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**Rapid Community Assessment Field Test, South Wollo, Ethiopia:
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Executive Summary

This report describes my activities in Ethiopia from March 6-21, 1999, as a researcher for the BASIS/IDR Horn of Africa Program. My work focused on facilitating the preparation and field testing of a methodology for conducting rapid community assessments as part of the project entitled “From Household to Region: Factor Market Constraints to Income and Food Security in a Highly Diverse Environment, South Wollo, Ethiopia.” Dr. Peter Little (BASIS Horn of Africa Program) and Dr. Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher (Addis Ababa University, Institute for Development Research) are the project directors. Dr. Yared Amare (IDR), Mr. Yigremew Adal (IDR), Mr. Degafa Tolossa (IDR), and I comprised their research team for the community assessments.

As a member of the team, I helped prepare the research design, participated in its field test in two South Wollo communities, and contributed to the revision of the research instruments. I also helped provide a preliminary analysis of the collected data and commented on other issues related to the community assessments and the overall project. It must be emphasized that the BASIS/IDR team had carried out substantial work on the research design before my arrival. Moreover, the project’s accomplishments regarding the community assessments during my time in Ethiopia – completion of the research design and its successful field testing – resulted from a truly collaborative team effort.

We designed questionnaires for key informant and focus group interviews to address the hypotheses and questions identified in the project proposal and related documents. The key informant schedule focuses largely on obtaining inventory-type data regarding the community. It obtains information on local demography, access to transport and other facilities, landholding, marketing, community associations, government services, food security, and related topics. The

focus group schedule contains inventory-oriented questions on farming, landholding, communal resources, labor, farm inputs, savings and credit, off-farm income, marketing, food security, local organizations, and similar issues. It also asks open-ended questions eliciting local views on these topics. The research team concentrated on tightening the content and form of each questionnaire, making them clearer and less-time consuming. We also focused on issues of sample selection – where and to whom would these questions be asked? Under what conditions?

During the Dessie field trip we worked out a successful procedure regarding official protocol for obtaining clearances and cooperation, as well as for selection of research sites and interviewees. Random sampling of sites and interview subjects is not possible. Instead, one must work closely with local officials and authorities to ensure that the selected site and interview participants represent a range of local situations. The methodology calls for deliberating selecting sites based on agro-ecological setting (highland, midland, and lowland) and distance from large markets or administrative centers. Having separate focus groups for men and women worked well, and the project team decided to maintain that strategy.

The interviews seemed successful in providing a profile of local situations, conveying a sense of how conditions can vary considerably within the same wereda and within the same kebele. The information collected on agriculture, marketing, food security, and so on addressed directly the hypotheses and research questions identified in project documents. Our field work revealed very high levels of food insecurity in each community due to the apparent failure of the belg rains and the cumulative impact of prior poor harvests. Households especially vulnerable to hunger due to landlessness, labor scarcity, or other situations were already reportedly facing desperate situations. We felt so moved by their dire conditions observed in the two communities

that we spoke to zonal and wereda officials before leaving Dessie.¹ The information contained in Appendices 1-4 presents a graphic account of communities under stress.

This report describes the process of revising the research instruments, and these are included in Appendices 5-6. It also discusses several topics for follow-up. For now the highly qualitative data collected for the community assessments seem easily managed as a Word text file, though plans are underway to use data-management software as well. The team also considered the number and location (in terms of agro-ecological zones) of communities to be included in the assessment. The issue of compensating interview respondents is mentioned. Finally, the report addresses the use of GIS technology.

¹ The belg rains of 1999 proved very disappointing, and many areas ended up with little or no harvest. The widespread scope and magnitude of hunger in South Wollo and other regions received considerable attention when the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) issued its *Revised Appeal for Assistance: Emergency Relief Needs in 1999* (Addis Ababa: DPPC, May 27, 1999).

1.0 Introduction

This report describes my activities in Ethiopia from March 6-21, 1999, as a researcher for the BASIS/IDR Horn of Africa Program. I helped prepare and implement a methodology for conducting rapid community assessments as part of the project entitled “From Household to Region: Factor Market Constraints to Income and Food Security in a Highly Diverse Environment, South Wollo, Ethiopia.” It presents a brief overview of the project and its objectives, then covers in depth how the research team finalized and implemented the methodology for the rapid community assessments. The report also describes the revisions to the research instruments and overall design based on the Dessie field test. Finally, it discusses several methodological and other issues for follow-up. The report’s appendices contain the information collected during the field test, the revised versions of the two research instruments, and my itinerary for the Ethiopia trip.

