk operators (64 women) receive training over a period of 7 years on: operation of water kiosks, financial accounting rules, water use and health and gender.
• Basic literacy education for over 500 hundred women, which includes DWWDA leadership, over a period of three consecutive years. When DWWDA started its operation 98% of members of DWWDA leadership were illiterate, and the objective was therefore to enable the leadership and those working as employees in the water kiosks to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills.
• Kebele water conflict resolution committee members. These committees consist of elders, religious leaders and water committee members and its task is to tackle man-made problems on the water systems, resolve conflicts and ensure the protection and safety of the water distribution system. The kebele level DWWDA water committees work closely with and supported by the conflict resolution body

Has AAE over-invested in the capacity building of DWWDA? We have to see this from two angles. The first is the scale of the water project: The Dalocha water project is a relatively big and complicated system. AAE was determined to transfer this scheme to a local women’s organization, but this decision inevitably requires serious investment and work in capacity building, if its water project is to succeed. The scale of the capacity building efforts is therefore somewhat related to the scale of the project being transferred. Yet how much investment in capacity building of DWWDA is sufficient is not at all clear. This is because on the surface what AAE has done in terms of DWWDA capacity building may appear a lot, especially when viewed as an investment on a single organization (with all the attendant maladies of creating dependency and confusion of identity mentioned earlier). On the other hand and paradoxically, the existing capacity of DWWDA (in all aspects) is still considered to be inadequate to manage the water scheme, especially in terms of future sustainability. This is a dilemma, which is difficult to resolve easily.

3.5. Sustainability Analysis

3.5.1. Financial Sustainability

Currently DWWDA generators its income from the sale of water to the Dalocha community as well as support provided by AAE. Based on discussion and agreements reached between the community, AAE and the local government, the tariff for the sale of water was set at 0.15 Birr for 40 litres. The initial predictions for generating revenue from the sale of water were somewhat optimistic. However, a look at DWWDA accounts show that the association is yet to establish a secure financial basis. The income and expenditure figures show that until 2002 DWWDA was unable to cover its expenses from the sale of water without the support of AAE (see Appendix I, Table 3). The total financial deficit of DWWDA without AAE support in the period 1999-2001 stood at 65, 626 ETB. However, DWWDA has gradually managed to reduce its deficit and currently has a positive balance of 394, 767 ETB in its bank account. Discussions with DWWDA and AAE personnel and evaluation documents indicate various reasons for low revenue from the sale of water including: high leakage on the pipeline, low water intake by the community, low water tariffs as compared to the costs and expenses DWWDA incurs to run the water system, especially the high costs of running the borehole system (which covers about 30 percent of population but takes 65% of the deficit).
The question of DWWDA financial sustainability has to be put in a long-term perspective. The Dalocha water project is still a relatively new scheme. Given the large-scale and complicated nature of the water scheme, the problems of financial sustainability are bound to loom large with the aging of the water system. Also, the system, especially the borehole is based on relatively expensive and imported equipment (generators and pumps) and with time the demands for maintenance and replacement will increase the expenses of DWWDA.

3.5.2. Organizational Sustainability

Organizational sustainability with regard to DWWDA must take into account both the strengths and weaknesses internal to the association as well as the external environment which influence its internal organization. Some of the strategic issues related to these are drawn together in the final section. Here we mainly identify DWWDA organizational sustainability in terms of internal weakness and strengths of the association in relation to the local community and government.

3.5.2.1. Legitimacy and Acceptance

Establishing legitimacy and acceptance by the community and local government is very important for the organizational sustainability of rural local women’s organizations such as DWWDA. However, we have shown in this study that due to a number of reasons the level of legitimacy and acceptability of DWWDA still needs to be securely established. The strong and pervasive role of AAE, the insufficient mobilization and lobbying work at the initial stage, and sheer refusal to accept DWWDA as an independent legal organization with the mandate to own and manage the water project because of competition for power and control over resources, are some of the reasons which undermine the legitimacy of DWWDA.

On the other hand, DWWDA is a formal and legal registered civic association. Like all such associations it has rights as well as duties, which it must fulfill based on the law of the country. This sheer fact is important because its existence cannot be as easily extinguished as in the case of some informal committee or group at the local level. This provides some legal protection and legitimacy for DWWDA and the measures taken to anchor the association on a formal and legal footing is a wise move and can serve as a model for other associations and organizations in rural areas. In addition a good amount of effort has been made to promote and publicize DWWDA in the national media and this also provides some measure of legitimacy and protection for the association.

3.5.2.2. Accountability and Transparency

According to the DWWDA by-law, elections to the board must take place every two years. However, no formal election of DWWDA has taken place since the formation and registration of the association. The justification by the current board members and the CO for not holding board elections is that current board members have received training and awareness creation for over a long period of time through capacity building programs provided by AAE and it is hard to find trained and ‘empowered’ women to replace the existing leadership. Whatever the justifications, it is a serious accountability and transparency problem, in that the association even at this early stage of its life has not been able to abide by its laws. With some exaggeration, we can say that the old and legendary principle of “the iron law of
“oligarchy” seems to be at work, in which an elected body ‘usurps’ and arrogates upon itself a permanent hold on organizational power.

3.5.2.3. Capacity of DWWDA Leadership and CO

Although the justification for postponing elections of DWWDA leadership is finding capable and trained people to replace the current leadership, there are, paradoxically serious doubts about the leadership capacity of the board and the general assembly, especially by the local government, mainly attributed to the low educational level of the leadership. This is one of the central arguments of the Dalocha woreda Administration. Internal assessments by AAE also underline that the future of DWWDA and the water project critically depend on the capacity of the leadership. The suggestion is being made that more educated women must be included in DWWDA leadership to provide the association with the requisite capacity to engage in strategic planning, give effective leadership to the coordination office, and expand the activities of the association. Similarly, assessments indicate that DWWDA coordination office lacks capacity for the effective administration of the water system with envisaged expansion.

3.5.3. Technical Sustainability

As already indicated the Dalocha water project under DWWDA management is a relatively large and complicated scheme consisting of a spring system connected to 70 km of pipeline and a reservoir system as well as 6 deep boreholes equipped with large and expensive generators and pumps. The protection and maintenance of the long pipeline and borehole is a technically demanding task.

Although AAE has invested a lot and undertaken some physical and biological protection work (the construction of dykes and soil conservation and aforestation) along the pipeline, this work covers only a limited portion of the system. The pipeline passes through numerous gullies and the area is vulnerable to erosion which requires continuous protection and maintenance activities. In addition, the availability and cost of equipment and spare parts in the domestic market for maintenance of the water system is another major area of concern. Although so far the water system is in a good condition, there is serious concern about DWWDA capacity, the level of community mobilization and support from government structures to meet the challenges of protecting and maintaining the extensive water scheme in a sustainable manner.

4. Summary and Conclusion: Success Indicators, Empowerment and Sustainability

4.1. Success Indicators

So far DWWDA has managed the water system reasonably well, which it its *raison d’être* and main mandate. In this regard there is a consensus among most of the stakeholders at the local level. As we have seen even the woreda administration admitted this fact and only pointed out its concerns about the future. In addition DWWDA has managed to fend off some serious challenges to its legitimacy and ability to manage the water system including disputes with the previous Dalocha woreda administration.
When looked at from a broader perspective, there is no doubt that DWWDA is a unique experiment, at least in the Ethiopian context. It can be seen as a bold attempt to empower women through the direct ownership and management of a relatively large-scale rural water supply program. It is not unusual for external agencies involved in rural development and service delivery such as water projects to transfer ownership and management of such schemes to local communities (such as water management committees, sometimes including women) with various levels of participation in the project cycle in between.

However, it should be kept in mind that DWWDA is not an informal rural women’s institution, cooperative or committee engaged in some small-scale scheme. Such women-based institutions/groups engaged in activities such as grinding mills, saving and credit, income generation schemes, etc are quite common even in rural Ethiopia. What is unique in the case of DWWDA is the fact that it is perhaps the only duly registered, formal and independent women’s civic organization in rural Ethiopia, which owns and manages an equally unique and relatively large-scale rural water supply scheme.

The implications of this experiment and the lessons that can be derived from it are very crucial in many ways: from the practical and strategic empowerment of rural women, the sustainability of critical rural development projects such as the Dalocha water program, the stakes involved in the ownership and management of such projects by independent organizations and the implications of this for the relationship of such organizations with the various tiers of government structures are all important issues. In the next paragraphs we draw out the main issues and lessons to be learned from the DWWDA experience in relation to empowerment, capacity building, and sustainability.

4.2. Agency And Empowerment: What Can We Learn From DWWDA Case?

It will be useful to relate the DWWDA experience to broader and currently important concerns both in the academic and policy field about gender, empowerment and development. The DWWDA case, at least formally speaking, denotes two sides of the empowerment dimensions simultaneously:

a) Practical empowerment: in terms of access to a basic service, namely clean water, which is undoubtedly critical for rural women, and a particular problem in Dalocha. Without doubt the water project has brought about a substantial change in the life of the Dalocha community. Although the community as a whole has directly benefited due to greatly improved access to clean and affordable water, women are considered to be the primary beneficiaries because previously the main burden of transporting water from long distances fell on women’s shoulder

2) Strategic empowerment: empirically speaking, the Dalocha women, through their formal association, control and manage the water scheme. If we take empowerment to mean the process of enabling formerly excluded individuals and groups to participate in decision making that directly affect their lives, there is no doubt that DWWDA itself as an organization can be taken as the culmination of the process of empowerment, because it now controls and manages the water scheme that principally benefits women. Operationally, the fact that DWWDA has successfully managed the water project since 1998 is also a reality.
The much more illusive and difficult to measure aspect of strategic empowerment is the impact of the above in terms of enhancing the role and status of women in the community in a broader sense. After all, one of the objectives behind the formation of DWWDA has been to bring such a change through a kind of a ‘demonstration effect’ (i.e., if it can be shown that women can indeed manage a relatively large scale project, then the age-old negative attitudes about the ability of women in the public sphere will be changed and the role and status of women will be enhanced).

Although discourse on gender has become part and parcel of the Ethiopian scene, more often than not people are skeptical if not hostile to ‘gender talk’, taking it to be more of a rhetoric than a reality. The DWWDA experience can be taken as one case in Ethiopia, which has taken the rhetoric to some level of reality. There is no doubt that transferring the control and management of a water project to a women’s organization is a totally alien idea in much of rural Ethiopia, including Dalocha. Nevertheless what is indisputable is that the formation of DWWDA has brought about a new dynamic into the local community in Dalocha, and thanks to the publicity work, DWWDA is already being taken as a model of a successful and promising rural peasant women’s civic organization in the country. A relatively large number of women have been exposed to public community level participation both as leaders of the association at various levels and as employed workers in the water scheme (all of the water kiosk operators are local women, who earn some income which supports their family without going far from their homesteads). In addition a number of other changes have been mentioned by ordinary women and men beneficiaries including: better relations in the family (between spouses) more time for productive activities, improved education of girls, increased confidence and participation of women in community affairs, etc. The line between practical and strategic empowerment is difficult to disentangle and many of the substantive aspects of empowerment are very subtle and require further thorough research and study.

4.3. Capacity Building: The Dilemma of Over-Dosage and Under-Dosage?

Has AAE over-invested in the capacity building of DWWDA? We have shown in this study that this indeed appears to be the case and our discussions with various stakeholders at the local level indicate that the role of AAE in the formation and consolidation of DWWDA has been such that there is a “confusion of identity” and a degree of dependency syndrome created.

However, we have also tried to show why the problem must be viewed from another angle too. The Dalocha water project is a rather large and complicated scheme. ActionAid’s strong commitment and decision to transfer this scheme to a local women’s organization inevitably requires serious investment and work in capacity building. The scale of the capacity building efforts, in other words, is somewhat related to the scale of the project to be transferred. Yet how much investment in capacity building of DWWDA is sufficient is not clear. On the surface what AAE has done in terms of building the capacity of DWWDA may appear a lot especially when viewed as an investment in a single organization. On the other hand and paradoxically, the existing capacity of DWWDA (in all aspects) is still considered to be inadequate to manage the water scheme, especially in terms of ensuring the future sustainability of the project. Striking the balance between over-dosage (and hence create artificial organizations with a confusion of identity and dependency) on the one hand and under-dosage (which leaves an organization under prepared) in the capacity building of local organizations such as DWWDA by external agencies is a delicate matter which requires serious and long-term planning.
4.4. Sustainability: The Critical Importance of Local Politics and Governance

We have shown in this study that DWWDA as an organization and the water project it manages still face a massive challenge in terms of all aspects of sustainability: financial, technical, organizational. So far DWWDA has been running the water scheme more or less smoothly. This is partly because the water scheme is still relatively new and DWWDA has been receiving all-round assistance from AAE. The latter explains the constant refrain by the local administration that it is because AAE is there behind DWWDA that the water system is running smoothly. With the aging of the water system in time and the depreciation of big and expensive equipment (generators, pumps, etc) DWWDA’s technical and financial troubles may grow and may expose it to increasing pressures and challenges from local government, in particular to its legitimacy and capacity to manage the water project.

However the most important issues related to sustainability in the case of DWWDA are not really financial and technical but largely political and social. The DWWDA experience indicates that the design of alternative institutional arrangements intended to empower groups formerly excluded from decision-making needs a thorough and careful analysis and continuous work at the community and local government level to create a solid basis of legitimacy, understanding and cooperation. This is the challenge of local governance in the context of promoting wider participation through civic organizations such as DWWDA in Ethiopia and elsewhere, especially in rural areas where independent and active civic organizations are lacking.
Case 10

Amhara Region

Sida-Amhara Rural Development Program

Mohammed Mussa

This initiative has been documented for this collection as it represents a major attempt to make resources available at the Woreda level, so as to support local initiatives. Funds have thus been made available through the Woreda directly, rather than as an extension of central government funding. This is a prime example of an attempt to work with the decentralisation policy, targeting financial resources and technical assistance. Although ongoing, there is some evidence that this approach can assist the Woreda to deliver and be responsive to local groups, as well as encourage local partnerships and initiatives.
List of Acronyms

ANRS - Amhara National Regional State
M & E - Monitoring and evaluation
PA - Peasant Association
PCU - Program (SARDP) Coordinating Unit
SARDP - Sida-Amhara Rural Development Program
Sida - Swedish International Development Agency
TA - Technical Assistant
ToT - Training of Trainers
WCPT - Woreda Core Planning Team
WDF - Woreda Development Fund

Definition of Local Terms

Belg - short rainy season
Kebele/PA - the smallest government administrative unit
Meher - Long rainy season
Woreda - Equivalent of district
1. Background

1.1. Amhara Region

Amhara region has a population of approximately 16.5 million people, living in eleven zones and 105 woredas (of which 98 are rural). The population has an approximate growth rate of 3 percent. 89 percent of the population lives in rural areas. The region is vast, covering a total area of 170,052 km².

The region is characterised by a varied landscape of high mountains, deep gorges, and rolling plains. The altitude varies from 500 metres above sea level at Matebia to 4,620 metres above sea level at Ras Dashen. The northern and eastern parts of the region are a higher altitude with the lowlands lying in the Northwest.

Nearly all agriculture in the region is subsistence farming, with the vast proportion (approximately 93.4%) being rain-fed. In most of the region, rainfall is extremely unreliable, with those areas depending on the Belg rainfall particularly vulnerable. The west of the region has high rainfall, exceeding 1200 mm annually, and it is the areas of Agew Awi and the East and West Gojam zones, which generally have greater food security and in good years produce a crop surplus. The northeast has the lowest rainfall (Wag and North Wollo).

The whole region experiences the highest rainfall during the Meher season, but the quantity of rain is greater in the west of the country. The Belg rain only falls in the east of Amhara, but is critical for those living in the highland areas where planting must be carried out early in the year to allow a long growing season and to avoid the frosts in November/December.

Average landholdings in Amhara are only 1.7 ha, which on the basis of per capita land requirement, fulfils needs by only 94.4%. This land shortage not only affects crop production, but also limits livestock numbers, as feed is in short supply. Despite this, livestock is an integral part of the farming system. Although livestock numbers are high, productivity is low.

Unreliable rainfall combined with small landholdings limits investment in agriculture. Farmers cannot afford to invest, nor can they take the risk of credit, for fertilisers, improved seed and other inputs.

Although the great majority of the population lives in rural areas, agriculture only contributes about 45% of the region’s GDP. For those living in rural areas, agricultural production is often the only source of income. For the reasons mentioned above, agriculture is far from a secure means of livelihood and this is compounded by the absence of other opportunities. The result is that, apart from the populations in the western, surplus producing areas, most people in Amhara region experience annual food deficits. In 1999 it was estimated that 14% of the population were in need of food assistance; by the end of 2000 this figure had risen to 22%. Sida has been working in 16 woredas in East Gojam and South Wollo zones of the Amhara region for the last several years.

1.2. Project Areas
1.2.1. East Gojam

The population of East Gojam is estimated at 2,172,010 people. The program targets 8 woredas and the total number of beneficiaries is estimated at 1,260,000 people. The people of East Gojam are Amharic speaking and predominantly Orthodox Christians. The zone has relatively good crop-producing potential and is also one of the surplus-producing zones of the country. However, it is still characterized by small land holdings, land degradation, and a number of landless households. The social structure has undergone transformation through the process of land reform, so that many households are now effectively landowners and are in competition for land. Many argue that the size of land-holding per se is not a useful indicator, since share-cropping is common and some land is not properly cultivated due to lack of oxen. Share cropped land accounts for 12.9 % of cultivated land in East Gojam. Crop productivity has been constrained by a number of other factors, including soil erosion and fertility losses, crop pests and diseases, erratic rainfall and market. Farmers say that rainfall is now increasingly unpredictable and there is decline in an overall amount and duration of rains. The agricultural input and crop market also appear to be against the farming households, since fertilizer prices are too high for poor farmers to afford; and on the contrary crop prices are falling.

1.2.2. South Wollo Zone

The population of south Wollo zone is estimated at 2,678,200 people. The program targets 8 woredas and the total number of beneficiaries is estimated at 1,314,000 people. The people of South Wollo are Amharic speaking and are followers of Islam and Orthodox Christianity. The Zone, including SARDP woredas, suffers from chronic food insecurity. Over 60% of the population lives below the officially recognized poverty line. In a normal agricultural production year only about 10-15% of the rural households produce enough to feed their families. The remaining 85% households experience 1-9 months of serious to severe food shortages. Chronic food insecurity is pervasive in the zone. In spite of this, the overwhelming majority of the population (90% or over) depends on agriculture. Household income is not only small but also suffers from a narrow base.

2. Description and Objectives of the Program

The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) has been providing support to the rural development efforts of the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) since 1993. It started in ad hoc manner with assistance to road, planning capacity enhancement and natural resources management. The ANRS program known as the Sida-Amhara Rural Development Program (SARDP) was initially planned in 1996, implementation started in April 1997 and officially completed in December 2001. Phase II of SARDP, which was under preparation between 1998 and 2001 with interruption during the Ethio-Eritrean border conflict, started operations in January 2002. It is expected they will be completed by June 2004.

The objectives of Phase I and Phase II were similar and aimed at improving the living conditions of the rural population, targeting poor and marginalized groups through sustainable increase in agricultural productivity and natural resources, economic diversification, promotion of good governance and ensuring equitable development.
3. **Approach of the Program**

The Woreda Development Fund is the pillar for the empowerment of the woredas and the communities in the selected zones of the Amhara region. The process in phases I and II mainly focused on encouraging the participation of the various groups of the community, including women, through the woreda development fund. It was learnt from the discussions with the relevant personnel and also from the documents that the communities intensively discussed their problems and prioritized them whilst the program facilitated these discussions. The idea was that the woredas incorporate the perceptions of the communities in their development plans. However, it was difficult to verify if the perceptions were really incorporated.