2.0 Development of Research Design

2.1 Initial Research Design

Before my arrival in Ethiopia, the project team had carried out considerable work on the research design for the rapid community assessment. The general goals, purpose, and methodology for the community assessments are set forth in the proposal “From Household to Region: Factor Market Constraints to Income and Food Security in a Highly Diverse Environment, South Wollo, Ethiopia,” by Peter Little and Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher. Their proposal stated that community assessments would be part of a broad research design that moved from the macro/regional levels to the household/intra-household levels. The assessments would focus on Peasant Associations

(kebeles) and would sample approximately 30 percent of them in the study area. A multi-method approach was envisaged, using ethnographic, survey, and rapid rural appraisal methods, with focus groups and key informant interviews serving as the primary techniques. Data would be collected from community leaders, farmers, and traders on a range of topics related to drought coping strategies, community-level organizations, farming and land allocation practices, market linkages, and other socioeconomic characteristics.

Little provided further details about the study in “Guidelines for Conducting Community Assessments under the BASIS Research Program in South Wello, Ethiopia.” It emphasized that these assessments would provide “institutional and qualitative (and limited quantitative) data” to complement the macro- and micro-level surveys, as well as serve as an information base for analysis on their own. The assessments were “expected to contribute to at least three of the four research hypotheses that were stated in the original research proposal”:

Hypothesis I: Physical access (measured in time and distance) to market centers and infrastructure will be a significant determinant of food security and incomes.

Hypothesis II: Food security and income at household and community levels are enhanced through strengthened linkages between highland and lowland production zones.

Hypothesis III: The success of households (and their members) in managing risks related to food insecurity will be dependent on their ability to gain access to non-farm income and assets.

The document also identified several key variables and the following “critical research questions”:

--What formal/informal institutions help to mobilize capital, land, and labor for producers?

--What types of formal and informal arrangements regulate access to agricultural land and other resources (e.g., forests and pastures), and how have they been impacted by recent government reforms?

--In what ways do extra-household (community) exchanges of assets, labor, land, and other factors help to mitigate risk among households? How do these vary by season and year (drought versus non-drought)?

--How have recent experiences with food insecurity affected community organizations and their risk management strategies?

--What are the local experiences with marketing and how have they been affected by spatial and infrastructural constraints?

Thus, the above hypotheses and research questions furnished the motivation and framework for the collection of information in the community assessments.

As implied in its title, the document also provided detailed guidelines and suggestions about the assessments and their design. It recommended selecting 30 PA's on the basis of the regional market survey, with communities stratified according to distance from the market or all-season road (within, or more than, 10 km from such sites). The kebeles were to be selected randomly. Fieldwork was expected to take two days per PA, with two sets of interviews conducted: two to three focus groups with local residents; and four to five key informant interviews with local officials. The document included a "Draft Topical Outline for Group Interviews," which, according to my count, featured over 130 items on food security, agriculture, marketing, and related topics.

2.2 Devising the Research Design at IDR

Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher, the director of IDR, and his colleagues Yared Amare and Yigremew Adal carried out significant work on the formulation of the research design for the community assessments. They proposed taking eight market towns (out of the 19 surveyed) from the range of agro-ecological zones as the focal point for selecting communities. Three lowland, three midland, and two highland communities were identified. Two PA's would be selected from each of the weredas where the towns were located, with distance from the market center (the 10-km benchmark) serving as the stratifying factor for each. Thus, the survey would involve 16 rather than 30 PA's. By way of email correspondence, Little favored this strategy. He also suggested doing two focus group interviews (with 12-15 participants) per PA's to avoid biases, with perhaps one group consisting solely of women.

Yared and Yigremew also drafted revised interview guide questions for the assessments. They aimed at molding the comprehensive but very long "Draft Topical Guidelines" into a useable field instrument that addressed the project's hypotheses and questions. Their productive efforts, in combination with the guidelines set forth in the original project proposal and Little's "Guides for Conducting Community Assessment," furnished the foundation for the two research instruments tested in the field. My role has been to facilitate the fine-tuning and finalization of key informant and group interview guidelines.

2.3 Castro's Collaboration with IDR

I initially met with Tegegne, Yared, and Yigremew on March 8, and we set forth immediately with plans to finalize the research instrument and to arrange field-testing. It was clear that several issues required resolving, including:

1. What would be the balance in the research instrument between the collection of inventory data about the community and the obtaining of local knowledge, perceptions, and opinions about agriculture, food security, etc.?
2. Would a single research instrument be used, or would separate ones be required for key informants and focus groups?
3. Who exactly would be interviewed? Officials or community members as key informants? Separate men and women focus groups?
4. What would the final draft research instrument, or instruments, consist of in terms of specific questions? Would it be specially formatted to facilitate for computer processing? For example, would responses be pre-coded?
5. What would be the timing in terms of obtaining clearances for zonal and local authorities and actually carrying out the surveys?

Over the next week these issues were resolved, at least in terms of the pretest in Dessie.

Yared, Yigremew, and I, now joined by Degafa Tolossa, worked together in Addis Ababa from March 8 to March 10, under the guidance of Tegegne, drafting the research instrument for field testing. We decided to devise two separate research instruments. A key informant schedule would be administered to kebele (Peasant Association) officials, consisting largely of inventory questions regarding the local population, its access to markets and public services, its demographic change, its experience in terms of addressing food security, and so on. The focus group schedule would contain some inventory-oriented questions, but it also sought to elicit local views, perceptions, and aspirations on a range of subjects (agriculture, land, agrarian change, access to inputs and markets, community relations, food security, etc.). I worked on formatting

the research instruments, including pre-coding for certain questions. It was also decided that men and women would be interviewed in separate focus groups.