4. **Outcomes of the Program**

In addition, ANRS and Sida decided to carry out a qualitative and quantitative based review of the program as an input for the elaboration of the Program Document for SARDP III and possible adjustments of the program’s aim and direction. The two documents, the draft program document and this review report will form the basis for the negotiations and agreement on the final design and modalities of SARDP III that will take place between the relevant Ethiopian and Swedish authorities.

The following findings of the review reflect an overall assessment of the component in four areas; namely Decentralization, Capacity Building, Woreda Development Fund and HIV/AIDS awareness creation.

4.1. Decentralization

**Expected output:** A decentralized, transparent, participatory and gender sensitive planning process carried out and monitored.

The focus of the decentralization activity was to strengthen the woredas in their capacity to administrate the local government, to provide services and to implement projects prioritised by the communities they serve; all with the aim of improving the socio-economic status of the population and alleviate poverty. The review clearly shows much progress in this respect and reportedly this observation is representative for all 16 woredas in East Gojam and South Wollo zones where the SARDP is operating. Training in participatory planning has been undertaken and significant planning has been carried out as a result of skills gained during this training. The communities have identified many projects that can improve their situation. Results at this stage suggest that the planning capacity has been decentralised to woreda level and that there exists basic knowledge for reducing poverty and improving the livelihoods of the target group, the rural poor.

The review results further showed that the high degree of empowerment of the woredas has increased as a result of decentralisation of the government’s administration that took place in 2002. The woredas are clearly more capable of planning, administering and delivering services to the communities. Meetings with sampled woredas from both highland and lowland areas show demonstrated skills in management, project planning, community mobilization and awareness creation. Woreda council members and staff were able to state group and personal skills increases and a rise in respect and prestige of the woredas. This prestige had enabled them to get better community cooperation and participation than in the past.
However, those communities living in abject poverty seem to be less involved in the participatory planning than other community members, reflecting the fact that the program classifies all the people as poor. The program is only now developing tools and mechanisms to identify “categories” of the poor, i.e. the extremely vulnerable, who are invisible, lacking voice, power and a bargaining position. These are the landless families, female-headed households, the displaced and orphaned youth. The lack of focus and link for monitoring and evaluation from the grassroots upwards has prevented some of the benefits (e.g. training) from reaching the community level.

The participatory planning process is still not sufficiently gender sensitive and fails to address many of the problems facing the women villagers. The woreda members were also less “empowered” to mainstream gender issues and to monitor them than expected. This was due to a misconception that only a woman could do this task. According to law and practice (see e.g. Annex III, p.7) 20 per cent of woreda council members are women. Nevertheless, the women were less visible to the Review team at decision-making levels than in subordinated planning committees, which reportedly consist of 30-40 per cent women.

There are still few skills noted in monitoring and evaluation at woreda level. This is a reflection of the still inadequate M&E system. The villagers have accordingly not yet been involved in monitoring and evaluation activities, and empowerment issues at village level have therefore not been addressed. Responsible woreda staff feel they require additional skills in financial management. A lack of zonal and regional support to woreda finance officers and accountants was also noted.

The decentralization of decision making, deployment of key sector staff (agriculture, water) to woreda level and financial disbursements have in some sites visibly improved rural roads, potable water supply and water harvesting. A drawback is the inexplicable delays in fund disbursement from the regional level, which at times causes confusion and community dissatisfaction.

The decentralisation process is not yet finished, which is noted from vacancies at the woredas and regular unjustified transfer of trained key staff and the resignation of others. This indicates some shortfalls in staff mobilization and recruitment at regional level.

The transfer of knowledge from trainers and technical staff to woreda council members and staff is positively reflected in the rising level of pre-planning for activities, where community representation has brought together villages in the kebeles based on agro-ecological factors. This is appropriate given that lack of food security is a major cause of poverty in the region, because of the high dependency on natural resources and vulnerability to drought and land degradation.

In summary, the ‘empowerment’, training and the transfer of skills is the most powerful means of giving power to the people. Fortunately enough, the results at this early stage indicate that woreda councils are empowered due to decentralization of power from the region and the zones, while at the same time receiving necessary technical support from the zones. The woredas assisted by SARDP, compared to non-program areas, are more capable of planning, managing and administering development projects. These are signs that indicate progress towards eventual empowerment of the target group.

The review made the following recommendations on decentralization:
1. Tools and mechanisms must be developed in order to identify ‘categories’ of the poor, i.e. the extremely vulnerable, those who lack voice, power and a bargaining position.

2. The planning process must be more gender sensitive. This can be achieved if women are more represented both in higher positions such as in woreda cabinets and councils as well as in planning meetings and committees. In addition, gender aspects must be mainstreamed throughout the planning process with specific reference to the already designed gender strategy.

3. The communities should participate in the monitoring and evaluation process. The program should develop practical procedures and mechanisms on pilot basis for this purpose. Reporting procedures from village/kebeles to woreda to zone to region have to be streamlined so that there is qualitative as well as quantitative reporting based on verifiable indicators related to the objectives of each component/sub-component and reflecting impact i.e. level of satisfaction, ownership, contribution, and changes in socio-economic status, improvement for the highly vulnerable, etc. The community should be involved in the selection of indicators and assist in the monitoring.

4. Tools familiar to the woredas and DAs, such as wealth ranking, trends analysis, market studies can be used to effectively measure levels of poverty and early warning signals on food insecurity. M&E is a critical aspect of decentralization as it can verify ‘improved management’ as result of decentralization and bottlenecks to decentralization.

5. The program must intensify the support to and capacity building of the financial administration at woreda level.

6. The regional government has to find means and ways to prevent the frequent transfer of trained staff from the woredas to prevent delays in the program implementation. Vacancies of at least key staff must be filled to avoid delays in the elaboration of annual budgets and plans of operation and subsequent release of funds.

7. The PCU must review the planning guidelines in order to simplify when possible and exercise a closer follow-up to ensure that planning dead-lines are followed by all actors at regional, zonal and woreda level.

8. Decentralization of community level and internalisation of skills transferred from the program’s TAs to the communities will be improved if a clear linkage is identified. The review team can see a need to strengthen the zonal level as a focal point for the technical support to the woredas. This would require that program TAs work more closely with the government’s zonal staff.

4.2. Capacity Building

**Expected output:** *Woredas capable of managing and administrating the project planning, implementation and monitoring process.*

The activity of capacity building for woredas is directed at making the woredas more capable of managing and administrating project planning, implementation and monitoring process.

Significant achievements have been made in a short period of time with respect to greater capacity in planning, implementation and monitoring through training of council members, community leaders, woreda staff and other stakeholders on participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation techniques with a focus on poverty and gender aspects.
Awareness creation workshops on gender equality have been conducted and female candidates have to some degree been given preference. Men’s behaviour has been in focus with respect of family planning and HIV/AIDS.

The physical infrastructures, e.g. buildings, office equipment and furniture have been appropriate and effective in building the capacity of the woredas. The Review Team also noted that the capacity to store and protect valuable woreda assets, along with physical infrastructure has improved prestige of the woredas and respect of the communities. The Review Team noted that in many cases, vehicles are not made available for woreda technical staff to them to meet appointments. This has caused some delays in coordination of some activities. The woredas’ effectiveness in planning, implementation etc. is constrained by their heavy workload, frequent transfer of staff and delays in funding.

Woredas still have limited capacity in coordination of activities such as training and how to apply training. There is no pattern in the training process, e.g. training, training of trainers, etc. Training as stated in the program document should be continuous and structured so that a core of trainers is established to sustain future training. This is often not the case, or trainers are transferred from the woreda. With many courses, there is no evidence of female candidates given preference. Training has also not reached village level to the extent expected as illustrated during the review focus group discussions.

It was expected that poverty and gender aspects be mainstreamed in the activities and measured by indicators. However, the logical framework places clear emphasis on quantitative measurements, which cannot address poverty and gender aspects of a project. For example, ‘construction of kms of road’ is quantitative and does not address issues of accessibility, quality, etc.

The capacity of the woredas in some technical aspects of the program is very low or absent altogether. The role of the TAs is therefore highly appreciated and of value to the woredas that the TAs visit frequently. Despite these visits many technical issues do not get enough attention, e.g. technical aspects of irrigation structures, agronomy, watershed management.

4.3. Woreda Development Fund

The expected output of this component was “improved agricultural production and environmental protection”. The Woreda Development Fund was expected to improve agricultural production and environmental protection. Through this government capital budget allocation, the Woreda council is authorized to exercise projects prioritised by the communities they serve. The funds are to be utilized for agricultural activities including natural resource conservation, village road construction, water supply and rehabilitation of schools and basic health clinics. It is also expected that measures be taken to mitigate negatives environmental effects.

There have been a number of successful agricultural interventions, some focused on individual technologies, e.g. seedling beds, and others focused on a full range of agricultural technologies – such as watersheds. These have been well received by the communities and the villagers have participated at all stages. However, the number of interventions is far below the required for these initiatives to have a significant impact on poverty reduction or improved food security.

Other reasons for the lack of replication of successful pilot interventions are the complexity of the interventions that often require technical know-how and extensive
training of farmers and agricultural staff (e.g. watershed management) or delays in planning and receipt of funds from the region.

The watershed management intervention shows the highest promise of community participation and ownership, with the potential to both improve incomes and protect environment in the long term. This intervention also involves women and men working together.

Interventions are highly dependent on the timely transfer of skills by the program technical assistants (TAs) at zonal level and technicians from the regional bureaus, who are few in number, compared to the woredas. The distance from zone to woredas is far and difficulties arise for TAs trying to reach each woreda on a monthly basis. The technical staff at the zones were dramatically reduced in connection with the decentralization in 2002. However, the review reiterates that there is a need to strengthen the zones, at least on the technical side and provide the zonal technical staff with adequate counterparts. The transfer of skills to woreda technical staff and development agents (DAs) must be reviewed in order to establish a sustainable system.

The community planning process is unevenly handled across the sampled woredas and a lack of understanding of the principles of participation has been observed. This suggests that the process of community motivation and mobilization has not been effective in all woredas and some communities seek individual rather than community benefits.

There is a concern that involving communities in annual planning and prioritisation procedures without visible results could provoke planning fatigue and discourage the communities from participation. The selection of projects to be funded by the WDF is finally made at woreda level, which distances the communities from the decision-making process.

4.4. Woreda Development Fund for Roads

Expected Output: Community Participated in New Rural Roads Construction and Maintenance through the Woreda Development Fund

The findings of the review indicate that the feeder roads financed by the Woreda Development Fund are connecting villages to the woreda road network. It was noted that communities actively participated in the road maintenance and construction and have achieved more access to services such as clinics and markets, which has the potential to stimulate the local economy.

The roads were constructed through a massive input of mainly voluntary community labour that had been mobilized in the beneficiary villages as a pre-condition for the construction. This is an appropriate step to minimize dependency and promote ownership. Regarding the efficiency, the construction of the roads has taken more time than expected in all cases, due to the time needed for community mobilization and availability of the community over only 3 months of the year, as they are busy with other livelihood activities. The roads in East Gojam were constructed without any payment, while in South Wollo zone, food for cash arrangements were made due to the recurrent droughts there. Interestingly enough, the communities in both zones were willing and actively participated in the road construction activities indicating that there is an enhancement of the sense of ownership through the program.
5. The Development of the SADRP III

Based on the outcomes of the review of SADRP I and II; and external evaluation of the program, the Phase III (SADRP III) was developed for the period of 2004 – 2007. The total amount of the program fund is Birr 560 million and is expected to start in July this year.

5.1. Objectives of Phase III

The Objective of Phase III is to improve the living conditions of the rural population, targeting the poor and marginalized groups through sustainable increase in agricultural productivity and natural resources, economic diversification, promotion of good governance and ensuring equitable development. It emphasizes Woreda capacity building, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and support to the judiciary in addition to most of the area development programs of Phase I. Phase III seems to be more participatory and will take greater steps to empower the community.

5.2. The Approach and Processes of the SADRP III

The previous phases of the SADRP focused on the region and woreda, as well as the community through the woredas. Unlike the previous approach, the SADRP entirely focuses on the capacities of the woredas and the communities.

Participatory planning is a useful exercise to enhance planning and decision-making capacity at the community level, especially in an environment such as the Woreda where grassroots democracy is only at a fledgling stage, illiteracy is very high, and planning data is lacking. It is for this reason that the major stakeholders of SARDP (Regional Government and Sida) agreed to adopt direct participatory planning in the formulation of Phase II. Sida assistance to the Woreda 4-year Development Program is presented below in as much detail as possible.

5.3. Capacity Building Activities through Participatory Planning

**Context**

The major objective of the participatory planning was to ensure that planning capacity is enhanced at the local level, especially in the communities. Accordingly, prior to commencing the preparation of the Sida-assisted 4-year Woreda Program, a three-stage capacity building program was prepared and implemented. The first stage involved training of trainers (TOT). The main subject covered included the concept, principles and application of participatory planning, why it is to be underscored in the preparation of the Woreda Program, and how to go about it. The TOT also covered other topics. These included facilitation skills, the concepts of project/program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability and others. Eight woreda staff, - three from Woreda administration and five from relevant sector offices – participated in the TOT. Sida technical advices were the trainers. The venue was the zone capital, and the training lasted 10 days. The purpose was to strengthen the planning capacity at the woreda level through the use of the TOT trainees as trainers.
The second stage was also a TOT. To further enhance the Woreda sector capacity, 24-30 staff members of Woreda sector agencies (agriculture, health, education, water, rural roads) were trained for six days. These constituted the Woreda Core Planning Team (WCPT). Subject areas of the training were the same as in the first stage TOT. As mentioned above the trainers were the first TOT graduates.

The third stage dealt with capacity enhancing exclusively at the community level. Out of the woreda, six kebeles were selected (based mainly on agro-ecology) as sample kebeles to develop kebele-level programs from which the Woreda Development Program was to emerge. In each of the six kebeles there was a planning team. Each team had 21-24 popularly chosen community representatives to do the planning work together with the WCPT members. About one-third of them were female. In some kebeles, the proportion of women was greater. Each kebele or Got (a sub-kebele) General Assembly elected members to a Kebele Planning Team. Prior to the election, members of the General Assembly were given half to one day sensitisation sessions on the basics of participatory planning, the role of the communities not only in the formation of the program but also in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The General Assembly also discussed and approved the criteria used for the purpose of selecting the planning team members. Each General Assembly was informed of each step in the process of the program formulation. Members of the Woreda Core Planning served in the capacity of facilitators at each General Assembly.

5.4. Second Stage Capacity Building through Participatory Planning

The Process in Brief

Formulation of the Woreda development program has been a joint operation involving relevant bureaus at the regional level, relevant offices of the zone and Woreda, the communities, Sida, and other development partners operating in the Woreda. These are essentially the owners of the program. If one were to draw a mandate mapping, i.e., distinguishing who among the owners would influence most the planning process, there was no question that it was the communities.

As reiterated above the principal objective of the program formulation was to ensure the community ownership of the program. This was the reason for the training of community representatives and relevant Woreda administration and sector staff who work closely with the communities. It was considered a key element of the capacity building process intended to address the critical capacity gap in this respect. The curriculum for the training was tailor-made, but in all cases dealing with concepts such as development and participation and participatory planning, with sensitivity to cross-cutting issues like gender, marginalized groups and the environment. It also covered simple but appropriate techniques for identifying and analysing development problems and priorities using the logical framework approach.

5.5. Gender Specific Interventions

One of the elements of the program is gender equity. Accordingly, the program concentrates on improving women’s economic position through improved access to targeted support, such as access to cash credit, training on off-farm and non-farm income generating activities and promotion of equity in access to land and extension services. Proposed off-farm and non-farm income generating activities are poultry and sheep/goat farming, apiculture, handcrafts, pottery and petty trading. The other major area of support seeks to address the strategic needs of women and the
problems of gender inequality. Resistance to gender equality is widespread within the communities, and the power and means to influence these attitudes and practices are lacking. Women’s groups and organizations are in the early stage of development and lack the experience and resources to engage in issues in favour of women’s rights. The Woreda Women’s Desks, located within the office of community participation and mobilization, are also new in structure and are poorly equipped to coordinate activities that address women’s issues and mainstream these in the programs of sector offices.

Capacity building, particularly in the areas of staff skill development, provision of office facilities and logistics, is a key input. A clear linkage needs to be developed between the regional bodies and support institutions, Woreda Women’s Desks and grassroots structures, to ensure continuities in provision of technical, material and financial support in the future. Other activities and support in relation to gender promotion include training for PA and Woreda authorities on gender and the legal system in relation to human rights, establishment/strengthening of women’s groups/associations and networks, and promotion of gender awareness workshops at community level.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2002, Sida commissioned an external consulting team to evaluate the status of its programs in different countries, including Ethiopia. In addition, an internal review of its programs in the two zones of Amhara region in 2003 was commissioned. There is a feeling that the external evaluation was more contextual, while the internal review was specific and focused on the components of SARDP.

7. Conclusions

The SARDP has contributed to the improvements of the livelihoods of the people in East Gojam and South Wollo zones of the Amhara region. The woreda development fund is the pillar for the woredas’ and the community’s empowerment. The process in phases I and II mainly focused on encouraging the participation of various groups in the community, including women, through the woreda development fund. The communities were able to plan and prioritize their needs. The communities discussed their problems intensively and prioritized them, and these discussions were facilitated by the program. The idea was that the woredas incorporate the perceptions of the communities in their development plans. However, it was difficult to verify if the perceptions were really incorporated.

The review of phases I and II show indicates the following:

- The capacity building component of the program has made achievements in training of council members, community leaders, woreda staff and other stakeholders in participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation techniques with a growing focus on poverty and gender aspects. The training of trainers (ToT) has been an important strategy to cover significant number of community members in the training program. Despite all this, the training program did not manage to reach all the villages.

- Beneficiaries are included in all aspects of the development cycle and this aspect of the program is considered to be one of the most successful that has managed to go further than many other government implemented programs – this is mainly due to the fact that the Sida funded program was, from the start,
based on the participation of the beneficiaries at all stages of the development cycle.

- It was learnt that although it is stated in the program document that the program focuses on gender equality through mainstreaming gender into all the components, this did not happen and women were not visible in the decision making levels of the program.

- It was learnt that community participation in the program does not necessarily mean participation of the poor as the voices of the relatively outspoken and economically better-off community members are often heard better.

- Sustainability in the program document is primarily defined as the program's potential to continue without Sida support. However, it was learnt that the woreda capacity to generate its own revenue was very low, program activities at community level are still scattered with little replication taking place, and there is high staff turn-over. These all threaten the sustainability of the capacity building that is taking place. More attention to the issues of sustainability thus seems to be warranted at all levels, including community ownership and cost sharing.

Phase III involves more community participation than the previous two phases, at least at document level. The participation of the community has been tackled at different stages and is expected to ensure that the process follows participatory methodologies. It has specific gender interventions that will allow women to participate in development activities and have decision-making roles that will help them become empowered. The review of the first stage of the program seems to be encouraging from the perspectives of community empowerment and that of sustainability.