Completion of the research instruments was not possible before Yared, Degafa, and I left for the field with Takele Giorgis, the driver, on Thursday, March 11. Because we had a laptop computer, it was felt the final drafting could take place in Dessie while awaiting clearances. We ended up doing so during an all-day session on Saturday, March 13 resulting in the completion of both instruments. A private computer company and a photocopying shop in Dessie allowed for the questionnaires be printed and reproduced. The research instruments were field tested on March 14 and March 15 in two kebele, and based on that experience, further revisions took place on March 18, with Yared, Degefa, and I undertaking the task. I finalized drafts of the two research instruments for presentation at a wrap-up meeting for March 19.

3.0 Field Test in Dessie

3.1. Protocol

In any research endeavor, careful attention must be given to official protocol in obtaining clearance and assistance from government administrators, local authorities, and ministry officers. The Dessie pre-test demonstrated that the process of obtaining official clearance and assistance could be a smooth and quick one. Indeed, officials at all levels of government in Dessie must be commended for their courtesy and timely cooperation.²

The procedure followed in Dessie was straightforward. Upon arrival in Dessie on Friday afternoon, March 12, the team visited the South Wollo administration headquarters, contacting the zonal chairman's office. We were directed to Mr. Selassie, the zonal vice-chairman, who

² The team also received courteous and timely assistance from Oromiya zonal officials in Kemise.

promised us full cooperation. Selassie even included his home phone number on the letter of instruction to his staff, in case they had any questions regarding the purpose and urgency of our task.

Mr. Yosef Tsegaye, the zonal food security officer, was summoned, and he provided comments about implementing the research design. Yosef accompanied us to the wereda headquarters for Dessie Zurie (also called Zureya), where we met with Mr. Adem Hussein, the chairman. The team conveyed our objectives regarding the selection of possible sites (for example, agro-ecological variation and distance from the market center/road) and interview participants (having men and women from different socioeconomic backgrounds, different age groups). We also asked for their advice in how to obtain a view of the range of local food security situations, both at the community and the household levels. It should be noted that site selection did not take place on a random basis, but, rather, ended up negotiated between the team and officials. Yosef helped emphasize the importance of our research, including the urgency of getting the work underway as soon as possible.

The officials themselves were not of one mind about which communities to pick. In particular, the wereda chairman and the food security officer differed over which kebele to visit. The wereda chairman insisted that we visit a certain community because of its major food security concerns, despite its proximity to Dessie. From his comments, it was apparent that Hussein had in-depth knowledge of the kebeles and their situations. He made a compelling case, and we ended up following us advice. It turned out to be an insightful choice.

The wereda chairman informed the kebele chairmen of our visits and our needs regarding interview respondents. We were lucky in that the chairman was already scheduled to meet with some kebele chairmen the following day (Saturday), making a Sunday visit possible. He also

appointed a local representative to accompany us. Ms. Birtukan Sebsibie, a wereda council member, traveled with the team to Kebele 32 on March 14, while Mr. Ayalew Akikilu, wereda security officer, accompanied us to Kebele 21 on March 15. To their credit, these individuals and the local kebele officers did not attempt to interfere with the procedures once we arrived at the field site.

Attention to protocol continued after the field visits. The team met again with Selassie, Yosef, Adem, and others to convey our thanks and our observations regarding the situation in the two communities. We also met with Mr. Bezalegne Mehammed and Mr. Meleku Ambaw of the Planning Ministry, who were very useful in providing information. We also provided a small gift (a nice pen from a local stationery shop) to the wereda officials as a way of thanking them for their courtesy and cooperation.

3.2 The Research Sites

Two communities were selected from the wereda on the basis of their distance from the Dessie, the local administrative and marketing center, and their overall food security situation. Both places were situated in the rugged mountains and narrow valleys that typify South Wollo's beautiful landscape. The first community visited has the official designation of Kebele 032. It is known locally as Hara Wabalo. The community is within 10 kilometers of Dessie, but the supposedly all-weather road to the kebele is nearly impassable by four-wheel drive vehicle in certain places due to severe erosion. Kebele 32 is situated in the medium zone, which is reflected in its main crops: wheat, barley, teff, maize, vetch, beans, sorghum, horse beans, and peas. According to the key informant interview, it has 6,000 residents divided into 1,223 households, approximately one-fourth of which are headed by women. They are ethnically Amharic and

predominantly Muslim. Farms are typically small, reportedly ranging from 0.2 ha to 2.5 ha, with the “average” around 1.0 hectare. About 25 households were classified as landless, mainly people repatriated from the resettlement program of the previous regime. The focus groups characterized the local food security situation as grave, due to the apparent failure of the belg (short) rains and the cumulative impact of seven years of poor harvests due to bad weather, crop pests, plant diseases, and other problems. The current market situation did not appear favorable for selling assets and buying food: livestock prices were depressed, while grain prices were high. Vulnerable households – including the landless, the land-poor, the isolated elderly, the sick, and so on – were already said to be facing severe problems.

The second community visited in Dessie Zurie Wereda has the official identification number of Kebele 21. It is also called Tabasit Tamasagola. This kebele is located about 31 kilometers from Dessie. In contrast to the previous field site, the all-weather road to this community was in generally good shape for its entire distance. Kebele 21 appeared to be higher in elevation than the other community. The interviewees designated its agro-ecological zone as *dega*, the high cold country of the Ethiopian plateau. The main crops grown in the kebele – barley, horse beans, peas, and lentils – are indicative of the highland agro-ecological zone.³ The community is ethnically Amharic and predominantly Muslim. It has a total population of 7,000, divided into 1,500 households. Kebele officials reported only 50 female-headed households. About one-sixth of the households (250) in Kebele 32 were identified by officials as being landless. Once again, they included people repatriated from the resettlement program. The focus groups indicated that the local food security situation was serious, though it appeared for the moment to be somewhat less grave than Kebele 21’s predicament. The belg rains had also

³ See Alemneh Dejene, *Environment, Famine, and Politics in Ethiopia*. Boulder: Rienner, 1990.

apparently failed in this community. Interview respondents observed that the community had experienced declining production, especially for the past three to four years, due to bad weather, pests, and crop diseases, and land scarcity. They were also caught in the same depressed price squeeze as the other kebele.

3.3 The Interviews

3.3.1 Selection Process

We asked officials to select at least eight men and eight women from diverse backgrounds for the focus group interviews in each community. This number was chosen for several reasons. The team recognized that the interview process would be lengthy, and that the participants were to receive no compensation for contributing their time and expertise. We tried to balance our need to collect information in an accurate and reliable manner with the desire to impose on as few people as possible. The team felt that having eight participants would probably allow us to get a sufficient range of local perspectives – if the selection process was done correctly. The group would be big enough so that no single individual would be burdened answering all the questions. (Or that no single individual could dominate the proceedings.) It would also be small enough to allow everyone an opportunity to have a say whenever he or she wanted. Finally, given the large number of questions, we thought that having more than eight or so respondents would make the interviews too lengthy.

In a rapid appraisal, the realistic aim is to obtain a range of local perspectives, based on key variables such as gender, socioeconomic status, and other relevant factors. The possibility of bias in terms of selecting interview respondents during short-term field visits is always great. We tried to convey to officials the importance and necessity of selecting a range of people for

interviews, including the poor and prosperous, the old and the young. Given the team members' prior experiences as field researchers in a variety of settings, we all worried that officials might end up selecting people who represented only a narrow spectrum of the community. Whether deliberately done or not, such strategies obviously produced a biased picture of local life.

I cannot say with precision that the focus groups included representatives of all viewpoints within each community. All three research team members, however, felt that the focus groups were composed of people from diverse backgrounds, including the poor, middle, and more prosperous community members, as well as female-heads of households and returned "resettlers" (people who had been involuntarily resettled in the past by the government). This conclusion was based on a number of observations: self-reports by the respondents (Degafa asked them); their appearance (such as the type and quality of clothing); and their comments during interviews (including intra-group chatter, remarks and responses to each other). The contrasts sometimes stood out: in Kebele 21, for example, a barefoot and raggedly dressed old man, compared to two members with wristwatches, nice clothing, shoes or sandals. In Kebele 32, a woman who was a repatriated resettler drew attention to her ragged clothing and her thinness as evidence of her desperate condition. Her long and loud complaints about the lack of local government assistance were clearly an embarrassment to officials.

The key informant schedules were administered as group interviews, involving three kebele-level officials in each location (chairman, economy section-head, and security head in Kebele 21; chairman, secretary, and capacity builder in Kebele 32). We asked the wereda leader to make sure that more than one kebele representative showed up for the interview. Clearly, there was an element of self-selection by the kebele leaders. The team members had discussed the possibility of interviewing non-officials as well for the key informant interviews. Given the nature

of the questions (many of them checklist items) and the length of the interviews (upwards of two hours), however, it was felt that the single interview per site was sufficient. The officials interviewed in each kebele were males.

3.3.2 The Interview Guidelines

Copies of the key informant and focus group questionnaires, along with the responses obtained in each interview, are included in Appendices 1-4. As mentioned earlier, these drafts derived from previous work by the BASIS/IDR team. While keeping in mind the research agenda, we aimed at clarity and brevity during question selection. We also tried to take into account how a question would be translated into Amharigna. It would probably be a good idea to have a copy of each research instrument fully translated into Amharigna to ensure the standardized data collection.

3.3.3 The Interview Process

The team split up to do the interviews. In Kebele 32, Yared did the female focus group interview and the key informant interview, while Degafa and I interviewed the male focus group. I also wandered around the kebele with Degafa, the chairman, and community members. We visited local facilities (shops, market sites, watering point, health clinic) and nearby households. At Kebele 21 Yared and I conducted the male focus group, and Degafa carried out the other two interviews. We were also treated to lunch by its kebele officers and local residents.