In general, it could be concluded that the woreda development fund has, to a certain extent, contributed to community empowerment in the selected woredas of East Gojam and South Wollo zones of the Amhara region. The woredas attempted to mobilize the community to participate in development process of the respective kebeles. The processes of the program indicate that in future all categories of the communities will participate, since it was learnt from the previous phases that the poor did not participate as much as expected. However, it can be argued that the communities would have been better empowered organizationally and economically if they directly managed the resources.
Annex: Sources of Information for the Study

The consultant had discussions with various people who are directly or indirectly engaged in the SARDP. Experts at the Sida offices in Addis Ababa and in Amhara region were contacted and some perceptions and views gathered. In addition, several documents were borrowed from the relevant offices, which were very important sources of information for the preparation of this report.
Case 11

Guraghe People Self–Help Development Organization

Teketel Abebe

This case study documents one of the oldest of the regional development groups and perhaps one of the more successful and independent. The group is not without problems, however, particularly in the area of relationships with government and the need to improve its gender balance. Despite this, the group, over many years, has achieved a great deal. The author links this success to the specifics of Gurage culture.
ACRONYMS

CSO  Civil Society Organization
EPRDF  Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
ETB  Ethiopian Birr (Local Currency)
GPDF  Guraghe People's Democratic Front
GPSDO  Guraghe People Self Help Development Organization
GRCO  Guraghe Roads Construction Organization
GZNMD  Guraghe Zone Nationalities Democratic Movement
Km  Kilometer
NGO  Non Governmental Organization
FA  Farmers' Association, also known as Peasant Association

GLOSSARY

Debo  Rotating agricultural Labour group (Male-only) consisting of 6 to 15 Members
Development Committee  GPSDO's seven affiliates each representing a house (tribe)
Enset  False banana tree used as a main crop in Guragheland and Southern Ethiopia
House (Bet)  Collection of affiliated clans. All Sebat Bet Guraghes are members of one of the seven houses
Iddir  Burial societies that provide social and financial support in times of bereavement
Imdibir  Capital of Cheha Woreda
Iqqub  Rotating saving and credit association usually practised by Guraghes
Kebele  The smallest administrative unit (equivalent of a neighbourhood)
Qitcha  Guraghe customary law
Sebat Bet  A confederation of the seven houses inhabiting western Guragheland: (Cheha, Enor & Ener, Iza, Geta, Gomare, Indegagn and Moher & Akil)
Shango  A customary dispute settlement forum
Wijo  Women's rotating dairy products credit association
Wolkite  Capital of Guraghe Zone
Woreda  Administrative unit between Kebele and Zone
Yajoka  The supreme Shango for Sebat Bet Guraghes
1. Background

Guraghe People Self-help Development Organization (GPSDO) is an indigenous not-for-profit organization involved in the execution of various socio-economic development activities in Sebat Bet Guragheland. GPSDO evolved from its predecessor, Guraghe Road Construction Organization (GRCO). As such we can say that GRCO/GPSDO is the oldest, well-known and most successful ‘ethnic’ or area based development association in Ethiopia.

Physically, the Guragheland is located south–west of Addis Ababa. The area falls between the western escarpment of the Ethiopian Rift Valley and the Gibe River which forms the north-eastern section of the Omo-Gibe basin. Owing to the frequent redrawing of administrative boundaries in recent years, it is difficult to determine the size of the population and the land area accurately. However, based on the 1994 census, an estimated 1.2 million people currently live in Sebat-Bet Guragheland, which covers an estimated area of about 4,150 km². With an estimated 366 people per km², the area is one of the most densely populated in Ethiopia.

The mainstay of the local economy in rural Gurageland is settled agriculture, which is mainly subsistence oriented. Enset culture, with some perennial crops and commercial tree planting, is the most widely practised form of agriculture in the area.

Sebat-Bet Guraghes have a long history of a high level of social organization. Some of the key Guraghe social institutions and networks are Yajoka Qitcha (Guraghe customary law), Debo (mutual self-help), Iddir (funeral society), Iqqub (saving and credit society) and Wijo (women’s dairy product saving and credit society). Most of these social institutions are said to have been invented by Guraghes. Moreover, as a people they are considered to have the qualities of hospitality, industrious spirit, business-orientation and hard work.

Migration is a key livelihood strategy for Sebat-Bet Guraghes. Agricultural land in Guragheland is poor in quality (degraded) and scarce. As a result, there is a long tradition of people (mainly men) migrating to other parts of the country, both urban and rural, in search of income and employment to support their families. Before modern transport and infrastructure they had to travel (and transport goods) long distances on foot and pack animals on very difficult terrain. In fact, as will be shown later, migratory survival strategies and the need to adapt to the new social situation caused by migration, along with the social obligations of Guraghe migrants, were factors that encouraged the people of Sebat-Bet to undertake associational activities. As part of the wider Guraghe culture, Sebat-Bet Guraghe people who have settled outside Guragheland are expected to maintain close contact with their homeland and also to support and regularly visit their parents and family there.

2. Primary Characteristics

Before moving on to detailed discussion about GPSDO, it is important to note some of the background historical, social, cultural, economic and political conditions that will help understand the Sebat bet Guraghe identities, and the establishment and achievements of the Guraghe model of development.
Traditionally, sedentary agriculture with hoe cultivation techniques and the Enset culture had been adequate to support the population of Guragheland. However, unchecked, ever-increasing population growth over the last century above the carrying capacity of the land had led to environmental degradation and ecological imbalances in many parts of Sebat-Bet Guragheland. Even with intensive farming techniques and the relatively advanced Enset-culture, the western Guragheland was no longer capable of supporting the population that depended on it. The scarcity of resources in the region, particularly of agricultural land was important for the formation of the Guraghe Roads Construction Organization (GRCO) renamed the Guraghe People Self Help Development Organization (GPSDO) in 1989.

Therefore, migration to other urban and rural areas elsewhere in the country was adopted as a survival strategy. However, the difficult terrain and complete lack of transport infrastructure were key barriers to the success of the migratory survival strategy. Overcoming this transport barrier required some form of organization for collective action. The first attempt to form an organization that primarily addressed road transport problems in western Guragheland was made in 1945. But, the initiative was not successful until members of Sebat-Bet living in Addis joined forces with their compatriots in Guragheland and established GRCO in 1961.

Perhaps one of the most important background conditions to the formation of GRCO/GPSDO was the complex social world of Guraghes. Guraghes have a strong tradition of maintaining strong ties amongst themselves through various forms of social institution such as family, village, clan, tribe and ‘House’, all of which are based on ethnic affiliation. Leroi Henry (2001) notes that family obligations are unavoidable and are seen as the building block of Guraghe society. There is particular pressure on children to support their parents. In the context of migration, these obligations extend to siblings and their sons. These obligations are backed by powerful sanctions such as blessing, curse and ostracism.

According to rural elders interviewed, Sebat-Bet Guraghes are also well known for their cooperation in communal affairs, which is the basis for Guraghe associational life in the form of self-help. Perhaps as an extension of their obligations to family and siblings, Guraghes are will often become involved in collective action, activism, mutual support and self-help in community life. According to informants, traditional social institutions and networks such as Yajoka Qitcha, Iddir and Iqqub provided crucial space to discuss community development issues including road infrastructure. An example of commitment to communal concerns, beyond supporting immediate family members, was the long process of consultations, resource mobilization, lobbying, commitment and partnerships forged between members of Sebat-Bet communities in western Guragheland and those residing elsewhere in the country, particularly high ranking Guraghe elites who were well placed in the military and civil service in Addis Ababa.

After fifteen years of intense struggle by Guraghe elders and urban elites GRCO was finally established in 1961 with the primary objective of building transport infrastructure in Guragheland. The focus of the first phase of the road construction project was connecting Wolkite to Emdibir (30 kms), then Emdibir to Hosaena (96 kms). The second phase was focused on connecting all Woreda capitals of Sebat-Bet Guragheland to Emdibir. Therefore, there was no external agency behind the formation GRCO/GPSDO. Rather, the Gurgheland road construction initiative was a community initiative instigated by rural elders and in response to pressing problems, including lack of social service facilities, transport infrastructure, scarcity of farmland, limited economic
opportunities and above all, the inaccessibility of western Guragheland that hampered the physical movement of people in search of better economic opportunities. However, the role of informed and well-placed Sebat-Bet Guraghe elites in Addis Ababa was critically important at formative stage and throughout the operational period of GRCO. Without strong partnership, commitment and support from influential members of Sebat-Bet in Addis Ababa, it would have been very difficult for the rural elders, who initiated the concept, to establish an organization that managed complex transport infrastructure development and operations.

Having addressed road transport infrastructure and service, it was natural for GRCO to expand its activities and tackle other socio-economic problems (health, education, water supply, environment) in Sebat-bet Guragheland in a more coordinated and integrated manner. This expanded approach to rural development required reorientation and restructuring of GRCO in the light of a new comprehensive and long-term mission. As a result, GRCO after nearly four decades of experience in community resource mobilization for self-help schemes was renamed GPSDO in 1988, with an amended constitution and operational guidelines ratified by the General Assembly. Therefore, GRCO and GPSDO are simply two stages in the development process of the same organization.

Goals, activities and structure of GPSDO
The overarching objective of GPSDO is to improve the living conditions of rural Sebat-Bet Guraghe people by mobilizing community and other resources and forging partnerships with all stakeholders working in the fields of social service delivery and rural development in Guragheland. The specific objectives include the following:

- improving access to infrastructure (road transport infrastructure and service),
- improving access to and quality of social service facilities (health and education),
- Introducing and promoting modern agricultural techniques,
- Promoting diversified and alternative economic opportunities such as cottage industries,
- Improving the supply of potable water and irrigation,
- Promoting natural resources development and conservation,
- Coordinating and facilitating relief operations at times of emergency,
- Supporting and facilitating participation of women, youth and adults in skills training that will help them secure their livelihoods,
- Encourage the introduction and expansion of crucial infrastructure such as electricity, telecommunications, banking, postal and other services so as to attract trade, investment and tourism,
- Support study, documentation and promotion of Guraghe people’s history, values and cultural heritage,
- Facilitate, encourage and provide technical assistance in the areas of education, organization and management to attract professionals and investors to the area and,
- In close collaboration with other parts of Guragheland, lobby relevant stakeholders and facilitate the development of all Guragheland.

Activities of GRCO/GPSDO were initiated entirely by the community. The management of GPSDO believes that the secret behind the great success of its predecessor (GRCO) was the unwavering public support, generous contribution by and participation of the Sebat-Bet Guraghe community at all stages of the programme. GPSDO, therefore, intends to maintain and reflect this tradition in its future efforts. As a community initiative, which was not influenced by any external
agent, GRCO/GPSDO’s approach, which could alternatively be termed as the “Guraghe Model of Development”, has some unique characteristics. Among others, these include:

• Using Guraghe identity, ethnicity and cultural values for development,
• Using traditional Guraghe social institutions (Yajoka, Iddir) and other family ties and ethnic affiliations as a vehicle for resource mobilization for community development,
• Maintaining political neutrality and forging strong and effective partnership with the state and its structures at various levels (at least during the road construction phase) to secure technical as well as financial support,
• Ensuring community participation through dialogue, consultation and grass-roots presence,
• Contributing the bulk of resources, assuming management of operations and full control and ownership of their own projects,
• Blending top-down and bottom-up approaches,
• Using voluntarism, sanctions, personalized leadership and patronage to reduce costs and enhance effectiveness

GPSDO is an umbrella organization that embraces seven autonomous Development Associations (also known as Development Committees) organized along ethnic affiliation. The General Assembly, with 980 elected members and elders, is the highest authority representing seven Development Committees. Under the General Assembly there is a Management Council with 35 elected members (Addis, 7 x 4 = 28 plus rural 7 x 1 = 7). Composition of the General Assembly is as follows:

1. Elected Members:
   a. Guragheland: 7 x 65 = 455 representing the Seven Development Committees in rural areas,
   b. Guraghe communities in Addis: 7 x 65 = 455, representing the Seven Development Committees in Addis Ababa,
2. Elders:
   a. Guragheland: 7 x 5 = 35, representing each Development Committee in rural areas,
   b. Addis Ababa: 7 x 5 = 35, representing, each Development Committee in Addis Ababa.

GPSDO has a secretariat in Addis and a branch in Wolkite, capital of Guraghe Zone. GPSDO operates with about 80 full time employees and over 3000 elected members and volunteers who provide their services without remuneration. With regard to membership policy, all individuals belonging to one of the Sebat-Bet ethnic groups and those who are non-Guraghe ethnic groups but permanently residing in Guragheland are considered members of GPSDO, and are expected to make their contribution to the organization in whatever form they can.

GPSDO maintains the transport infrastructure and other social services set up during GRCO’s 27 years of operation. Since 1998 it has,

• Expanded social services and facilities in education, health, rural water supply, electrification,
• Coordinated activities of seven autonomous sub committees that constitute GPSDO,
• Designed projects, prepared proposals for funding and liaised with donors on behalf of its sub-committees,

Restructured itself and set up a branch office in Wolkite to coordinate activities in Guragheland.
3. Details of Case Study: Empowerment Analysis

In the context of this paper the term "agency" is defined as people’s ability to make their own choices and control their own future. In the following section we will discuss the aspects of individuals and communities so as to analyse the prevalence of agency in GRCO/GPSDO. Aspects of Sebat-Bet Guraghe community that are discussed below include social, educational, psychological, economic, political, organizational and spiritual factors.

3.1 Aspects of Agency

3.1.1 Social Cohesiveness

The literature reviewed and discussions with Guraghe elders and scholars indicate that Sebat-Bet Guraghe community is socially cohesive group. Social cohesion in Sebat-Bet community is a product of historical processes (social, demographic, economic, political, psychological).

Although there are differing views on the origins of its people, for the purpose of this research we will follow the dominant discourse that argues that the people of Sebat-Bet Guraghe migrated from northern Ethiopia (including today's Eritrea) around 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} centuries and settled in their present location (sometimes known as western Guragheland) where they intermingled with other existing ethnic groups.

There are two dominant and opposing sets of views as to the origins of social cohesiveness in the Sebat-Bet communities. One view states that although there were conflicts among members of Sebat Bet, these were always resolved promptly by well-established Guraghe social institutions, which evolved over time and were institutionalized into Guraghe customary law, Yajoka Qitcha. This view romanticises the Guraghe culture one that has always been based on peaceful co-existence, mutual cooperation and trust through a complex web of social institutions lined to the identity of the Guraghes.

The second view believes that there was cooperation, but more dominantly conflict, within various Houses of Guraghe. More importantly, there were conflicts between Sebat-Bet and other non-Guraghe ethnic groups. Such conflicts reached a critical stage and necessitated collective self-defence amongst the Houses when the Amhara-dominated Ethiopian empire expanded to Guragheland around the end of 19\textsuperscript{th} century. According to this view, therefore, it was the need for collective self-defence that ended internal conflict and hostility in Sebat-Bet and paved the way for the formation of a coalition of Houses and enhanced social cohesion within and between members of houses.

In addition to the need for collective defence, male Guraghe migration, necessitated by demographic and economic realities in Guragheland, is believed to have enhanced social cohesiveness in two ways. Male Guraghe migration has usually been associated with certain roles, rights and obligations. The need to meet social expectations, adapt to a new environment and counter negative images of Guraghe migrant workers has enhanced social cohesion among
migrant Guraghes. They have also led to the development of a complex "social world of migrant Guraghes".

Explaining how "House" was used as an organising principle among Guraghes, Henry (2001) quotes an ex-leader of GPSDO:

"GRCO was based on "house" in order to get proper support and cooperation of all the community. The people in the seven sub-regions [houses] were already organized into smaller groups and it was easier to approach the organized groups instead of trying to contact individual personalities. .......... Before GRCO, the sub-committees were already formed as they had their own smaller units dealing with local affairs. Each group came together as a unit at the Sebat Bet Shango in order to deal with community conflicts and social life as a whole. It was easier to deal with existing [institutions] to form a development organization, to make use of the existing facilities for development. It made it easier as these were people who were accepted and had credentials within the community". (2001:)

Therefore, there is a high level of social organization which is institutionalised into a complex web of social institutions that govern various aspects of community life. However, some scholars have argued that Guraghes have an inherently factious tradition (Bahiru Zewde: 2002) and have never had centralised political leadership. Instead, they have a fragmented administrative system led by clan heads and elders (Henry: 2001).

3.1.2 Educational:

Like many parts of rural Ethiopia, access to formal education is very limited and the literacy rate very low in Guragheland. Therefore, the role of education in creating or enhancing agency amongst the Sebat-Bet is limited. The revised Guraghe customary law states that in the past Sebat-Bet Guraghes who migrated had forgone the benefits of education. The customary law also states that members of the Sebat-Bet need to catch up on education. In fact, it the acknowledgement of the lack of education that necessitated the transformation of GRCO into GPSDO with a heavy emphasis on upgrading and expansion of schools to improve access to education.

However, education also seems to have played a pivotal role in the establishment and successful operation of GRCO/GPSDO. It was urban Guraghe elites who had attended an elementary school built by Catholic missionaries that were instrumental in the formation of GRCO. Its operations only became a reality once these elites joined forces with rural Guraghe elders and the community as a whole. According to GPSDO officials, the achievements of the organization would not have been reached without the unwavering support and voluntarism of educated Guraghe elites. Therefore, when viewed from its wider perspective, education has played a crucial role in the formation and operations of GRCO/GPSDO.

3.1.3 Psychological:
In the past, Guraghes, particularly migrants, were subject to various forms of discrimination from Amhara elites who were dominant in politics and the civil service. According to Henry (2001), the two most apparent manifestations of Guraghe discrimination by the Amhara elites were:

- Perception of Enset as unpalatable by the Amhara ruling class,
- The term Guraghe often applied to those with an obsession with making money and can mean to cheat or steal.

Some Guraghe elites strongly argue that discrimination and negative stereotypes had limited their employment opportunities to spheres despised by Amhara elites, such as manual labour, artisanship and trade. Sebat Bet Guraghes responded to the negative stereotypes and discrimination through the construction of counter-discourses and the recreation of Guraghe identity. One of the key features of the Guraghe responses to counter the stereotypes and discrimination is an "idealization of the male Guraghe migrant" as follows:

1. hard-working and enterprising,
2. flexible and willing to undertake any work in order to advance himself and support his family,
3. saves money to invest in future business ventures,
4. supports his rural kin and at the same time maintains his social obligations to other Guraghes,
5. in addition to sending money back to his parents, he returns for festivals and ceremonies (Maskal, Arafa, and weddings and funerals),
6. maintains strong associational links with other urban Guraghes such as village, clan and house-based iddirs,
7. willing to help other Guraghe migrants, particularly those from his own home village and clan, but
8. most of his economic success is due to his own individual effort rather than his Guraghe linkages.

The cohesive urban social world and its institutions (House, Shango, Iddir, Iquib) created for social and economic advancement and to reinforce urban-rural linkages among Guraghes were heavily drawn upon to counter the effects of discrimination and negative stereotypes against Guraghes.

This process has led to development becoming an embedded element of Guraghe identity. The Guraghe model of development has become one of the key points Guraghes use to differentiate themselves from other ethnic groups and the second objective of GRCO/GPSDO is ‘raising the image and status of particularly urban Guraghes’. Henry (2001) notes, ‘promoting the Sebat Bet Guraghe self image was a key motivation for GRCO’s activities, particularly to challenge some of the negative stereotypes often assigned to Guraghes’.

3.1.4 Economic:

Due to extremely constrained economic opportunities in Guragheland and the psychology of a 'migrant' (with a sense of mission and purpose), migrant Guraghes have demonstrated incredible determination in all economic spheres and locations they have settled over the past several decades. The literature repeats that migrant Guraghe workers take an instrumental view of labour and take up any job that is available. Although they are spread over all economic spheres, migrant Guraghes
dominate trade and service sub-sectors ranging from shoe-shining and hawking to employment in workshops, hotels, restaurants, supermarkets; and more recently in industry. Many Guraghe were able to exploit the economic chaos of the ‘communist period’ (1974–1991) to make their fortunes.

When discussing economic aspects of agency among Sebat Bet Guraghes and their organization, GRCO/GPSDO, it is important to distinguish between two stages of the organization. The two stages are: (a) before the establishment of GRCO/GPSDO (so as to determine what economic assets were already there), and (b) after the establishment of GRCO/GPSDO (to examine what economic assets have been created thereafter).

A) Before/During GRCO/GPSDO:

Rural Guraghe elders and House-based development committee members in Cheha Woreda underscored that the most important economic asset at all stages (before, during and after establishment) of the organization is the urban Sebat Bet community, whom they referred to as “our sons in Addis”. In fact, the organization, GRCO, itself was needed to serve as a bridge between Guraghe land and Addis so as to channel financial and other resources both for development and subsistence from the latter to the former. Urban Guraghes also viewed GRCO as a medium that facilitated the transfer of badly needed resources from Addis to the homeland. It is apparent that the urban Guraghe community contributed a considerable sum during the establishment GRCO/GPSDO.

But by far the most important source of economic strength during the road project was the rural Sebat Bet Guraghe community itself. In the early days of the road project, rural people in Guraghe land contributed the lion’s share (see Annex 2.2). As one rural elder from Cheha (Imdibir) put it, ‘we (rural Guraghes) were not as poor and demoralized as we are today’. During the early days of the road project, rural people contributed finance, labour and materials generously and with a lot of enthusiasm. According to one of the ex-GRCO leaders, there was a competition between the different Houses to raise funds and get priority in the list of Houses that were served by the project.

Finally, there was also a subsidy from the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, through technical and direct material support. The Ethiopian Highways Authority was authorised to cover about 35% of the cost of road construction (see Annex 2.2).

B) After GRCO/GPSDO:

The economic situation changed after the establishment of the organization. It would be very difficult and exhausting for a community to continuously raise resources to finance every single community project it needed. No matter how committed the Guraghe community might have been to communal causes such as the road infrastructure, not only did the initial enthusiasm evaporate, but also it became a question of ability, rather than willingness to meet such obligations in an uninterrupted manner.
There were concerns, particularly amongst the leadership of the organization, that the initial morale would drop, enthusiasm evaporate and momentum lost after a certain period unless certain self-sustaining sources of finance were created. After completion of major portion of the road infrastructure project, the leadership of GRCO, realising funds would eventually dry up, devised strategies to finance ongoing and future community development activities in a self-sustaining manner. Strategies used by GRCO/GPSDO to generate revenue and to replace at least partially, community contributions included the following:

- **a)** Introducing toll system to collect money from other transport operators who use roads built and owned by GRCO,
- **b)** Operating public transport service business using over 20 small, medium and large buses purchased by GRCO,
- **c)** Charging passengers using GRCO’s fleet and road infrastructure a bit more than transport tariff set by national authorities,
- **d)** Petroleum products retail using a gas filling station owned and operated by GRCO and;
- **e)** Charging other customers for automotive repair and maintenance services provided by using GRCO’s automotive workshop.

In addition to relieving the Guraghe communities of the burden of continual financial contributions for community development, revenue from all sources indicated above had remarkable positive impacts on the organization (strong financial capabilities) and the community it served (self-empowerment through ownership). Besides, the long-standing success of the road project, which had had notable legitimizing impact on the organization itself, it has also served to improve Guraghe self-image as pioneers of successful indigenous model of development based on ethnic affiliations. Paradoxically, however, the organization has been in difficult circumstances since the mid–1990s. Most importantly, the toll system, which has been operating for about three decades and served as the main source of funds, was removed by local government authorities in 1996, as allegedly incongruent with the principles of ‘free market’. It has been suggested this occurred as a result of GPSDO leadership involvement in opposition party politics. There have also been allegations of corruption.

3.1.5 Political:

Officially, GRCO/GPSDO is politically neutral indigenous civil society organization entrusted with addressing community development issues in Guragheland. Many people, who believe GPSDO’s recent difficulties were caused by its failure to maintain its tradition of political ‘neutrality’, attribute its outstanding performance and success to such neutrality from politics. But, it is hard to accept that an institution
can be totally free from political influence and this particular organization has not been totally isolated from political influence.

The history of the organization indicates that Guraghe elites and high ranking officials, who were well placed in the military and state bureaucracy played a decisive role in the establishment and subsequent operation of GRCO/GPSDO. In addition to serving as patrons, mobilising community resources and providing unpaid professional services to GRCO/GPSDO, pioneering Guraghe elites including those leading rural power structures used their influence to find and expand political space for GRCO/GPSDO. Today, many Guraghe elites and elders believe that it was the patronage and political influence of and manoeuvring by the GRCO/GPSDO leadership that meant the organization had space for its operations during the previous two political systems. Therefore, it could be concluded that the organization enjoyed remarkable positive political leverage, and not neutrality, in the past.

Although the issue is still contested, interest for Guraghe political representation among GPSDO’s leadership became increasingly apparent after the EPRDF military victory in 1991. According to informants, when EPRDF invited all ethnic groups to form political parties that represented them in the transitional government, Guraghes, like many other nationalities in Southern Ethiopia, were not represented by any formal political organizations. At the time, GPSDO was the only pan-Guraghe organization. It was also said that prominent members of GPSDO, who had been meeting regularly at GPSDO head quarters, formed a new political party Guraghe Peoples’ Democratic Front (GPDF).

In its first program the GPDF included several policies that it believed would serve the interests of Guraghe people. However, some of the policies of the GPDF were contrary to certain core principles of the ruling party, the EPRDF. Despite friction caused by non-compliance of its policies and programme with those of the EPRDF, GPDF received mass support and funding from urban Guraghes. Although the GPDF leaders claimed that they had made a clear distinction between their roles in GPSDO and GPDF, they were accused of using GPSDO as a political vehicle. According to informants in Cheha Woreda, Imdibir town, GPDF leaders, thinking it in the interests of the Guraghe people, had used GPSDO’s resources, facilities and networks for mobilising urban supporters and penetrating rural areas. However, such allegations were vehemently denied by the leadership, who stated that the accusations were mere propaganda used against GPDF by members of an EPRDF-puppet party known as Guraghe Zone Nationalities Democratic Movement (GZNDM). The GZNDM is a parallel political organization created and supported by the EPRDF to represent it in Guraghe Zone. Many urban Guraghe elites believe that GZNDM de-legitimized GPSDO in order to undermine GPDF and promote its political ambitions. The intense political battle between the two political parties culminated with GZNDM’s electoral victory, which many Guraghes believe was achieved by undermining GPSDO and hence, at the expense of the Guraghe people. The GZNDM, soon after its political victory and at a time when GPSDO was strangled in intense internal conflict, removed the toll and associated revenue sources hoping that the organization would cease to exist.

3.1.6 Organizational:

As discussed in section 3.3.1 above, Guraghes are a socially cohesive group with a range of social institutions that help them maintain this cohesiveness. In the context of migrant Guraghes these social institutions are transformed into a complex network of social organization. Large numbers of migrant Guraghes took their traditional
Social institutions with them and sustained them so as to maintain and facilitate close
ties with their families and kin in Guragheland. Rural parents and kin are also heavily
reliant on remittances from urban-based migrant workers. As there was no formal
organization responsible for facilitating and strengthening these ties between the two
these transactions and communications took place only informally.

Rural Guraghes needed to have easy organizational access to their urban relations
for resource transfer; and urban Guraghes needed to have infrastructural access to
facilitate their visits to Guragheland. These mutually reinforcing interests required a
formal organization that met such needs. It was the need for an institutionalized
approach to facilitate communications between the two communities that led to the
establishment of GRCO/GPSDO. When political support was gained, urban Guraghe
elites joined the movement at the request of rural Guraghe elders. Existing house-
affiliated social institutions were drawn upon to facilitate the establishment and
operations of GRCO/GPSDO.

3.1.7 Spiritual: Belief System

Although Sebat-Bet Guraghes are dominantly followers of Christian and Muslim
religions, they tend to mix religion with traditional beliefs. Guraghes are well known
for their beliefs in "curses" and "blessings". The traditional belief system is such that
parents and elders, by virtue of belonging to the older generation, possess the power
(given to them by the God) of "cursing" or "blessing" the younger generation.
Administration of justice and ensuring peace and tranquillity in the community are
considered to be God-given responsibilities of elders. Other community members are
expected to reciprocate in various ways, including giving respect to and recognition
of their authority, providing free service and labour and material (financial)
contributions. Maintaining close ties with family and kin and support and obedience
to parents and elderly are other key features of the Sebat-Bet Guraghe tradition.
Thus, elders and parents are powerful, feared and respected members of Sebat-Bet
communities.

Sebat-bet Guraghes believe that bad luck (bankruptcy, illness and even family death)
will befall a person if he/she is "cursed" by elders or parents. Conversely, if a person
is "blessed" by elders and parents, which is expected if he/she serves them well or
sends remittances, then his/her business will flourish, and his/her family's health and
well-being will flourish. Furthermore, there are sanctions that govern codes of
conduct and ensure that members of the Sebat-Bet Guraghe (wherever they reside)
behave in a socially acceptable manner. Therefore, these strong traditional belief
systems (albeit paternalistic and sometimes irrational and parochial ones), ensure
effective observance of customary laws, and have undoubtedly served as an agency
for the establishment of GRCO/GPSDO and subsequent effective resource
mobilisation.

Table 3.1: Ranking GPSDO's Aspects of Agency: (Own Assessment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Agency</th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Very Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Cohesiveness</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Participation

The underpinning assumption in the dominant Guraghe development discourse reflected in GPSDO's development endeavors is that development of Guraghe land is possible only with full participation of all urban and rural Guraghes in community development activities. Community participation is a broad term that could mean different things to different people. Therefore, it is important to examine and understand the meaning of participation in the context of Guraghe culture, social structures and customary approaches to communal cooperation.

Unlike mainstream development discourse, the meaning of participation among members of Sebat-Bet tends to be confined to contributing resources to community projects according to one's capacities, financial or otherwise. As described by a scholar, Henry (2001), contributing resources and time for community development initiatives is an integral aspect of wider obligations to the Guraghe community. "...participation in development [is] a sacrifice and a burden willingly undertaken".

Moreover, it should be made clear from the outset that when one says community participation in Guraghe culture it does not necessarily refer to all cross-sections (male-female, youth-elder, poor-rich, minority or cast groups) of a community. The relatively advanced, complex and apparently participatory forms of social organization (of Sebat-Bet) that served as an agency for the establishment of formal organizations such GRCO/GPSDO also has its own serious limitations. For instance, with respect to participation in its contemporary sense, some criticize the customary laws in general and the Guraghe social institutions in particular as having a tendency to marginalize, or even exclude some social groups such as women, the youth and caste groups.

Discussions with rural elders in Guragheland indicated that the household is an economic unit to which all members of a family are expected to contribute their share. The household is usually represented by the male household head. Therefore, it goes without saying that in Guraghe culture, it is the male head of the household, as a representative, that participates in community affairs through various social structures. Thus, it is important to note the differences in meaning, nature, degree and scope of participation in development as used in GRCO/GPSDO and in contemporary development thinking that emphasizes popular participation in all phases of the project cycle such as NGO projects. It is with this context of participation in mind that we have attempted to summarize the level of popular participation (in a project cycle) in community development projects executed by GRCO/GPSDO in the Table below.

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Table xx: GRCO/GPSDO Popular Participation Matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Project Cycle</th>
<th>Degree of Participation</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>Consult</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Needs Assessment/Identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Planning (Appraisal, Design and Resource Mobilization)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Relationships and Stakeholders Involvement

In this section relationships of GRCO/GPSDO with certain primary stakeholders will be examined. Key stakeholders whose relationships with GRCO/GPSDO will be discussed include a) the state (government), b) community c) local informal institutions, and d) other civil society organizations. It should also be noted that GRCO/GPSDO, with a forty year history has been operating in frequently changing socio-economic and political environments. Hence, situations have been both favourable and unfavourable for the organization. Therefore, the organization’s relationships with other players, particularly the state, needs to be examined inter-temporally.
3.3.1 GRCO/GPSDO and the State

GRCO/GPSDO’s relationships with the state have not always been friendly, smooth and based on mutual cooperation. Since its official establishment in 1961, GRCO/GPSDO has passed through three different political systems: a) the Imperial regime, b) the military dictatorship, and c) the current federal parliamentary democracy. For GRCO/GPSDO the situation under the imperial and the military governments was similar. Therefore, state–organization relationships under the first two political systems will be discussed together.

The two former political systems (the Imperial and the Military Dictatorship), were extremely oppressive and generally did not allow any space for associational activities, particularly ethnic based ones. Paradoxically, however, GRCO’s relationships with the these governments were cooperative and longstanding partnerships were forged for the realisation of community projects, particularly the road infrastructure and public transport service. Thanks to influential and well–placed urban Guraghe elites, GRCO not only had space to operate but was also generously subsidized. However, there were several occasions where the organization faced considerable challenges from local governments. These difficulties were common particularly during change of governments. But, the problems were resolved through lobbying, discussion and dialogue with relevant government authorities.

Relationships with the current government were hostile at the start, but are improving. The ruling party, Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) assumed power in 1991 soon after GRCO was renamed GPSDO (1989). Reportedly, certain members of GPSDO’s leadership participated in an EPRDF peace conference to establish an all-inclusive ethnic based transitional government. Subsequently, members of GPSDO leadership formed an opposition party; and were accused of using GPSDO’s facilities and influences thereof to further their political interests. This had led to bitterness among local government circles. This hostile relationship continued, culminating in a series of actions against GPSOD by local government in 1996. The measures included nationalization of the road network built, owned and managed by GRCO/GPSDO, banning the toll system and extra transport charges on routes owned by GRCO/GPSDO. GPSDO’s management stated that the measures taken by local government had had a devastating blow on GPSDO and its operations ever since. Currently, GPSDO is in extreme financial difficulty.

On the other hand, local government officials put the blame for weakening of the organization back onto GPSODO’s inherent leadership and management problems, rather than external political interference. Similarly, a rural informant from Cheha Woreda commented that “although GRCO/GPSDO is our identity and it is still in the hearts of all Sebat Bet Guraghe people”, internal decay of its leadership had reached such proportions that “it had started abusing the very people (Guraghes) it was supposed to serve”.

Over the past few years, however, things have changed for the better and relationships of GPSDO with government at all levels have improved significantly. Although real partnership and commitment between the two is yet to occur, local
government authorities have admittedly acknowledged GPSDO for its popular acceptance, achievements, success and continued commitment to the cause of rural Guraghe people. Good level understanding of each other was observed during a discussion that involved both GPSDO management and local government in Guragheland. Currently, GPSDO is undertaking internal housekeeping measures including decentralization and reorientation of its activities to help improve its image and relationships with local government and to discharge its responsibilities better.

3.3.2 GRCO/GPSDO and the Community

Based on observations during the fieldwork, amongst a cross-section of Guraghe communities the relationship between GRCO/GPSDO and the community is one of emotional attachment, rather than simple contemporary development discourse.

Explanation of support and commitment, a member of GPSDO management stated that the ‘Guraghe communities both in Guragheland and elsewhere are the sole source of power and pride to their organization, GPSDO’. According to elders interviewed in Cheha Woreda, without the community’s unwavering support including the ‘sons in Addis’, financial and material contributions, unpaid labour from several thousands of rural elders, who served as development representatives for their respective Houses, GRCO/GPSDO would not have achieved anything today.

On the other hand, there are some members of the urban Guraghe community who had a mixed view of their organization and strongly criticised the transport section of GRCO/GPSDO for its corrupt practices and failure to serve its legitimate owners, the Guraghe people, properly since the mid–1980s.

The view that GRCO/GPSDO is linked closely to Guraghe identity is shared by both urban and rural Guraghes. For instance, some Guraghes in Addis who were highly critical of the transport section stated that GPSDO, beyond providing infrastructure and other facilities, had served Sebat Bet Guraghe people as a symbol for Guraghe identity. It is a successful indigenous model of development that should be reinvigorated and replicated elsewhere. Based on our interviews and discussions, currently the dominant view among Guraghes is that the responsibility all of them to see that action is taken to rectify GPSDO’s current problems and to help it capitalize on its resources (Guraghe people and their existing social networks, the organization’s own reputation and the new professional leadership) and to forge partnerships with others in order to address basic development issues in Guragheland, in a more systematic manner.

3.3.3 GRCO/GPSDO and Local Informal Institutions

One of the unique features of GRCO/GPSDO that contributed to its longstanding success is that it evolved from local informal institutions and maintained very close relationships with them. The organization used informal social institutions and networks as outreach and communication channels and resource mobilisation venues. Through representation at various levels of ethnically affiliated hierarchy
ranging from family, village, clan, tribe or House to Sebat Bet, the whole range of informal institutions was fully involved and effectively utilised for project identification, consultation, fund raising and mobilisation of other resources required for the implementation of a community project.

Similarly, House-based urban Iddirs, which are an extension of rural Guraghe associational life, were instrumental and were most effectively used in mobilising resources, particularly finance, from urban Guraghe communities in Addis Ababa and other towns. As a tradition, use of House-based urban Iddirs to mobilise finance for homeland development has continued even after GRCO/GPSDO operations had become self-sustaining. Although to a lesser extent, there are some urban Iddirs that are raising finance currently for the development of their respective localities.

Relationships between local informal institutions and GRCO/GPSDO have always been indirect but very positive. In such symbiotic relationships, while the organization benefits directly, the informal institutions usually also make indirect gains, such as community development and a sense of identity, as well as becoming consumers of GPSDO’s services. It should also be noted that maintaining positive relationships among various Guraghe social institutions and also participation in development is a social obligation and part of the wider Guraghe citizenship.

3.3.4 GRCO/GPSDO and Other Civil Society Organizations

Unlike almost all indigenous civil society organizations engaged in development activities, partnerships of GRCO/GPSDO with other civil society is limited in scope and diversity and very recent relative to its long history. The majority of indigenous civil society organizations including Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) engaged in relief and development work have always been heavily dependent on their international partners, who are also their creators, since they lack financial as well as organizational capacities.

As an exception rather than a rule, GRCO/GPSDO, which has had relatively long history of adequate financial, technical, organizational, institutional and even managerial capacities, had always relied on its own people and resources until very recently. It was only after the removal of the toll system in the mid-1990s that GPSDO started to face serious financial difficulties and was forced to look for partnerships with other civil society organizations. Since the removal of its main source of revenue, GPSDO has sought support from and partnerships with some international NGOs and has worked or is still working with international NGOs such as PACT, OXFAM, Save the Children, and SNV.

Regarding GPSDO’s relationships with other civil society organizations, the management of PACT, GPSDO’s main partner, stated that it is ‘exemplary’. According to them, GPSDO has deep roots in the community, is accountable, transparent, bottom-up and able to raise matching resources effectively. Therefore, the implication is that GPSDO’s partners are confident and supportive of the trusteeship constructed between the organization and the people it seeks to serve.
3.4 Capacity Building

From the outset, GRCO was established with the clearly stated primary objective of improving accessibility of Guragheland (physical movement of people and goods) through building a road network. In the days of the road construction projects, the role of GRCO was somewhat like an intermediary contractor between the community that contributed resources and a public sector road construction authority, which subsidized the construction work and actually did the road design, engineering and construction works. Capacity building was provided only in the form of financial and technical assistance; and not as a strategic component to GRCO’s future operations. Moreover, leadership of and professional assistance to GRCO/GPSDO had always been and still is based on unpaid volunteers. With the exception of about a dozen full–time employees at GPSDO head quarters and its newly opened branch in Wolkite, several hundred people in its leadership and development committee continue to provide unpaid service.