The food security officer suggested that the focus groups be conducted without any member of the kebele administration present. It was generally easy to follow his advice, since the kebele officers participated in the key informant interviews, which apparently took one-to-two hours to complete.

Both male focus group interviews were conducted in enclosed rooms, with the participants sitting on benches and chairs. The female focus group interview in Kebele 32 took place in a schoolroom, while the Kebele 21 interview occurred in an open yard. I participated in both male focus groups. They took around three hours. The pace of the male focus group interviews was steady – there was very little “dead” time. Having to translate their responses of course added to the length but probably not significantly. By the end of the questionnaire the interviewers and the respondents both were tired. The interview process, including the number of questions, was stretched to the limit of reasonableness. Yet, the men seemed grateful to be asked at the end whether they had anything to say or to ask. This open-ended question yielded much useful information and local priorities and concerns.

The female focus group interviews took less time, probably around two or two-plus hours. Again, the need for translation in the men’s interview undoubtedly made it longer, but it also appears that the men had more to say. Given the time difference between the men and women’s groups, it seemed reasonable that the person doing the latter also carry out the key informant interview. The results of the female focus groups show that much useful information was collected.

3.3.4 Having Women’s and Men’s Focus Groups

The team members discussed whether it would be always necessary to have separate male and female focus groups. It was proposed, for example, that mixed groups might be used in some situations. My opinion is that separate groups ought to be maintained. I think the men would dominate the interview. The differences in information between the men and women also warrant

keeping their interviews separate. For example, in Kebele 32 the following responses and ranking were obtained from men and women regarding “What field crops are grown?”:

<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1. Barley	1. Wheat
2. Maize	2. Maize
3. Vetch	3. Teff
Horse beans	4. Sorghum
Peas	5. Beans
Teff	6. Peas
Wheat	7. Barley
(Only 1-3 ranked)	8. (Unclear)
	9. Lentils
	10. Fenugreek

While differences in researcher “style” may have played a differences in obtaining these results, it appears likely that men and women probably evaluate the importance of field crops in different ways. Other significant differences emerged regarding bartering, nonfarm income, food security, and other issues.

3.4 Other Methodological Issues

3.4.1 The Revised Schedules of Questions

Based on the field test, the research team revised the key informant and focus group interview schedules. These appear as Appendix 5 and 6, respectively. It is assumed that these revised versions may undergo further revision by the BASIS/IDR program.⁴ The changes done during the last revision round were relatively minor. For example, a question was added to the focus group schedule on irrigation, while a question on the size of the kebele was added to the key informant

⁴ Indeed, a few revisions took place in the final versions used in the community assessments. The research instruments in Appendix 5-6 are the ones actually used by the team (in contrast to the versions that appeared in previous drafts of this report).

schedule. Most of the pre-coding has been dropped, as it ended up less helpful than anticipated. Some necessary stylistic changes were carried out, such as a renumbering of the questions.

3.4.2 Data Management

As shown in Appendices 1-4, I have entered the interview information as a Word file. The format used is very basic. The questionnaires were used as a template, with the responses entered from each interview. In the case of the focus groups, the women's and men's responses are listed separately. Some stylistic changes were done (for example, placing the questions in italics) to improve the readability of the data. Given the highly qualitative nature of the data, this seemed an appropriate form of management. It may be possible to use more complex software to manage and analyze the field data, though by its very nature this information will not easily lend itself to statistical analysis. (In fact, the IDR team members eventually took on the task of entering much of the data into the SPSS statistical analysis package).

3.4.3 Number and Location of Communities

Upon its return to Addis Ababa, Yared, Degafa, and I discussed the issue of how many communities ought to be assessed. The conversation was wide-ranging and inconclusive. It was suggested that given manpower and resource constraints, it might be sufficient to survey only seven weredas, with two kebeles from each site. Kombolcha might not be necessary as a site, for example, given its proximity to Dessie and the over-representation of lower to midland sites in the proposed sample. The possibility was also discussed of slightly expanding the sample to include a couple more communities, allowing us to determine more precisely the range of local food security situations. Manpower and resource shortages were again mentioned as constraints. The

project staff ultimately decided that the community assessments ought to be expanded to cover 11 weredas and 22 kebeles.

3.4.4 Compensation for Interview Respondents

Both Yared and I thought that it might be worthwhile providing a small payment – perhaps 10 birr – to interview respondents.⁵ Coming to the interview sites and the focus group itself probably involve more than a half-day commitment for them. There is no direct or tangible benefit for participating in this activities. Of course we appreciate that turning information into a commodity can involve complex methodological, financial, and possibly even social issues. Will the quality and reliability of data be changed, for example, through offers of payment? How will payment for information impact other researchers? The program’s and project’s documents contain no mention of compensation for host populations. We expect no action to take place regarding this issue during the community assessments and probably the other phases of the project. It might be the time to start considering the practice, however, if simply to debate its merits.