Although out-sourcing unpaid professional support and leadership is important to keep operation costs low, it has its own limitations for it inhibits continuity and does not lend itself for institutionalisation of capacity development component. According to GPSDO management, currently, in partnership with some partner NGOs, training and capacity building efforts are underway. Training seminars aimed at improving management and planning skills were provided to some of the House-based development committees in Guragheland. Moreover, as part of GPSDO’s plan to reorganise itself and improve its managerial capacities, qualified and competent professionals are being recruited and placed in key management positions.

Given the multi-dimensional development issues that the organization seeks to address in Guragheland and its heavy reliance on unpaid volunteers, GPSDO has started its capacity building component very late and from a low starting point. Thus, if GPSDO is to become an indigenous civil society organization capable of mobilising resources and delivering public goods and services as effectively as it did during its road construction projects, then it needs to deepen the ongoing process of rationalizing itself, and accelerate the process of institutional capacity building.

3.5 Sustainability

Discussion about sustainability of GPSDO and its operations as an indigenous civil society organization should be discussed in terms of political, financial, organizational or institutional and motivational sustainability.

3.5.1 Political

It is apparent that no activity can be totally free from politics and hence politicians’ interference in one-way or another. Despite its alleged political neutrality, GRCO/GPSDO has been part of Ethiopian politics throughout its history. The only
exception is the nature and degree of political involvement and support from
government that varied from time to time.

Despite differences in opinion as to the source of current problems, both local
politicians and some members of GPSDO’s management share the view that such
crises are inherent to large public organizations such as GPSDO with a long history
of development work. Both sides also confirmed that currently their relationships
have been improving progressively. Therefore, current calmer relationships suggest
that the recent problems of GPSDO, though serious, should be seen as a temporary
hiccup in an institutional process.

3.5.2 Financial

Financial sustainability was not been a major issue for GPSDO before the toll system
and associated charges were removed by local authorities in 1996. Ever since,
however, GPSDO has been in serious financial difficulties. GPSDO’s leadership is
still of the opinion that the previous toll system should be reinstated through lobbying
and convincing the government. An elder who was also one of the pioneers of
GRCO/GPSDO strongly opposed the government’s decision to remove the toll
system:

“There is nothing wrong with the toll system. I don’t understand when
government officials say ‘the toll system is against free-market principles’
when, in fact it is being promoted and practised in western countries where
the concept of the so-called free-market came from. When I visited my son in
the United States recently, he was driving me around [name of city] and I saw
him paying money in two places on the same day. When I asked my son why
he was paying money he told me that the road and the bridge we were
crossing are managed by a private company that built and owns them. They
collect toll charges to recover their costs and maintain the infrastructure in a
self-sustaining manner. To me removal of the toll serves the interests of
certain greedy transport operators and not that of the Guraghe community.
For instance, private transport operators, instead of lowering transport
charges after removal of the toll, raised it even higher over and above what
GPSDO used to charge”.

Proponents of the toll system unanimously hold the view that the government should
come to terms with reality and reinstate the toll system, which would help GPSDO
finance development projects without seeking further contributions from the
community and other partners. However, there is no indication that the government
will entertain such request and reinstate the old toll system at the moment.

3.5.3 Organizational/Institutional

There is a consensus among the majority of stakeholders including former
GRCO/GPSDO leadership, elders, urban elites, ordinary Guraghe people and
obviously, local government officials that GPSDO has had serious and inherent
institutional problems, including corrupt practices and lack of capacity required to
maintain and build upon its reputation. According to some informants, had it not
been for GPSDO’s internal weaknesses, it would not have been possible for local

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20 These groups of informants believe that GPSDO’s institutional weaknesses were used by
local politicians to justify their actions to advance their political interests.
politicians to weaken the organization and destroy its assets and strong economic base. There are also those who take the issue of institutional weaknesses of GPSDO even further and argue that GPSDO would have collapsed even without external political interference. In fact, local politicians and extreme critics argued that any external pressure on GPSDO, be it political or otherwise, should be seen as a ‘blessing in disguise’ for it awakened the organization and helped it clean up its act before it was too late.

3.5.4 Motivational: Sense of Ownership

Motivation, or a sense of ownership as an aspect of sustainability is an important factor in GRCO/GPSDO’s success. In fact, there is very little difference of opinion among all Sebat Bet Guraghes including critics and local politicians, when it comes to the sense of ownership and institutional ‘belongingness’ to GRCO/GPSDO. It is believed to have served as a symbol of Guraghe identity for over three decades.

3.6 Success Indicators

The dominant view of GRCO/GPSDO is that it is the oldest and most successful indigenous civil society organization in Ethiopia. Perceptions and views of GRCO/GPSDO’s success were solicited from various groups including the organization’s management, members of development committees, representatives of local government, elders and ordinary Guraghes in Addis as well as Guragheland. All of these groups shared a common view that the organization has been successful in achieving its stated objective of building a road network. According to rural Guraghe elders interviewed, over 500 km of road network built and managed by their organization had improved access to and from Guragheland.

Apparently, there was a consensus among all parties that the road project was an ‘eye-opener’ for rural Sebat-Bet Guraghe people. Improved network of roads has contributed enormously to Guraghes’ migratory survival strategies. Besides, a number of social services such as education, health, potable water supply and electricity have expanded following successful completion of the road projects in Guragheland over the past three decades or so. Despite their concern about certain financial and institutional difficulties that the organization has been facing currently, perceptions of the majority of stakeholders about GRCO/GPSDO’s degree of success and achievement have been such that the organization has become part of Guraghe identity and one with which every Guraghe wants to be associated. Despite some differences in views and perceptions about the organization recently, it goes without saying that GRCO/GPSDO’s success has been key for the improvement of migrant Guraghes’ image in the Ethiopian society at large.

However, some politicians and or extremist critics of GPSDO do not accept such success. In fact, they support the idea that GRCO/GPSDO’s road projects were conceived by urban Guraghe elites to serve their own interests, rather than those of rural Guraghe people. Furthermore, the critics argue, previous efforts made by the
organization did not bring about any development in rural Guragheland as rural Guraghes are poorer today than ever before.
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Wolde-Selassie Bereka (General), 1987, Achievements of Collective Efforts (in Amharic), Addis Ababa, GRCO
### Annex 1: List of Organizations and Persons Contacted

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Ato Cheru</td>
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<td>Program Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ato Woldemeskel</td>
<td>GPSDO, Wolkite</td>
<td>Coordinator</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ato</td>
<td>GPSDO</td>
<td>Head, Transport Operations Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ato Bahru Muktar</td>
<td>Guraghe Zone Administration</td>
<td>Head, Department of Finance and Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ato Omar???</td>
<td>Guraghe Zone Administration</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ato</td>
<td>Cheha Woreda Administration</td>
<td>Chief Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ato Shume Nagade</td>
<td>Enor &amp; Ener Development Association</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ato Abdella Becher</td>
<td>Enor &amp; Ener Development Association</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex 2: Statistical Information

Residing at Different Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>House Affiliations</th>
<th>Guragheland</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promised</td>
<td>Collected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cheha</td>
<td>300,000.00</td>
<td>298,501.50</td>
<td>(1,498.50)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gomare and Geta</td>
<td>300,000.00</td>
<td>287,247.25</td>
<td>(12,752.75)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Iza and Akil</td>
<td>133,333.00</td>
<td>147,655.10</td>
<td>14,322.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Enemor and Ener</td>
<td>260,000.00</td>
<td>260,029.38</td>
<td>29.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moher</td>
<td>33,333.00</td>
<td>29,813.00</td>
<td>(3,520.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wollene</td>
<td>16,667.00</td>
<td>3,406.00</td>
<td>(13,261.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bushnan and Merabicho</td>
<td>100,000.00</td>
<td>90,982.00</td>
<td>(9,018.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wolkite</td>
<td>50,000.00</td>
<td>16,988.00</td>
<td>(33,012.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Enekor and Fonko</td>
<td>40,000.00</td>
<td>23,571.00</td>
<td>(16,429.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>1,233,333.00</td>
<td>1,158,193.23</td>
<td>(75,139.77)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>House Affiliations</th>
<th>Addis Ababa</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promised</td>
<td>Collected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cheha</td>
<td>97,616.00</td>
<td>96,849.00</td>
<td>(767.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Enemor and Ener</td>
<td>27,817.00</td>
<td>27,817.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bushnan and Merabicho</td>
<td>4,370.00</td>
<td>4,370.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Iza</td>
<td>63,360.00</td>
<td>63,360.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gumer</td>
<td>31,917.00</td>
<td>31,917.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Moher and Akil</td>
<td>21,598.00</td>
<td>21,598.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Geta</td>
<td>22,456.00</td>
<td>22,456.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Azernet and Berbere</td>
<td>34,480.00</td>
<td>25,166.00</td>
<td>(9,314.00)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>303,614.00</td>
<td>293,533.00</td>
<td>(10,081.00)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>House Affiliations</th>
<th>Outside Addis and Guragheland</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promised</td>
<td>Collected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enemor and Ener</td>
<td>936.00</td>
<td>936.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bushnan and Merabicho</td>
<td>599.00</td>
<td>599.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Iza</td>
<td>3,315.00</td>
<td>3,315.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gumer</td>
<td>3,101.00</td>
<td>3,101.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moher and Akil</td>
<td>2,755.00</td>
<td>2,755.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Geta</td>
<td>1,186.00</td>
<td>1,186.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Azernet and Berbere</td>
<td>350.00</td>
<td>550.00</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jima</td>
<td>10,456.15</td>
<td>10,456.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>22,698.15</td>
<td>22,898.15</td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,559,645.15</td>
<td>1,474,624.38</td>
<td>(85,020.77)</td>
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</table>

Source: General Wolde-Selassie Bereka, 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Distance (km)</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Total (Etb)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GRCO (65%)</td>
<td>Government (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wolkite-Hosanna</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1,596,184.83</td>
<td>859,484.14</td>
<td>2,455,668.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gubre-Bojebar-Gumer Mazoria</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>760,581.60</td>
<td>409,543.94</td>
<td>1,170,125.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Atat-Enor-Kosse-Gunchire</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1,251,701.15</td>
<td>673,992.93</td>
<td>1,925,694.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anbussie-Hebir Abee-Teklehaimanot</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3,627,951.55</td>
<td>1,953,515.0</td>
<td>5,581,466.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mugo-Burat-Megenassie-Yeterek</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2,912,000.00</td>
<td>1,568,000.0</td>
<td>4,480,000.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Main Route-Atata Hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gubre-Luke (by Cheha People)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>10,148,419.1</td>
<td>5,464,536.0</td>
<td>15,612,955.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tadesse Debelle, 2001

## Annex 2.3: Number of Meetings GRCO Held Between 1963 and 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types Meeting</th>
<th>No. of Meetings</th>
<th>Average No. of Participants</th>
<th>Duration of A Single Meeting (Hrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>6:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Committee</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary Meetings</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1610</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tadesse Debelle: 2001
Annex 3: GPSDO Resource Flow Chart

- Management Council
- Executive Committee
- Secretariat/Secretary
- GPSDO Transport
- GPSDO (Transport Operations)
- House Committees (Guragheland)
  - Cheha
  - Iza
  - Gomare
  - Enor and Ener
  - Geta
  - Moher and Aklil
  - Indegagn
- Addis Committee (Corresponding to Each)
- Committees Elsewhere
  - Cheha Iddir
  - Iza Iddir
  - Gomare Iddir
  - Enor and Ener Iddir
  - Geta Iddir
  - Moher & Aklil Iddir
  - Indegagn Iddir

- Woreda Council
- Executive Committee
- Kebele

- Donations
- Int’l NGO Funding
- Membership Contributions
- Government Subsidy (GRCO)
Annex 4: Members of Sebat-Bet Guraghe Exercising “Yejoka Qicha” (Customary Law) and Its Categories

YEJOKA QICHA
(SEBAT-BET GURAGHE CUSTOMARY LAW)

CATEGORIES OF QICHA (CUSTOMARY LAWS) ADOPTED IN YEJOKA

- Yejefore (Common Property Law)
- Yeqoq (Manslaughter)
- Yejod (Manslaughter)
- Yepe (Marriage Law)
- Yepe (Land Property Law)
- Yeqe (Common Property Law)
- Yeket (Mastery-Slave) Non-operational now
- Yege (Breach of Trust)
Case 12

Tigray

Sekeil (Adiha) River Diversion Project and Community Empowerment

MOHAMMED MUSSA

This case study differs from the others included in this collection, in that it focuses on the quasi party/governmental body REST. However, it shows how it is possible to develop programmes which provide a voice in local management to local farmers, even within this more formal type of structure.
Acronyms

AISCO - Agricultural Inputs Supplying Corporation
BoANR - Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources
DSCA - Dedebit Savings and Credit Association
Co-SAERT - Commission for Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Rehabilitation in Tigray
REST - Relief Society of Tigray
TPLF - Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

Definitions of Local Terms

Baito - local elected body
Kushet - village
Tabia - the lowest administrative unit in Tigray
1. Background

1.1. Regional profile

Tigray is one of the nine regions of Ethiopia and has a population of 3.8 million people. The region has a total of 46 woredas including the special woreda of Mekele. A woreda can have a population of from 80,000 to 150,000 people. Tigray is one of the most drought affected regions of Ethiopia. The mainstay of the region is agriculture. About eighty-three percent of the population depends on rainfed agriculture of subsistence crops. The major crops grown in the region include barley, teff, sorghum, finger millet, maize and pulses.

Like in other parts of Ethiopia, farming practice in Tigray is predominantly traditional. Low technological development coupled with a fragile resource base and erratic rainfall have made the region susceptible to vulnerability. Most of the woredas in the region have food deficits and often require food assistance, especially during the dry season. Lack of sufficient irrigation systems increases the vulnerability of the region to recurrent drought and crop failure. The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) is a long standing partner and works with communities to develop and equitably manage water sources in order to increase agricultural production on a long term and sustainable basis.

Some donors are supporting food security projects in the regions. One of them is Oxfam America that has made a long term commitment to working in Tigray to improve the livelihoods of the millions of rural people who have long suffered from drought and civil war. REST and Oxfam America have made a partnership in addressing food insecurity problems in some parts of the region.

1.2. Engagement of Community

The Adiha river diversion project site is located in the Kolla Tembein woreda of Central Tigray, which is known for its mountainous terrain with steep escarpments and valleys. The Tsadiet river was in the past a seasonal river that flowed through Sekiel tabia (hereafter called Adiha tabia). However, it has become perennial after being joined to a spring-fed tributary called Ruba Lomin, since the spring flows all year round from nearby mountains.

During the rainy season, the flow rate of the river is estimated to be 360 m$^3$/s (maximum flow) and 130 l/s (minimum flow) during the dry season. Adiha tabia is located in a valley at the lower end of the Degua Tembein escarpment, at an estimated elevation of 1700-1800 metres above sea level. The climate of Adiha tabia is moderately warm.

The people in the study area are involved in the combined activities of crop-livestock interaction. Staple crops like maize are cultivated under rainfed conditions, although frequent drought puts severe constraints on their production. Consequently, the people of Adiha tabia have had to construct hand dug canals to divert water from the river to plots where they grow cereals and other crops for food as well as income. Farm lands in the valley are well suited to irrigation by gravity. Farmers traditionally grow local varieties of maize, pepper and onion as well as local types of orange, lemon, and papaya. Adiha is 1-4 hours drive from several market places including Workamba (10 kms), Abi Adi (22 kms) and Mekelle (107 kms).
The four kushets that comprise Adiha tabia (Adiha, Wukro, Sekiel and Awet Bekalsi) encompass about 700 families and had a total population of nearly 3,100 during the project formulation and design. Land holding ranges from 0.25 to 1.0 hectares per household depending on family size and fertility of the land.

The Adiha irrigation project is designed to diversify the agricultural activities of the project area by increasing the size of irrigable land and creating opportunities for dry season employment. It has been implemented through REST with financial support from Oxfam America. The total budget was Birr 4.3 million.

2. Project Planning and Implementation

The farmers of Adiha have been practising traditional irrigation since the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. However, the maximum utilisation of traditional irrigation techniques has not been possible due to lack of technical knowledge and shortage of materials and labour. Most traditional irrigation structures are temporary as they are made of stones, mud, hay and branches of trees. These structures are often destroyed during the long rainy season and need to be rebuilt and maintained every year, requiring a great deal of labour and material input. The improvement of the traditional irrigation scheme was required in order to promote efficient use of irrigation water, to increase crop production by increasing the size of irrigable land, to reduce conflict over water use, and to mitigate adverse environmental impacts.

The Adiha river diversion project was initiated by the tabia community, woreda baito and BoANR. The planning process involved consultation with the community, baito, BoANR, REST management and representative of Oxfam America. Agreement was reached to carry out a feasibility study and to share responsibilities. The detailed study, design and construction work was done by REST irrigation engineers.

The project addressed the needs and priorities of the community members and clearly identified the responsibility of each actor in its implementation. The project was implemented by REST with close collaboration with the community, baito and BoANR. The baito was responsible for mobilizing the community to provide material and labour assistance, while BoANR took the responsibility of providing technical support and supervision.

3. Targeting of beneficiaries

Male and female headed households had been using the river for small–scale and traditional irrigation before the construction of the irrigation project. After the completion of the improved irrigation scheme, land reallocation was done by woreda and tabia baito and BoANR. The beneficiaries of the improved irrigation scheme are farmers, female headed households, displaced people and ex-soldiers, and youth depending on previous ownership of permanent crops, family size and fertility of land.

The size of the irrigable land plots varies from 0.12 ha to 0.25 ha. The direct beneficiaries of the irrigation project are 527 farm households (about 2,620 people). These are families living in the three kushets (Adiha, Wukro and Sekeil) near Tsediet river and they now cultivate lands using the diversion structure. Furthermore, the team discussed and observed that the reallocation of irrigable land was appropriate
and compensation was given to farmers who lost their agricultural lands for construction purposes.

4. Irrigation and Household Income

The irrigation project has provided households with opportunities to increase the amount and range of crops grown. The crops grown using dry season irrigation are cash crops such as vegetables and fruits. Supplementary irrigation is used to increase the yield of the main cereal crops. The project has the effect of increasing the amount of food grown by households both in quantity and quality.

Despite the fact that the size of household irrigable land plots is relatively small, ranging from 0.12 ha to 0.25 ha, it has become possible for the beneficiaries of the project to grow enough food for their own consumption and to market. This is because production has been intensified. It is also worth noting that the irrigation project is supplementing rainfed agriculture. The extension service also provides advice and training on production techniques and management. The farmers have good access to improved seeds, fertiliser, and credit.

Table 1: Average yield of selected crops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of crop</th>
<th>Land size in m²</th>
<th>Production before using improved irrigation in q/m² (quintal = 100 kg)</th>
<th>Production after using improved irrigation in q/m²</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepper</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is observed from the table that compared to the pre-project period, the yield of maize (A-511) has increased three-fold and of pepper and onion four-fold. This is because the irrigation project enabled farmers to harvest 2-3 times a year.

Efficient use of irrigation water and the extension package has resulted in increased production and income. This increase in production and income can be verified by the high loan repayment rate in the project area. Credit access ensures that farmers are able to take advantage of the production opportunities created by irrigation development.

Farmers’ demands for credit and other inputs has increased substantially. This shows that the irrigation project has made a considerable contribution to the increase in production and income of beneficiaries. The loan repayment is also another indication of the increased income of the households from the farms. The following table depicts this fact — the farmers are economically empowered by the irrigation scheme, that has enabled them to increase their production for consumption and sale. They are therefore in a better position to repay their loans when compared to people from Selam and Gesekamlese tabias.

Table 2. Loan repayment rate of Adiha tabia and other two tabias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tabia</th>
<th>Loan repayment (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adiha tabia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selam tabia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesekamlese tabia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows that the amount of irrigable land under cultivation has increased from year to year. Before the intervention of the project, the amount of traditionally irrigated land in the project area was 27 hectares.

Table 3: Sizes of irrigable land under cultivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount of dry season irrigable land (ha)</th>
<th>Amount of supplementary irrigable land (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>300 hectares is under supplementary irrigation since 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, the project has empowered the beneficiaries. It has enabled households to improve their asset base by building new houses, buying oxen, becoming involved in petty trading and other activities. Beneficiaries explained that the project has protected them from having to dispose of their assets, for example selling livestock, for purchase of food and other consumables.

It can thus be seen that the project has brought about social and economic benefits for the targeted community. It has, to a large extent, enabled beneficiary households to maintain their social status and position. It has also protected them from potential distress situations during the cropping season; in the past rainfed production had been destroyed by heavy rain and storms.

5. Empowerment

Enhancing the sense of ownership and ensuring project sustainability received due attention in the project design. To ensure sustainability, the active participation of the community in problem identification was encouraged, as was efficient implementation, through action-oriented community training and research. REST adopted an action-oriented research and training approach, which was directed towards the practical application of what was learnt according to the needs identified.

Technical training and skills upgrading of beneficiaries was one of the most important activities of REST in collaboration with BoANR. Project beneficiaries received training on vegetable and fruit crop production and management, forage development, green manuring and compost making, and operation and maintenance of irrigation structures. Many farmers were also taken to other areas to learn new technologies and exchange experiences. The process contributed to the organizational and economic empowerment of the community.
Ms Selas Samson is a woman farmer in Adiha tabia. She participated in various training programmes and meetings and is well aware of the advantages of the project. She produced pepper on her irrigated land. From the sale of the pepper, she was able to buy clothes for her children and herself, pay back her loan from DSCA, and buy 5 sheep and grains for consumption.

6. Gender Equity in Participation

One of the development strategies of REST was to encourage the active participation of beneficiary households in the project design and implementation, so as to achieve community empowerment and sustainability of the irrigation project in the long term. The participation of the target community in the planning, design, construction, operation, monitoring and evaluation of the Adiha irrigation project exposed the community to a learning process, which empowered them to make informed decisions about their community problems. The community actively participated in the project in information generation, and materials and labour provision.

Gender equity was one of the components of the project. The strategy was to empower women through a holistic approach of economic intervention, awareness building, education, training and research. In the course of the evaluation, it was observed that women and men had participated equally in the project. Female representatives of the Adiha tabia baito participated equally with men in all processes of the project. Women’s right to participate in the development process and benefit from its fruits was acknowledged and put into practice.

In general, there was an effort to address and maintain gender balance in the project. This was best demonstrated by a high level of equitable community participation. Women’s involvement in the project was significantly high. This was probably because it increased levels of food availability and access in the household, which is a major priority of women.

7. Sustainability

Sustainability was also one of the components of the project. In Tigray, and particularly within the programs of REST, there is a well developed habit and experience of working with the active involvement and participation of key actors – amongst these the communities themselves. The high commitment of the baito, community and REST to the fight against poverty and hunger and the tremendous experience and knowledge gained so far requires no better indicator of the sustainability of the project.

Some of the systems which are in place to ensure the sustainability of the project are:

- The community actively participated in all stages of the project (identification, feasibility study, design, implementation, operation and maintenance, and monitoring and evaluation) and developed the necessary capacity for its management.
- The head work construction was carried out according to the standard of BoANR. The structure is simple and manageable by the baito and water management committee.
- The training provided for the water committee on operation and maintenance of the system has developed its capacity.
• The project is integrated with soil and water conservation activities and with health and sanitation education.
• The development agent and the project coordinator are there to follow up the management of the irrigation system and to provide continuous training and advice for the beneficiaries.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

In 1999, REST commissioned a consultant to evaluate the project. The findings of the evaluation showed that the irrigation project had been successful in terms of increased household income and also community empowerment, both organizationally and economically.

9. Lessons Learnt

In general, the following lessons have been learnt from the process of the project:

The strategies followed by REST, BoANR and the baito to mobilize the community and local resources and to create an understanding and conducive working environment during the course of the implementation of the project were successful and useful learning processes. The community actively participated, resulting in a strong sense of ownership and commitment to the operation and maintenance of the project. The participation of those concerned and the achievement of their consent and acceptance was a key feature of the development strategy of REST.

The Adiha small scale irrigation project provided a useful learning-by-doing opportunity for REST and the region as a whole. The project has strengthened the capacity of REST in planning and designing small-scale irrigation projects in the region.

The integration of the project with other development activities in the project area and the overall institutional and capacity development of the beneficiary community is a good example of an integrated rural development intervention.

The project’s success came about as a result of the joint working commitment and skills of the key actors. Community participation was at the root of the project. The chairman of Adiha tabia baito explained that the community had worked hard at all levels (planning, construction, monitoring and evaluation) of the river diversion scheme, which made the overall project successful. The beneficiaries have already seen the fruits of their efforts and they will continue working to maintain the canals and to take care of the weir, to assure the sustainability of their gains.
10. Conclusions

The river diversion project has an interesting history. It was initiated by the community and then received some external opportunities to promote the irrigation project. The beneficiaries have been practising traditional irrigation since the time of Emperor Haile Selassie. However, the optimum use of such traditional irrigation systems had not been possible due to the lack of technical knowledge and shortage of materials – irrigation structures were made of stones, mud and trees and often destroyed during the long rainy season. The improvement of the traditional irrigation system by diverting the Adiha river was undertaken by REST with the assistance of OXFAM America. The project has been completed and handed over to the community. According to REST, it is being managed efficiently.

The review of the relevant documents and discussion with project staff indicate the commitment, enthusiasm and confidence of the community about the project. As a result, the project has brought about a significant change in the life of the beneficiary community. The project has enabled beneficiaries to increase and diversify their production, thereby significantly reducing the food shortage problem of the area. Depending on crop choice and individual effort, the beneficiaries have the options for second and third season production. Thus, the scheme has enhanced the productivity of the farmers. The size of irrigable land has also increased year after year, showing the importance of and demand for the project.

There were encouraging levels of participation of the community in the design and implementation of the project. There was also a clear understanding and informed decision about the project. Community participation ensured that the design and construction of the scheme was compatible with the needs of the community. Also local skills were built up and management responsibility was kept in the hands of the community. This resulted in an asset for the community in terms of decision making and self-reliance. The community has a good understanding of the value of the scheme.

The various training programs provided for the water management committee on the operation and maintenance of the scheme, and for the beneficiaries on vegetable and fruit crops production and management, were effective and appropriate from the perspectives of community empowerment and project sustainability. The encouraging results of the training can be seen by farmers’ use of controlled water outlets from main and secondary canals to control water volume. The demonstration of diversification of crop cultivation promoted farmer experimentation with irrigation technology and new crop choices to bring optimum effectiveness and efficiency. The introduction of non-traditional foods like sweet potato into the diet of the community has also gained encouraging acceptance.
Annex: Sources of Data

The consultant had discussions with technical staff of REST in Tigray and Addis Ababa about the inception and completion of the irrigation project. The evaluation document of REST and other documents were used for the preparation of this report.
Case 13

Addis Ababa

The Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Project

Astir Abirke

Although building on a previous Northern NGO programme, the Integrated Holistic Approach had clearly adapted its programme to local needs and culture. The long term approach to urban development, with its emphasis on building individual and organisational confidence, is interesting. There are also some good examples of how women have taken on roles and jobs previously regarded as in the domain of men.
The Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Project (IHA-UDP)

I. Background

The Integrated Holistic Approach Urban Development Project, IHA-UDP, in Addis Ababa, is a project that grew out of work undertaken in the 1980s by Save the Children Norway (Redd Barna) in one of the poorest Kebeles of the capital. The project was set up as an independent initiative by a then employee of Save the Children Norway, who felt that the phase out of the organization from the Kebele in 1986 was neither strong nor sustainable.

The work of IHA–UDP revolves around three key themes of physical upgrading of the urban environment, community development and primary healthcare. The initiatives are characterised by their integrated and holistic nature and their strategy for sustainability, in that projects are eventually handed over to local community based organisations (CBOs). The first handover took place in 1997, and the organization is planning to replicate the same strategy for its current project at the end of 2004, drawing on the challenges faced and lessons learned from the original process.

The main thrust of both projects is that they are integrated and holistic initiatives which have allowed IHA-UDP to see extensive transformation among the target community.

II. The First IHA-UDP Project

A. The Project Initiation

IHA-UDP became operational in 1989, conducting needs assessments in three major components i.e. socio-economic development, primary health care and physical infrastructure. In addition a community needs survey was conducted which identified 11 eleven priority areas of concern to community members. IHA-UDP then categorised these eleven priorities into 3 main project components consisting of Community Development, Physical Upgrading and Primary Health Care. Staff were organised and activities were designed. The community fully participated through their representatives in the identification as well as the design of the initial project. They took part in various types of training, as well as in setting the criteria for selecting which areas of the three project components were most pressing.

Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- improve the quality of life of the people of the area, focusing particularly on the neediest, by addressing the root causes of the multiple inter-related needs of the target group through a community-based, integrated, holistic approach. This helps to reinstate human dignity and self-esteem and enables the community to take control of their lives and become self-sufficient.
- make all the activities sustainable so that the development process continues even after the project phase-out.

II B. Approach

To achieve its goals IHA-UDP uses a set of approaches that are defined and implemented throughout the duration of the project. The main approaches used along with brief definitions (according to IHA-UDP), are highlighted below.

Integration:
The inter-relatedness and joint implementation of the three components: community development, health and physical upgrading, under which the expressed needs of the target community are categorised.

Holistic:
Relates to the whole person’s needs – and their inter-linked challenges, which cannot be addressed separately. This recognises that addressing the needs of a person involves more than just a focus on the individual, to incorporate his/her family and community. IHA-UDP believes that ultimately, through an integrated and holistic approach, its programmes can address the root causes and problems of the poor.

Dialogue:
At IHA-UDP dialogue is a process that staff utilize in working together with community members, leading ultimately to consensus building. Dialogue ensures that agreement is reached through mutual understanding and conviction and not through manipulation or imposition.

Humanisation:
Open and participatory dialogue helps minimise manipulation and/or compromising human values. It is through systematic awareness creation that the poor can fully be liberated and thus be ‘humanised’. Attempts to bring social justice to those disempowered has its foundations in both religion, and the need to look at poverty as a human rights issue.

Conscientization:
Continuous dialogue, discussion and liberating education with facts and accurate information result in a change of attitude, humanisation and self-determination as well as empowerment.

Institutionalization:
Creating formal and structured institutions is taken as an important process towards self-determination, self-administration and self-sufficiency.

Participation
Participation is the first principle that allows respect, a sense of equity, raises self-dignity and esteem, and promotes empowerment, sustainability and a sense of ownership. Participation is synonymous with being ‘people centred’.
People-centredness assumes that all human beings are equal in the eyes of God; each human being deserves respect and dignity and basically knows what they want or need - even if sometimes, for various reasons, they will not readily express their wishes or felt needs. It also presupposes that communities, however poor, will if allowed and accommodated take responsibility and voluntarily participate to achieve a better quality of life. Furthermore, efforts to 'enable' people rather than 'dictating-imposing' will bring out the best in people and build their confidence. This results in taking proactive steps in advancing their own development.

Training and discussions with community representatives are conducted in the evenings and on weekends to ensure full participation at a time that is most convenient to community members.

IHA-UDP uses both professional and community members in door-to-door baseline surveys to assess community needs. Both are trained for the purpose of the door-to-door survey, are done simultaneously to avoid the possibility of professionals mistakenly misinterpreting answers of respondents. Professional surveyors are used to train community members as locators and data collectors while the relatively more educated members of the community are encouraged to do their own surveys.

IHA-UDP, therefore, is very careful to make the process participatory each step of the way proving to be a useful approach. The initial involvement of the community at the base line survey stage helped build self-confidence in the community and paved the way for future participation in actual development activities.

The survey was designed to elicit the felt needs of the community, listed in order of priority and no change could be made. Indeed, no professional or managerial decision changed the priorities the community had identified. When results indicated unrealistic prioritisation, with some educational orientation, the baseline was repeated.

II C. Project Components

The major activities of IHA-UDP carried out as part of the three main components are listed below.

a. Physical upgrading activities included replacing condemned houses, making minor and major repairs to houses, reactivating or repairing latrines, building kitchens, and construction for own programme related activities, roads, alleys, ditches and lanes.

b. Socio-economic or community development, activities dealt with issues of creating social awareness and human development. This resulted in community empowerment and individuals regaining self-dignity and respect as well as becoming more self-sufficient. Moreover, there was a focus on community organising at all levels, income generation and job creation, education (both primary and vocational), and rehabilitation, as well as issues related to socially and physically disadvantaged people.
c. **Health** component where primary health care and its eight components namely health education, maternal and child health, nutrition, safe and clean water, immunisation, environmental health, control of communicable diseases, minor treatment (first aid) and curative clinic based activities were carried out.

IHA-UDP carried out a total of 52 different activities under the overall programme.

### II D. Participation Structure

To ensure the effective and true participation and ownership of project activities by the community, the NGO organises the community along the following lines.

1. **Education Extension workers (EEWs):**

   Education Extension Workers (EEW) are all-purpose, semi-volunteer community workers selected from the communities. They are groomed to hold key positions in sustaining programmes. Girls who had completed the 12th grade of education were trained and receive refresher courses throughout the life of the project on various key topics including community mobilisation. On completion of their initial training, together with the project team, they assist in setting up and organising the Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) which are then assigned to every zone in the Kebele. They undertake various sensitisation activities and generally serve as a 'bridge' between the community and the project.

2. **Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs)**

   As a community based organization, the project divides each Kebele by group of 5 to 10 households, by sub-zone of 30 households and by Neighbourhood. The four kebeles, in a pyramidal structure, elect 1 representative from each component: 3 from each Kebele. The 12 (3 x 4) form the 'Tamra' which is the joint executive body and is part of the Community Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organization (CBISDO) which took over from IHA UDP after phase-out. These form the Neighbourhood Groups (NHG) which meet regularly to explore various issues, problems and work out possible solutions in collaboration with project staff.

   From each sub-unit right up to the Kebele level, residents elect people to represent them on the 3 major program components of health, socio-economic activities and physical upgrading. This approach resulted in the involvement of a substantial number of community members in the project. Like the EEWs, the training for NHGs is continuous. In cases where a final decision is needed, the project staff defer to members of the NHGs.

**Youth**

The other important group in the community is youth. Although the youth structure works in collaboration with the NHG, the high youth population required them to form as a group. Their particular focus is education, recreational activities and other issues which involve young people. They are also represented in their own right in CBISDO, the community based organisation that took over the first project.
III Sustainability: First Phase—Out and Hand Over

A. The Process
To ensure sustainability, two basic elements need to be fulfilled in terms of human and monetary resources. The project phase—out strategy was included in the original agreements with the Region, central government and donors. Concerted effort was made in training and involving community members by way of capacity building and generating income through various cost recovery mechanisms to subsidise activities that cannot generate their own income.

Phase—out of projects is meticulously planned and executed at the start of the project. For example the community-based structure is organised side by side as part of the project implementation.

Because the handing over process was planned and executed as a critical component of the main project, the handover to the newly organised CBO was a smooth transition. Board members (representatives from various sectors) and stakeholders assist the CBO in all areas of programme implementation. It has been more than six years since this was finalised. All project activities are continuing well under the CBO’s leadership.

B. Lessons Learned
- The biggest challenge faced was in reaching agreement with the government offices that were to take over various social services and administer them as their own. In the case of projects focused on the elderly, social issues and education, it was not possible to hand these over to the relevant government offices. As such, the project had to be prolonged before phase—out could occur, since funds had to be raised to support these initiatives.
- Another challenge was the lack of legislation in the country that recognises and regulates a CBO. Therefore, after discussions the CBO was registered as an Association. As CBOs are not allowed to have an NT account, money had to be channelled through IHA-UDP. Another issue is the lack of recognition by NGOs and donors that provide support or lack thereof.
- Modifications of activities that were carried out by the first IHA-UDP project were made, such as not engaging as an organisation in income generating activities and reducing the area of coverage of the new project for better impact.
- IHA-UDP found that smaller projects allowed results and impact to be recognised and valued more by the community.
- The absence of social security and turnover of government staff and policy, means that it is important to plan for additional funds post phase—out, and to make this situation known to donors at project start up.

IV. Community Based Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation (CBISDO)
A. The CBO

The new project run by the CBO, CBISDO, began in 1997 after taking various steps to identify lessons learned, in terms of which activities and strategies to replicate or not. To cite an example, it was decided that income generation was not cost effective and such activities should be limited and undertaken only at the community level. When IHA-UDP started its programme it had both social and economic objectives for undertaking income generation activities. The social component was highly successful while the economic aspect was not. In addition, after the CBO took over, it was decided that construction of new houses should cease and that only maintenance and refurbishment.

B. Impact

Some of the many positive impacts on the community are briefly highlighted below.

- IHA-UDP has transformed the community economically and provided opportunities for growth. People that have worked on construction sites for IHA-UDP purposes have over the years received good experience at various levels. This built their capacities and some have become contractors, employing a number of people and even undertaking some competitive work for IHA-UDP.
- The project has brought about a change among the community and has broken gender barriers of what was traditionally considered a ‘woman’s’ or ‘man’s’ job. Women were employed as daily labourers for IHA-UDP (usually considered as a man’s job) in various capacities; at one point there was even a woman foreman. In a highly traditional sector of society, this was a big change. Now many of these women and those that came after them go to other parts of the city to work on various construction sites and support their families. It is now an accepted norm.
- The actual standard of living of community members has improved. Some persons living in very low standard housing which was reconstructed by the project, are now able to afford a television set.
- The biggest transformation is the psychology of the people, who are now able to see, understand and believe that poverty is economic and not psychological or spiritual. As a result, community members, both individually and through various forms of organization are responsive and active participants in all aspects of community development work and have made positive behavioural changes. For example, immunisation and contraceptive use are now widely practised and community members are at the forefront of HIV/AIDS testing.
- The culture of volunteerism has been promoted and as such most of the development work and related organising activities are done free of charge.
- A substantial number of community members have learned valuable skills, which have given them various livelihood alternatives.
- Youth delinquents have been rehabilitated through various types of support including, the provision of vocational training. Many are now self-reliant and support their families.
- Child mortality has reduced very significantly
- The credit and savings programme that is being run in the four Kebeles has had positive impacts, including providing business opportunities, particularly to women.
V. Current IHA-UDP Project

The current IHA-UDP project is operating in Woreda 23, Kebele 08 and 09 of Sar Bet. Before starting this project, three major assessments were conducted, and one community needs study, that complemented the process of priority setting. The total population of the Kebele is estimated at 6000, most of whom are found to be living in absolute poverty. There was a glaring absence of public social service provisions and no significant private or government owned investment activity taking place in the Kebele.