3.4.5 GIS

The questionnaire forms list a spot for recording longitude and latitude. It is my impression that a GPS locator could be used to record this information, especially if it is incorporated into the protocol procedures. The wereda security officer, for example, was aware of our actions, even accompanying us to one of the sites.

4.0 Findings

⁵ The exchange rate at the time was 7-plus birr to a US\$1.

These findings based on the two communities are of a very preliminary nature. First, they are based on a very limited database – two communities. Secondly, they are based solely on my own interpretation of this data. Finally, this version is intended as a draft, subject to revision.

4.1 The Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: Physical access (measured in time and distance) to market centers and infrastructure will be a significant determinant of food security and incomes.

The field test underscored the complexity of this hypothesis. As described earlier, the research team visited two rural communities near Dessie, the local administrative and trading center. Kebele 32 was located within 10 kilometers of Dessie, while Kebele 21 was more than 30 kilometers away. Although closer to the main town in terms of distance alone, field interviews suggested that Kebele 32 had a greater degree of food insecurity than Kebele 21. Several factors appeared to contribute to this situation, including transport infrastructure. A clear difference existed in the condition of the main road serving each community. Kebele 32's road was in extremely bad shape in several places, resembling a rocky ravine rather than an all-weather road. Not surprisingly, people reported that very few motor vehicles visited the community. This very rough road made the transport of people (particularly pregnant women and the sick) and goods extremely difficult, especially in the wet season. Local officials claimed that no households used vehicles for transporting goods – a statement that seemed reasonable, especially given the road's condition. People reported that difficult travel conditions constrained local development efforts. Several community members, for example, stated that the rough road prevented the Ministry of Water, Mines and Energy from bringing its deep well drilling machinery to repair several water points. They also mentioned another road connecting their kebele to Dessie and neighboring

communities had become impassable. It required the building (or rebuilding) of a bridge through a seasonal wetland. According to the kebele officials, the maintenance of that road was beyond their capacity. Their appeals to the relevant ministries had as yet gone unanswered.

Despite its distance from Dessie, Kebele 21 appeared less isolated in terms of transport infrastructure. The road was in much better shape, and the team encountered several other motor vehicles passing through the community. Its officials reported that “very few people” used vehicles; still, the kebele seemed well served in terms of the availability of motor transport. The cost of travel (10 birr to Dessie) was probably the greatest obstacle faced by the community in this regard. The men’s focus group called the fare to Dessie “very expensive.”

Local transport infrastructure provided only one facet of the food security and income situation. The weather, crop pests and diseases, land scarcity, land quality, current livestock and crop prices, the availability (or lack of) of non-farm income, and the cumulative impacts of prior seasons on local well-being also clearly played crucial roles. Both kebeles reported that the current outlook was not good in terms of local livelihood or food security.⁶ The belg rains had apparently failed. Moreover, each place had suffered from several consecutive years of poor or disappointing harvests due to bad weather (too little or too much rain, frost [especially in Kebele 21, which was higher in altitude], hail damage), pests, crop disease, exhausted land, and soil erosion. Livestock prices were low, as people were selling animals to cover current cash needs. In contrast, grain prices were high, constraining the ability of people to buy food. People in both communities suggested that the land might be too crowded to support the current population. As

⁶ As noted earlier, the severe problems encountered in the two kebele were shared by a large number of communities in Amhara and neighboring regions – something documented by the project’s community assessments and by the DPPC’s report listed in footnote 1.

a man from Kebele 21 eloquently observed, it may no longer be possible for households to obtain “a sustainable livelihood system through agriculture.”

The interviews in Kebele 32 indicated that the community as a whole was already in a near desperate situation due to the apparent failure of the belg rains and the cumulative impacts of seven consecutive years of poor harvests. The men’s focus group recorded: “1984 was a famine of one year. The condition was not as serious as this year.” The women’s focus group observed: “This year’s price conditions are worse than the previous time. Worse than 1984-85, when livestock prices were better, livestock conditions were better.” People reported that “highly vulnerable and weak households” – the poor, female-headed families, the isolated elderly, repatriated resettlers who possessed no more than house and garden plots – were facing very hard times. One of the focus group participants – a woman who had returned from the involuntary resettlement program to find her land taken up by others – dramatically and bitterly complained about her predicament before the team left. Kebele 21 had similar problems, but the situation did not yet appear as desperate. Interview respondents reported suffering four to five poor years in a row – obviously, a bad circumstance. But Kebele 32 left the impression of being on the verge of a very grave predicament.⁷

Hypothesis II: Food security and income at household and community levels are enhanced through strengthened linkages between highland and lowland production zones.

⁷ The research team selected Kebele 21 for inclusion in the assessments, with a new round of interviews conducted by Yared and Yigremew on April 5, 1999. The complete failure of the belg rains had increased and intensified food insecurity in the community. “People reported widespread food shortages due to repeated crop failure. The men stated that most households now faced severe hunger” (Alfonso Peter Castro, Yared Amare, and Yigremew Adal, “Kebele Profiles, Part I: Dessie Zurie, Kalu, and Ambassel Weredas.” Addis Ababa: BASIS/IDR, June 11, 1999, p. 13).