The top six community priorities were: 1. opportunities for employment, 2. renovation and maintenance of houses (including kitchens and latrine), 3. Improvements to sewage system and establishment of proper garbage disposal mechanism, 4. establishment of kindergarten, 5. recreational facilities especially for the youth - including youth sport centre and library and 6. skill training opportunities relevant to the lives of the residents. These activities were taken up by IHA-UDP as new project focus areas.

In addition to undertaking activities that were prioritised by the community, IHA-UDP is currently building a 'Learning Centre' to serve as an institute for urban development workers.

The project was designed and implemented using the bottom–up approach and earlier mentioned strategies of community participation. This successful project has only 8 months until it is taken over by the new CBO. Although planned as a five year project, it was extended by 2 years for a variety of factors, including change in government policy on land lease.

To assist the process of phasing out, IHA-UDP has been undertaking annual seminars and is currently in the process of replacing current structures with those from the CBO. The name of the CBO is Addis Hiwot Integrated Sustainable Development Organisation, which is already in the process of setting up a board. The Manager has already been recruited to overlap and facilitate the handing over process. IHA-UDP is in the process of writing a phase out report.

VI. Lessons Learned

IHA-UDP has learned various lessons in implementing both projects, some of which are described below.

♦ Attitude is a major impediment to participatory development and there is no short cut to bringing about positive attitudinal changes. Without attitudinal change, reinstated self-dignity and people-centeredness, there will not be meaningful change to bring about a sustained and improved quality of life for the poor.

♦ Fatalism is a major obstacle to participation of the destitute, in this case slum dwellers. Slum dwellers believe that they are born to poverty and no one can change that situation. Slum dwellers find it difficult to believe that anybody cares about their plight or that they can address it by themselves.

♦ Since the lives of slum dwellers are patterned on living one day at a time, hand-to-mouth, there is a deep conviction that tomorrow cannot be any better. They have not experienced any social justice nor had their basic rights recognized or addressed. This has made them suspicious of anyone
claiming to do anything to improve their quality of life or to empower them to address their own situation.

♦ Most existing policies are not designed to help the poor have better access to social services (education, health services, etc).

♦ Most development workers are forced to comply with donor requirements rather than being concerned with the felt needs of the people they are supposed to help develop.

♦ Many professionals and development workers believe that, by just working with certain communities and without including them in decision-making, they are being people-centered. People-centered, or bottom-up participatory approach requires extensive time and the need to accommodate the conveniences of those disadvantaged that it serves.

♦ In the time-consuming process of conscientization, attitudinal change occurs and the poor build up their capacity and capability so that they are able to control their lives and become self-sufficient.

♦ The teaching and learning process that takes place in development work, that involves listening to people, means there is a growing recognition that the participatory approach is all about realizing each individual has something to offer - even if poor communities are slow in decision-making. Change will be sustainable only if individuals feel that it is their own needs that are being addressed. This in turn leads to full ownership, which sustains the development process. Ultimately, no development work will be successful unless it is people-centered.

♦ Development actors should continue to experiment with CBO models such as CBISDO as a new paradigm of sustainable development.

♦ There is a need to implement community development projects with a high sense of accountability and transparency.
Persons Interviewed

Amelework    IHAUDP

**CBISDO** (Focussed Group Interview)
Kidist Bizuneh Yellow Girl CBISDO
Netsanet Mesfin    NHG representative, CBISDO
Wegayehu Daba    Yellow Girl CBISDO
Wondimu Tsegaye    CHA (Community Health Agent)
Mulatu Kebede    NHG/Youth Coordinator
Berhane Fanta    NHG
Abera Yigletu    NHG

Reference Materials

1. Introduction of IHA-UDP
2. Booklet on IHAUDP
3. Various brochures and fliers: the general project, sponsorship fliers, various components
4. Website materials: IHA-UDP for Academics and several others
5. Newspaper Article on IHA-UDP
Case 14

Dire Dawa

The New Roles of Iddirs in Dire Dawa

ACORD

Ayele Zewge

Many people have argued the pros and cons of trying to engage with the widespread institution of Iddirs (funeral societies). This case shows one attempt to build on these indigenous Iddirs by expanding their roles in credit and savings, beyond the original aim of funerals. It also notes the attempts to establish second level Idirr unions and their successes, despite some clear gaps in legal frameworks to enable this to happen. This case highlights the tension between a vibrant civil society movement and a weak enabling environment.
**Introduction**

Iddirs are a type of indigenous and widely spread civil association in Ethiopia that mostly focuses on the social role of assisting a family during the mourning period. Their main activities include attending the burial ceremony of the deceased and providing the bereaved family with an *a priori* fixed amount of money, food and materials such as kitchen utensils, chairs, tents, cups and the like. Some Iddirs in urban areas even provide a hearse. Iddir members are also required to spend time with the bereaved family for the first few days after the death in the family.

In order to meet these objectives, Iddir members usually contribute a certain amount of money every month, depending upon the terms of their regulations. The payment that is made on the death in the family comes from the money saved by the members. The materials provided during the mourning period are also bought from this contribution.

Different studies conducted on this civil institution had revealed that about 87% of Ethiopians in urban centres and close to 70% of Ethiopians living in rural areas belong to these Iddirs. This makes this particular traditional institution the most widely spread type of self-help community group in the country.

Although a typology of Iddirs would exhibit numerous forms, such as those based on the work place (Yemesrea Bet Iddirs), friendship (Yeguadenhoch or Abro Adegoch Iddirs), relatives (Yebete Zemede Iddir), ethnic based (Yetewelagoch or Yakababi Iddirs), the dominant form remains those based on immediate neighbourhood, as manifested in Yesefer Iddirs and Yeguada Iddirs. Yesefer Iddirs are based on the neighbourhood while the latter one exclusively involves the women residing in the neighbourhood, the main task being preparation of food as the name ‘yeguada’ meaning ‘kitchen’ indicates.

It is not only their wide coverage but also their stable existence since they emerged at the turn of the 20th century that makes them unique and proves their strength. The staying power of the Iddirs is attributed mostly to the autonomous way in which they function and their focus on a limited social objective.

As a result of this, these community organizations have remained isolated and withdrawn from developmental activities up until recently. Intrusion of government into their business in the past is also believed to have prompted Iddirs to maintain a distance from external entities outside their own constituency.

**ACORD’s involvement with Iddirs**

The idea of involving these grassroots community organizations in the development process was taken up by the International NGO ACORD, in Dire Dawa town in 1995. ACORD (Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development) was established in 1976 as a consortium of international agencies headquartered in the north to provide its members with operational capacity to address poverty issues resulting from drought in sub-Saharan Africa.

ACORD Claims to have recognized that "no single organization, however large, can bring about sustainable improvements in the right of poor and marginalized people in Africa on their own. The momentum and power needed to challenge local, national and global injustice can only be achieved by working in common cause with like-
minded groups like NGOs, trade unions, Community Based Organizations and other marginalized groups.\textsuperscript{21}

In line with the global objective of the agency, ACORD Ethiopia has stated its primary goal as, “To reduce poverty and vulnerability and to help poor people win their basic rights using the available local community structures.”\textsuperscript{22}

Hence, of all available local community structures, ACORD claims to have chosen Iddirs on the grounds that they are self-initiated and aimed at mutual support, that they have strong social cohesion and commitment, that they are an appropriate organ to target the poor and provide fair distribution of development outputs. ACORD, based on the above-mentioned rationale and the result of the needs assessment it conducted in the above-mentioned town, had developed a programme that enables Iddirs to assume additional new roles in the development arena.

One major component of the programme involves provision of a grant that serves as a revolving credit fund that mainly aims to support the initiatives of community groups or individual members in creating income-generating activities. Another component is the implementation of joint projects that aim to address problems identified by the community and capacity building interventions. These mainly take the form of training, so that Iddir members and leaders can cope with the demands of their new roles. Finally, there are initiatives to facilitate linkages of these Iddirs with other development actors and continued research into how to unleash the latent potential of these institutions for developmental purposes.

\textbf{The project}

Accordingly, ACORD had identified about 100 Iddirs, mainly made up of the poorest segments of communities located in the periphery of 10 Kebeles of Dire Dawa town. The majority of Iddirs targeted were ‘Yeguada Iddirs’ of women. As a result of this, 71% of the beneficiaries are women. Through these 100 Iddirs, the project reached about 3784 households with 20 000 indirect beneficiaries.

The initial stage of the relationship was one of challenges and mistrust. ACORD was even labelled as a messenger of the devil and as a group of infidels. Despite these setbacks encountered at the start–up stage, the organization continued with its effort to engage the community in implementing the programme.

The implementation strategy was developed in such a way that support to social objectives of the Iddirs was also covered. Members of Iddirs who did not want to participate in income generating activities were able to retain their Iddir membership without being required to join the new venture. Iddirs lacking sufficient materials required for the mourning period were helped to acquire these so that they could better deliver their social services. This and other carefully devised measures helped cement the relationship between the Iddirs and ACORD and paved the way for promoting subsequent initiatives of the community members themselves.

Through credit facilities made available to these Iddirs, a substantial number of their members managed to increase their income and improve their living standards. Projects that were implemented jointly, like bridges, water supply, electricity, flour mill, renovation of schools, not only providing additional services but also helped

\textsuperscript{22} ACORD proceedings of the Ethiopian National Conference on Iddirs- Participation and Development, Addis Ababa 2003
these Iddirs to engage with other development entities for the purpose of common good.

Training given to the majority of the direct beneficiaries in areas such as organisational management, book keeping, auditing and internal control, group dynamics, cooperative management and most importantly, entrepreneurial development, are believed to have built up the capacity of these Iddirs. Running saving and credit operations and actively participating in the development process had previously been beyond the scope of the Iddirs.

After the establishment of the Saving and Credit group, different forms of organization within the Iddirs appeared. In some of the saving and credit cooperatives, the chairmanship of both the saving and credit cooperative and that of Iddir remains the same, but separate treasurers, secretaries and accounts have been established. In some others, the leadership at all levels remains the same but regulations and financial accounts are separate for both entities. Still in some others, a separate committee along with separate accounts has been established for the purpose of Iddir. As a general rule, this last organizational form has been set up in Iddirs were there is a less educated leadership.

A program assessment undertaken by an external consultant, in August 1997, clearly indicated that more than half of the very poor members of the communities had managed to engage in at least one income generation activity. This assessment also revealed that no less than 70% of the previously poor had improved their status to poor and 42% of the previously poor attained middle status.

Besides this, a program impact assessment carried out during the year 2000 also showed that about 18% of the beneficiaries have created new self-employment opportunities and have managed to generate a stable income. About 95% of the loan clients have considerably increased their monthly income with an additional monthly income of Birr 100 to 200. Most of the credit beneficiaries have also improved their household asset holdings and enhanced their access to education and medical services through self-payments.

**Initiative to Create Second Level Associations**

The above-cited achievements refer to the 100 primary saving and credit associations established by the programme. These same Iddir-managed saving and credit associations have now established second level associations on their own initiative.

According to the initial plan, 1998 was the year in which the programme would be phased out. This was the year that witnessed the transformation of the Iddirs from passive development partners into active community groups that were highly motivated to tackle their own problems through their own efforts.

In mid–1998, the Iddirs came up with the idea of forming a second level association based on the neighbourhood. The main rationale behind this move was to minimise the cost of running their saving and credit activities by jointly covering the expense of hiring accountants to serve as a linking agent between member co-operatives and local Government entities. Creating a new entity from among their ranks that replaced the role of ACORD after the phase–out was also part of the rationale.

Of the seven newly established Saving and Credit Co-operative Associations, two were established at the end of 1998 (Addis Alem and Goro) while the other five were
established during 1999. These were Filwoha, Gende Gara, Mebrat Hayel Edget Begara, Police Meret Limat Chora and Sabian Tesfachora.

In terms of membership, Addis Alem Association has 10 member Saving and Credit Co-operatives under it, Filwoha 11, Gende Gara 4, Goro 11, Mebrat Hayel Edget Begara 6, Police Meret Limat Chora 14 and Sabian Tesfa Chora 11. Thus, of the initially 100 Iddirs supported by ACORD, 67 of them have already joined this second level association of their own free will and in full support of the very objectives they were initiated for. The remaining few Iddirs are either processing their legal status in order to joining nearby associations or are still considering the decision.

The pioneer associations have left the space wide open for the individual Iddirs to join or stay out of this initiative if they so wish. Accordingly, as mentioned above, 67 of the Iddirs had established seven Associations of Saving and Credit Cooperatives. ACORD assisted this initiative by constructing offices for these associations and sharing the costs of the accountant for a one and a half year period.

In this connection, it is worth noting that the guidelines issued for saving and credit cooperatives were found to be very useful as they give recognition to both the economic and social functions of the co-operatives. In fact, the proclamation of co-operatives (No. 147/98) provides for the allocation of up to 10% percent of co-operatives’ profit for promotion of social objectives. Due to this, most saving and credit co-operatives allocate this amount to the strengthening of their Iddirs or to cover members' commitment to social objectives at a wider community level.

So far, these associations have managed to provide accounting services to their respective members (primary saving and credit co-operatives and Iddirs) by employing qualified personnel for the job. Beside this, they have also managed to acquire legal documents for their office premises and are working hard to secure their legal status.

These same associations have served and are still serving as a forum for the promotion of family planning and reproductive health awareness raising efforts, in close collaboration with Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia.

In collaboration with Oxfam-Canada, these associations have established library and mini-media services at their respective office premises that are believed to have had a tremendous impact on awareness raising efforts on HIV/AIDS.

On top of the above mentioned activities, in their drive for self-sustainability, they have also been engaged in income generating activities like a shower service, Recreation Centres, sale of food and drinks, renting their library space for workshops and various training sessions and the like. They are also playing important roles in advocating the needs of their member co-operatives and in linking them with local government and non-government organizations. They have also been involved in other development and social activities of their respective localities.

**Legal Problems**

However, whilst there is space for action at the grassroots co-operative level, and a number of visible achievements as enumerated above, the formation of these second level Associations has met with a number of difficulties in attaining legal status for their operations.
Up until very recently, the position of the co-operative promotion office, the relevant government body attending to matters relating to co-operatives, was that the grassroots co-operatives could only grow to become co-operative unions, and this would require the individual entities to dissolve their grassroots saving and credit co-operative and merge their resources. Obviously, for these saving and credit co-operatives with their Iddir origin and their fulfilment of Iddir tasks along with their co-operative activities, this option was neither acceptable nor practical.

This is why they have resorted to trying to register with the Justice Bureau, in accordance with the Decree of registration of Associations, by establishing Associations of grassroots co-operatives. This effort was not successful, for two main reasons. The first and principal hindrance is that the current decree on association registration does not provide for the establishment of second level associations. This legal insufficiency will hopefully be addressed by draft legislation that governs NGO operations, that is currently awaiting endorsement by the parliament.

The second problem pertains to the administrative status of Dire Dawa town itself. Even if this legal insufficiency is to be addressed as expected, the Dire Dawa Bureau of Justice as it stands today cannot register these associations automatically. The Bureau of Justice in Dire Dawa, unlike other regional Bureaux of Justice, has not yet been mandated to register associations on behalf of the Ministry of Justice. Officials of the Bureau hope that upon the finalisation of a process to make Dire Dawa a chartered city, these legal issues can be resolved.

The Iddir leaders, or as they are officially known today, saving and credit co-operatives leaders, in their quest to achieve their objectives, have worked out a temporary solution that gives them legal space to undertake their responsibilities as Associations. The main tasks outlined for this second level of Association, as indicated earlier, are the hiring of an accountant that gives accounting services to member co-operatives and Iddirs, establishing an office, tackling legal issues of the member co-operatives and engaging with local officials and other third parties in matters pertaining to their activities. Other tasks identified by the second level association are handling fundraising activities and creating income-generating schemes in order to cover the costs of running the association.

With these objectives in mind, the newly established Associations have identified a legal loophole that enables them to undertake these tasks and responsibilities temporarily. This creative option involves co-operatives that are legal entities entering into contractual agreement amongst themselves to jointly implement the above-mentioned tasks. They have bestowed a mandate on two chosen people from each co-operative to implement the terms of the contract on their behalf. To legalise this delegation of authority, they have had their contractual agreement registered at the Acts and Document Registration office at the Bureau of Justice.

Currently, the Association leaders are discharging their responsibilities based on this legal mandate given to them. Although this arrangement helps them to some extent to officially undertake the responsibilities entrusted to them, a body that is established in such a way still faces serious difficulties in acting as a fully fledged Association. For instance, these associations were not able to get a letter of support from the Co-operative Promotion Office that would help them enjoy some of the privileges provided by the law.

Recently the Co-operative promotion office changed its position with regards to the requirements of the formation of second level associations of co-operatives or the formation of unions. At the moment, they claim to have properly studied the
provisions incorporated in the Co-operative proclamation regarding the establishment of the union. They admit that establishment of unions of saving and credit co-operatives does not require the dissolution of the primary co-operatives and only requires the existence of additional new tasks that can not be performed by the primary organizations. They also add that such a union should hire its own manager and other staff members.

In view of this, they maintain the position that the newly established Associations of saving and credit co-operatives in Dire Dawa do not have sufficient legal ground to establish the second level association. If they insist on establishing these associations, then they must meet the requirements on the employment of hired staff.

The Association leaders believe that they have identified a sufficient number of additional new tasks that they cannot perform at primary co-operative level, but argue that with their current needs and financial capacity, they should not be forced to incur unnecessary administrative costs whilst they can carry out these responsibilities on a voluntary basis.

The stalemate faced by these associations around their legal status is not yet resolved and poses a formidable challenge for the successful attainment of their objectives.

Despite these problems, the seven established Associations have achieved visible results in establishing their offices, hiring accountants that have streamlined their financial transactions and records, engaging with local government entities and creating income–generating schemes that cover costs associated with the running of their offices.

At the phase–out stage of ACORD, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness and Social and Labour Affairs Bureau received the land certificate upon which the offices of these Associations were built. At present, the leaders of the associations are using the legal mandate bestowed on them by the primary co-operatives to demand that they be given their respective land certificates, on the grounds that parties to the contractual agreement are legal entities recognised by the law. Accordingly, it was agreed that they should receive their respective certificates. However, the government office in question lost the certificates, thus forcing these associations to again surmount the tedious bureaucratic hurdles to get their certificates. Currently, two residents of Dire Dawa town, who illegally built houses in the compound of the Association offices, have not been forced to vacate simply due to nonchalance on the part of the town municipality.

The leaders of the associations reiterate that these seemingly trivial cases do in fact claim a large amount of their time which could have been used more productively.

In fact, because of their problems with the government office mentioned above, the leaders of the associations have begun to advocate for the establishment of a government body that makes administrative decisions on disputes that arise between civil society institutions and the government, without having to go to court. In their opinion, this should be the last resort and not the solution to minor disputes. The major concern of the associations is that going to court exposes them to unnecessary expenses and takes up much of their time.
Conclusion

Generally speaking, the formation of second level association of Iddirs in Dire Dawa is found to be playing a vital role in strengthening the capacity of these community based organizations in terms of influencing local government entities, pooling resources and protecting their basic organizational rights like getting access to land and capital.

However, due to the absence of adequate legislation in the area of establishing associations and due to complicated and bureaucratic registration procedures, such community initiatives are usually faced with a number of formidable challenges.