As mentioned, the interviews ended up highlighting local food insecurity and lack of income. Yet, it is apparent that wider market linkages matter. The Kebele 32 women's focus group identified the key role of traders who brought maize from Wollega (in Western Ethiopia) to Dessie during the previous year. The women said that people would have suffered severe hunger without maize to purchase, since local supplies were unavailable.

Hypothesis III: The success of households (and their members) in managing risks related to food insecurity will be dependent on their ability to gain access to non-farm income and assets.

People in both communities emphasize the significance of non-farm income, but they also bemoaned the dearth of opportunities for obtaining it. The people of Kebele 32 mentioned the importance of urban firewood sales as a coping strategy for food shortage. The widespread planting of the trees in recent years has provided a crucial resource. Urban employment and petty trading are significant coping strategies, but interview respondents complained about the lack of available income-generating opportunities. They mentioned agricultural migrant labor, but several people pointed out that recent poor coffee harvests reduced the demand for workers. Interview respondents also associated hazards with migrant labor, especially the risk of becoming infected with malaria in the lowlands. Long absences also strained family relations.

4.2 Research Questions

--What formal/informal institutions help to mobilize capital, land and labor for producers?

Land: there has been no redistribution in either community in recent years, except to provide house and garden plots to the returned resettlers. Sharecropping takes place, with those possessing oxen, seed, labor, and presumably some capital obtaining land from those who lack the ability or resources to farm.

Labor: Households mainly provide their own labor. Reciprocal labor exchange occurs but less frequently than in the past because of the overall decline in the farming system due to bad weather, pests, plant disease, and the cumulative impact of several poor harvests. Other forms of labor exchange may have existed in the past but have broken down.

Capital: People report little access, with relatively few households in Kebele 21 getting loans from the Ministry of Agriculture. People in both communities mentioned the decrease in livestock capital, as households sell off stock to deal with income and food shortages.

--What types of formal and informal arrangements regulate access to agricultural land and other resources (e.g., forests and pastures), and how have they been impacted by recent government reforms?

Agricultural land: No recent reforms or allocations have taken place.

Forests: Sale of wood and grass is controlled by the government through the kebele officials.

--In what ways do extra-household (community) exchanges of assets, labor, land, and other factors help to mitigate risk among households? How do these vary by season and year (drought versus non-drought)?

Bartering for seed at the onset of the planting seasons was cited as a major risk-aversion strategy.

Labor exchanges, loans of pack animals, and grain loans constitute major coping strategies. The

increasingly desperate situation regarding agricultural production is making it more difficult for people to cooperate in general. The men of Kebele 32 observed, “Economic assistance was quite strong in the past. People had a mutual understanding about one another. That still exists but things now are not so strong.”

--How have recent experiences with food insecurity affected community organizations and their risk management strategies?

Community organizations (funeral associations, religious groups) and social relations have been weakened by the years of declining agricultural production. As the women of Kebele 21 observed, there was “greater love and concern previously.”

--What are the local experiences with marketing and how have they been affected by spatial and infrastructural constraints.

As mentioned above, spatial and infrastructural constraints have a major impact on access to markets and other facilities. Regarding markets, the interview respondents described themselves as caught in a price squeeze: livestock prices are very low (reflecting the desperation sale of animals, and their poor condition), while grain and food prices are high. Some people thought the situation was worse than in 1984.

5.0 Conclusion

As a member of the research team, I helped prepare the research design, participated in its field test in two South Wollo communities, and contributed to the revision of the research instruments. I also helped provide a preliminary analysis of the collected data and commented on

other issues related to the community assessments and the overall project. It must be emphasized that the BASIS/IDR team had carried out substantial work on the research design before my arrival. Moreover, the project's accomplishments regarding the community assessments during my time in Ethiopia – completion of the research design and its successful field testing – resulted from a truly collaborative team effort.

We designed questionnaires for key informant and focus group interviews to address the hypotheses and questions identified in the project proposal and related documents. The key informant schedule focuses largely on obtaining inventory-type data regarding the community. It obtains information on local demography, access to transport and other facilities, landholding, marketing, community associations, government services, food security, and related topics. The focus group schedule contains inventory-oriented questions on farming, landholding, communal resources, labor, farm inputs, savings and credit, off-farm income, marketing, food security, local organizations, and similar issues. It also asks open-ended questions eliciting local views on these topics. The research team concentrated on tightening the content and form of each questionnaire, making them clearer and less-time consuming. We also focused on issues of sample selection.

During the Dessie field trip we worked out a successful procedure regarding official protocol for obtaining clearances and cooperation, as well as for selection of research sites and interviewees. Random sampling of sites and interview subjects is not possible. Instead, one must work closely with local officials and authorities to ensure that the selected site and interview participants represent a range of local situations. The methodology calls for deliberating selecting sites based on agro-ecological setting (highland, midland, and lowland) and distance from large markets or administrative centers. Having separate focus groups for men and women worked well, and the project team decided to maintain that strategy.