Lessons that can be learned from the experience of Dire Dawa Iddirs leader one to suggest that for such community initiatives, simple registration procedures possibly at Woreda and even Kebele levels need to be explored.
This interesting case study details an attempt, at the regional level of the Horn of Africa, to explore and support capacity building initiatives in civil society. What comes across in this study are some of the wider lessons learnt as a result of the programme, based on a large number of experiences in the region and, specifically, in Ethiopia. The results and impacts listed at the end of the study are of particular value.
I. The Program

The Horn of Africa Capacity Building Program - HOACBP is a program that is being jointly implemented by Oxfam Canada and Oxfam Quebec with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency-CIDA. This program is currently operational in four countries of the Horn of Africa including Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia (Puntland and Somaliland) and Djibouti.

The goal of HOACBP is to support the active participation of civil society groups in the Horn of Africa in the provision and protection of basic human rights and in fostering democratic development. Its purpose is to support the capacity building of non-government and governmental structures involved in and committed to the principles of equity and participatory development with particular emphasis given to non–formal education, justice, gender and information/communication.

After five years of operation, the program was extended for another two years, ending in 2004. This extension phase is serving as a bridge period transforming it into the next phase of the program. The next phase will take the major components of the existing program with some modifications based on the lessons that emanated from the current programme. One new initiative of the next phase is an activity entitled 'new circles of learning' that revolves around the two main topics of information/communication and gender, with the objective of consolidating knowledge among development allies that work on similar developmental issues. It is hoped to consolidate their knowledge and serve as a platform for leveraging the use of such knowledge. Experienced facilitators will be availed when called upon by the "circles of learning".

II. Partners

HOACBP has two types of partners -- funding and non-funding partners. Both types receive capacity building support.

HOACBP has clearly developed criteria for selecting partners to be either a funding or a non-funding partner. For non-funding partners the main requirement is willingness to be part of the partnership and to uphold their side of the partnership requirements.

The program has supported over 65 projects all over the Horn of Africa Region. In Ethiopia the program is working with 6 funding partners -- 5 networks with varying numbers of members and one NGO. The non-funding partners total 40 with 30 of these in Ethiopia. The number of partnerships fluctuates yearly, based on the type of partnership and their level of development. The partners work in the areas of information and communication, voluntarism, women’s issues, youth matters, human rights, and a few in various types of service delivery.

III. Capacity building
The capacity building focuses more on the "software" aspect of capacity building support rather than the "hardware". The types of support provided include,

- training provision in areas such as local resource management, financial management, fundraising, strategic planning, income generation and other need-based training
- exposure visits within the country and organising information sharing forums
- providing reference materials, which are discussed, analysed and then adapted for program implementation purposes
- technical assistance in a variety of topics e.g. assistance in financial management
- knowledge management and documentation
- participating in special regional initiatives
- equipment support such as computers in some very rare cases

IV. Sustainability

HOACBP identifies exit strategies of the partnership individually with each partner at the beginning of the partnership initiation. One year before the end of the partnership the exit strategy is reviewed and key preparatory steps are identified, along with the type of support required to make such sustainable efforts a reality. The type of preparatory steps needed might be, for example, linking with other partnering organisations, training in relevant areas, study tours on some related topics, initiating income generation activities, etc. In most cases, the partners that are not active as a funding partner then continue their relationship and participation as a non-funding partner. Each year the ongoing partners' programs are evaluated using a certain number of indicators in programmatic as well as partnership areas.

V. Approach

HOACBP is based on three main conceptual pillars. They are:

i. Civic Public Realm is a concept coined by Goran Hyden, a development thinker that alludes to a civil society that encompasses the civil and government sectors and where the three sectors come together for a common public good. This can be realised through promoting citizens' influence, social intervention and a responsive and responsible public governing structure.

ii. The Grassroots Development Framework that believes in the basic assumption that any work has two main outcomes between the tangible and the intangible.

iii. Field experience and literature review, which need to complement and offset each other in program work.

All matters needing decisions in the partnerships are reached through dialogue and consensus building, wherever appropriate.

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23 Software of a capacity building project denotes the skills, know-how, attitudes and systems required within a certain setting as opposed to the physical equipment and infrastructures.
VI. Contextual Framework: CSOs in Ethiopia

HOACBP has a certain understanding on what constitutes civil society organisations in the Horn, cooperation between these and the state, Ethiopians' views of poverty and the role of external agencies in Ethiopia's development.

As part of the program, HOACBP launched an action/research project to better understand the motivation of Ethiopians to address their country's social and development issues. The results identified several groupings across Ethiopia that have been successful in mobilising resources from their own people and in securing support for activities from local governments. These groups have been primarily concerned with the welfare of their fellow citizens and have often been viewed by external resource providers as of 'little significance to development'. Such statement by external resource providers overlooks the historical context, evolution and importance of associational life in society. Groups engaged in local resource mobilization provide opportunities for communities and ordinary citizens to discuss and act on some of the development challenges they are facing. The activities of such groups may be small scale and local, but can be instrumental in the development of a democratic culture and of skills useful in making decisions on a larger and more influential scale.

The relationship between civil society and the state is generally much more simple at the local governance level and gets more complicated and bureaucratic as one climbs higher. This has implications for the sectoral area which an NGO addresses, and determines the way that NGOs are perceived and supported. For example, an NGO with an objective of increasing access to primary education might get much better support than one that is working on issues related to good governance.

A certain historian, M. Mamdani, hypothesised that in Africa, colonisation has significantly contributed to existing poverty. The paradox for Ethiopia, however, is that it was never fully colonised, but is very poor. Therefore, it is important for Ethiopians to discuss, debate and understand their existing poverty, its causes and possible solutions. HOACBP holds continuous debates on the agenda, either in groups or individually and tries to involve the business community, academia, civil society etc. Among the many problems Ethiopians face the program believes, the most far reaching are the lack of material progress, gender inequalities, marginalisation of agro-pastoral communities, limited trust and participation, isolation and resistance to change.

HOACBP believes in the importance of exploring the role of external agencies in Ethiopia, what their contribution to development is/was and understanding how Ethiopians can contribute to their own development through self-help initiatives.

VII. Hypothesis

HOACBP takes into consideration certain hypothesis, which directly influence and give shape to the program. These are briefly discussed below.
The high level of dependency of Ethiopian civil society on external funding for a lot of their developmental activities contributes to the ‘disconnectedness’ of Ethiopian organisations from their constituency. The program also believes that external support can undermine the development efforts of local communities. Therefore, HOACBP insists that one key qualifying criteria for partnership is an organisation’s ability to mobilize local resources. To augment this, an assessment was carried out on voluntarism and how to move towards creating a more conducive and enabling environment for promoting voluntarism.

There is a critical need for groups to be supported by a local constituency that is clearly defined and active in their organisations. One indicator for measuring this is the continuous growth of local resource mobilisation capacity with an objective of supporting consistent and ongoing local support.

The program believes that development programmes should continually generate new knowledge. For this, it provides support to partners and its own staff where information is provided, reference materials made available and exposure visits organised. The program subscribes to the following equation in generating new knowledge: \( \text{Generation of New Knowledge is a sum total of information, recognition, resources, space, alliance and self-reflection all acting together.}^{24} \)

HOACBP invests in sharing knowledge: publications are sponsored and work is commissioned on information provision – an ongoing process. To date several publications have been commissioned by the program including case studies of local resource mobilisation efforts, networking, volunteerism in Ethiopia, the Langano framework for self-evaluation and others. The knowledge equation also applies to the program staff who are required to undertake continual self-reflection. From time to time, the program also brings in some ‘thought leaders’ to for dialogue and debate internally and with other partners.

Another tenet is that program support should move beyond individual projects. Ethiopia has been negatively affected by its extended isolation from the rest of the world and at a national level, the focus seems to be on individual projects. There is a difficulty in moving beyond the micro to the macro context. To combat this, the project promotes networking as one of its key objectives and allocates the lion’s share of resources to activities related to networking. Thus far, the major areas of focus in networking have been information and communication and inter-sectoral cooperation.

HOACBP’s regional scope can facilitate cross-fertilization that has its base in local experiences. In working in four countries of the Horn, HOACBP found that a lot of learning and sharing could take place. It identifies unique and successful practices in its areas of operation and brings the four regions together for mutual learning, adaptation and innovation based on the lessons learned. Some cases in point are the experiences of community radio in conflict situation and local resource mobilisation in war–torn locations.

\(^{24}\) To clarify: Information (asset assessment) + Recognition (e.g. Award) + Resources (money plus others) + Space (to work, experiment and innovate) + alliance (similar organisations networking) + Self-reflection (Regular action reflection) = Generation of new knowledge.
VIII. Work Modality

a. The program believes in promoting the role of the youth so as to provide new and contextual solutions to old problems. It holds a deep conviction that youth have a leadership role to play in the Horn's development, which is why both funding and non-funding partnerships mainly target young people.

b. The partnerships that are developed have a more intensive and rigorous contact and association at the beginning when they are characterised by constant discussions. When partnerships mature, the relationship develops into the kind where the organisation is autonomous and the partner is in a position to give open and positive criticism back to the project. The program does not believe in micro managing partners and their activities.

c. The program seeks to get the most return out of an investment. This it ensures through various means:

The program has very clear and stringent criteria for partners' selection. So it is very sure of its partners and therefore the quality of work they can produce, from the outset.

The organisation has challenging standards for its own staff, for example, they are required to do a lot of reading. Contemporary development books are made available to staff, reading is then analysed either in groups or individually and discussion follows as to how it can inform their work. In line with this, there is a constant drive to fine-tune the organisation's methodologies.

Staff numbers are kept low, with a handful of individuals running the regional initiative, assisted by modern information and communication technology.

Respected scholars contribute to the work of the project. Relationships have been built with them and the project engages them in debate and discussion on their development thinking, from a practical point of view. Moreover, the program analyses the ideas of leading development thinkers and integrates these into programming. Linkages are forged with leading organisations in the field so as to promote mutual learning.

All learning and lessons of the program are reproduced, sometimes translated and at sometimes also distributed to the wider development community.

IX. Impact of the program

Results and impact of the program amongst the partnering organisations and their membership have been recorded. Some of these are highlighted below.

- As a result of assisting community based self-help groups, a number of autonomous community based organisations have been established.
- Organisations have been able to build their confidence level where they can stand on their own feet and feel empowered to undertake various types of activities.
- The ability of organisations to diversify their funding bases has increased.
- Organisations have been able to widen their sphere of networking and forge linkages with various organisations from various sectors in different locations.
o The capacity of members has been built up, which in turn has resulted in a clear multiplier effect.

o Some organisations are in the process of building coalitions, one of the main thrusts of the program.

o The knowledge base has been developed, and various publications, some of which have been translated into vernacular languages have been produced.

o Some organisations are becoming more and more proactive, while earlier they used to wait for guidance. Now they accomplish a lot on their own and ask for assistance only when they have not been had success in a particular initiative on their own.

o Partners' problem solving capacity and their ability to be creative and innovative in various aspects of program implementation has increased.

o The membership base of networking organisations has increased: a clear indicator that the constituency base is widening.

o The culture of documenting experiences is taking root and growing.

o As a result of some projects, 'reading' is becoming very popular. A case in point is the Illubabor community resource centre and library that has helped meet the reading needs of teachers. Now about 40% of teachers have enrolled in distance education schemes
Persons Interviewed

Mahlet H/Mariam  Program Officer  HOACBP
Yihalem Abebe  Program Officer  Ethiopian Association for
Voluntary Services (EAVOS), HOACBP partner

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Case 16

Addis Ababa

Three Birds with One Stone: Yeka Cleaning Services

Hirut Tefferi

This short study documents the activities of a small group of unemployed young people from Addis, who, over time and against the odds, built up a small company collecting garbage from an area in the city. This clear example of local agency also shows how, starting from very small-scale collection, the group grew to be able to formalise their collection and employ more collaborators. The attempt to counteract local fear of young people and channel their own energies is stimulating, mainly because it was almost entirely due to their own efforts. At the time of writing, the founding group had gained the confidence to negotiate with clients, employees and local authorities. They have achieved a rounded form of empowerment which takes in the economic, psychological and social.
Yeka Cleaning Services

This case study documents an example of initiative undertaken by youth in Yeka Kifle Ketema, Kebele 08, Addis Ababa.

Introduction to the initiative
Four young people, three men and one woman, initiated the work as a group, contributing 30 Birr (about $3.50) each to start up costs. Later they were formally organized in as a business partnership, defined by a memorandum of association which was developed jointly by the members of the group.

Yeka Cleaning Services is an autonomous project started on the initiative of a group of young people. These individuals were inspired by a much bigger non-profit initiative intended to clean Addis Ababa and involve young people in the process.

The community that the group serves are urban dwellers of mixed ethnic background who do not have access to adequate waste disposal services. Yeka Cleaning Services collects garbage from over 600 households.

Context
Some of the young people involved in the project have completed their high school education but did not score grades that enabled them to join government higher learning institutions. Neither were they able to join private institutions because of the costs. Before the start of the project, they spent their days sitting on the side of the road and doing odd jobs. They were mainly engaged in loading and unloading materials (such as building materials, furniture or goods to be sold in shops) in their neighbourhood. These and other youth engaged in similar activities in Addis Ababa are notorious for their behaviour: they force themselves into people’s compounds, following trucks driven in to deliver or load up with materials. The youth set prices that are highly exaggerated for the loading and unloading of materials. Some had criminal records.

Objectives and activities of the initiative
The initiative started in 2001 with the following objectives:

- Collecting and disposing of dry waste from households and offices
- Waste recycling
- Creating job opportunities for unemployed youth.

Yeka Cleaning Services collects rubbish from households and offices. The project provides bags for the waste and regularly collects the waste that is accumulated. The collected waste is then put in bigger tanks that the Addis Ababa City Administration has placed in different parts of the city. (The collection of waste materials from households is not systematised in terms of separating materials that can be recycled.)

The project charges households depending on their capacity to pay. For example, poor households pay as little as 2 birr per month while those who have better incomes pay 15 birr per month. The project provides services to over 600 households in the Kebele and disposes of more than 2500 m³ of waste every year.
In addition to the four youth who began the initiative, the project has since employed eight other young people to collect rubbish, one of whom is a youth who has serious hearing and speech problems. The original four who started the project are engaged in tasks such as customer relations, monitoring the services, looking for new customers, and administration of the project. Whenever there is shortage of staff they step in to collect waste from the customers. Decisions concerning the project are made jointly by the group members. Commonly, these decisions involve issues concerning employment of staff, amount of money to be set aside for project development, etc.

The group is mindful of the prior history of its members as anti-social youth. Therefore, the members are careful to maintain a good standard of behaviour and gain acceptance by the communities they serve. The involvement of the female member of the association has helped to recruit new customers to the service.

**Evolution of the Initiative**
The project was started by the young people as a way to save up some money so as to achieve other things, such as starting a small business or acquiring a driving licence which would enable them to be employed as drivers.

Once the youth started working on the project, they were required to go through a process of registering with the Addis Ababa City Administration, reporting to the Kebele and Kifle Ketema. This opened a way for them to improve their organization, meeting obligations such as drawing up a memorandum of association, following reporting routines, paying taxes, etc.

Fulfilling these types of obligations mean that the group was eligible to access training on waste recycling and organization of associations. Eventually, the project got more organized and developed a long-term perspective for engaging in waste recycling. These long-term plans involve buying a lorry to transport the waste to a recycling point, running a nursery for plants and engaging in production of organic fertilisers. The youth have already finalised discussions with the Kifle Ketema administration to receive a plot of land once they are ready to be engaged in recycling. The plans for a nursery and production of fertilizer were not part of the initial planning of the project, but developed as the youth gained more experience and interest in their work.

**Resources and other types of support**
The initial resources that supported the initiative were contributions from the four founders of the project. With their contributions of 30 Birr each they bought a wheelbarrow. Once the group started its work with the wheelbarrow, a lady in the neighbourhood paid 1,000 Birr for the purchase of a bigger cart that is more suitable for the task. There were no other external inputs.

After paying salaries and other expenses, some of the earnings from the project are saved in a bank with the aim of improving the work and engaging in recycling.

The main agent of non-financial external support to the project is the Kebele office which publicises the usefulness of the services to the residents of the Kebeles. The Kebele office also liaised with the appropriate agencies so that the project people get training on waste management, recycling and formation of small scale business associations.
The project started at a time when many youth in Addis Abeba were voluntarily engaged in cleaning and beautifying their neighbourhoods. Small plots of public lands that had gone to waste were converted into parks with flowers and trees planted by unemployed youth. Although family members and people in the neighbourhood had discouraged the youth from starting the project because of the danger of evil spirits,25 these initiatives are now usually supported by people in the neighbourhood, as they are happy to see the spots where waste had accumulated being turned into small parks. This had created a positive environment for the youth.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

Different actors evaluate the project in different ways. Project indicators used by the youth themselves revolve around the number of households that get services from the project.

However, the project is also monitored by different levels of the local administration. The project is expected to submit a weekly report to the Kebele, a monthly report to Yeka Kifle Ketema and a quarterly report to the appropriate Agency in the Addis Ababa City Administration.

There has not been an initiative to share information about the project in a structured way. The residents of the Kebeles in which the project provides services seem to be aware of the developments in the project.

**Capacity development element**

The capacity building element included training and monitoring carried out by the Kebele; which was intended by the Kebele administration to keep track of the developments of the waste disposal project and to ensure that the youth got access to training that was relevant to their project.

The Kebele took it upon themselves to raise the awareness of the public on the services provided and the advantages of engaging unemployed youth in this task. The Kebele’s involvement served to convince the public about the acceptability of the young people. Therefore, it can be said that the capacity building element targeted both the project and the public.

The history of the group is a relevant factor in analysing how the youth promoted their own development. The services, offered by a group of youth who had a history of forcing their services and demanding their own rates in payment, were initially received by many people with a certain level of suspicion and fear. The main reason for accepting the services of the youth was for fear that if their services were not accepted, the youth might retaliate in some way. Some members of the community agreed to pay for the services in order to live peacefully with a difficult situation in their neighbourhood. However, the youth acted in a way that was responsible: their communications with their clients, negotiation skills and respecting waste collecting times became very important factors. People started to show appreciation and give their open support as the youth proved themselves to be trustworthy. The actions of the project encouraged other groups of youth to be engaged in other alternative activities.

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25 It is widely believed that places where rubbish is collected is frequented by evil spirits, which tend to transfer themselves to persons that are found in the vicinity of the rubbish dump.
Activities of the young people before the project began were characterised by the defined territories on which they worked. Loading and unloading was off-limits for youth originating from another area. However, when the young people began the waste disposal project, their own Kebeles were not convenient for the work, because they were located on the slopes of a mountain and not conducive to hand-driven carts. Furthermore, the community in the location discarded their waste on the mountain, thus the services rendered by the project were not required. This led the youth to look into the possibility of providing their services in locations other than their own. This led to a lot of negotiation with the youth from other Kebeles and the Kebele leaders. The latter had different views as to whether the youth should work in Kebeles other than their own. These and other developments further strengthened the determination of the youth to improve themselves.

Now, some are supporting the education of their siblings, others improved the living conditions in their homes and have a certain amount of savings. The members of the project are also members of the Anti-Aids club in their Kebele.

Both the youth and the community reported that the acceptance of the youth by the community has increased. The youth in the project believe that their engagement in the project has helped other young people in the Kebele to find alternative sources of work. Previously a lot of youth aspired only to be employed by government agencies rather than creating their own schemes for employment.

Besides its contribution to the improvement of the environment, the project has created a level of social cohesion by engaging anti-social youth in constructive work that is useful for the community and the young people.

The project objectives are met, as perceived both by the youth and the community. The project is seen as providing services to the community, contributing to reduce the unemployment of young people in the Kebele, and also contributing to the effort of the City Administration to manage waste. In the words of one client, the project has attained the objective of "three birds with one stone!".