The interviews seemed successful in providing a profile of local situations, conveying a sense of how conditions can vary considerably within the same wereda and within the same kebele. The information collected on agriculture, marketing, food security, and so on addressed directly the hypotheses and research questions identified in project documents. Our field work revealed very high levels of food insecurity in each community due to the apparent failure of the belg rains and the cumulative impact of prior poor harvests. Households especially vulnerable to hunger due to landlessness, labor scarcity, or other situations were already reportedly facing desperate situations. We felt so moved by their dire conditions observed in the two communities that we spoke to zonal and wereda officials before leaving Dessie.⁸ The information contained in Appendices 1-4 presents a graphic account of communities under stress.

⁸ The belg rains of 1999 proved very disappointing, and many areas ended up with little or no harvest. The widespread scope and magnitude of hunger in South Wollo and other regions received considerable attention when the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) issued its *Revised Appeal for Assistance: Emergency Relief Needs in 1999* (Addis Ababa: DPPC, May 27, 1999).

APPENDIX 1: DESSIE ZURIE, KEBELE 32

Draft: March 13, 1999
BASIS/GREATER HORN OF AFRICA PROGRAM/IDR
GUIDELINE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

Date: March 14, 1999

Enumerator: Yared Amare

Agroecological Zone: Woina Dega

Name of Wereda: Dessie Zureya

Name of Kebele: 032,

Other names for the community: Hara [Nara?] Webelo, Kuru medina

Longitude _____ *Latitude* _____

Interview Respondents

Number of Respondents: 3

Position of Respondents

Kebele official: 3, chairman, secretary, capacity builder

Gender of Respondents:

Males: 3

I. Community Checklist

1. *Estimated population:* 6,000

2. *Number of households:* 1,223 (+25 ex/s)

3. *Number of female-headed household:* 300

4. *Ethnic Groups*

Amhara: As a proportion of population: 100%

5. *Distance from all-weather road:* 5 (or 15?) km

6. *Distance from seasonal road:* 0 km

7. *Distance from motorized transport:* 0 km

8. *Distance from Woreda headquarters:* 5 km

9. *Distance from nearest bank:* 5 km

10. *Number of health clinics:* 1

11. *Number of retail shops:* 1 service coop.

12. *Number of schools:* 1

13. *Number of churches and mosques:* 2 mosques

14. *Does this kebele have a daily or weekly market?* Yes, weekly.

15. *Distance from main daily market used by kebele residents:* 10 km

16. *Distance from main weekly market?* 0.5 km (very small)

17. What are the main means of transporting goods in this kebele? Rank

1. 1 Walking
2. 2 Donkey

18. What proportion of local households use vehicles for transporting goods? 0%

19. What financial institutions such as banks or organizations that provide credit exist in your area? Rank their importance:

1. Min. of Agriculture

19a. What is the average size of household landholding in this kebele? 1 hectare, 3 timad

19b. What is the range in size of household landholdings in this kebele?

1. Largest : 5 timad, 2.5 ha
2. Smallest : 1 timad, 0.2 ha

19c. What number of households are landless in this kebele? 25 households

19d. What number of households use purchased inputs such as improved seeds and fertilizers? 35 households

19e. What number of households make use of farm credit? 48 households

20. What proportion of households are actively involved with agricultural extension? 80%

21. Do community associations exist in your area? Yes

22. If yes, what associations and what do they do?

1. Kire Activity: funeral association

23. What proportion of households belong to such groups? 100%

24. Do NGOs exist in your area? Yes

25. If yes, what organizations and what do they do?

1. Children's Fund Activity: school equipment, water wells

26. What proportion of households participate in NGOs? 0%

27. Have any of these community associations or NGOs assisted households in meeting food shortages in the past 10 years? No

28. If so, list the associations or NGOs and rank them according to their local importance in helping to meet food shortages? N/A

29. What government agencies operate in your kebele?

1. Min of Ag. _____ Activity: inputs, credit, extension
2. Min. of Ed. _____ Activity: education, promotion of school
3. Min. of Health _____ Activity: education, vaccination, treatment
4. DOPC (?) _____ Activity: relief

No number 30

II. Natural Resources Access and Use

31. What are the most important natural resources to the local population?

 X Rivers and lakes [“commonly used”]

no 32-36

III. Kebele Demographic Change

37. Has the population increased, stayed the same or decreased during the past 10 years?

Increased

38. Why has the population changed [or not changed] during the past 10 years? Rank

- 1 Natural increase
- 2 People moving into the community

39. Have the number of people moving into the community increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years? Decreased

40. What are the reasons for that pattern of population movement? Rank

1. Most resettlers have moved in all ready (Assab refugees) rank: 1
2. Problems in kebele such as drought and food security rank: 2

41. Have the number of people moving out of the community increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years? Stayed the same

42. What are the reasons for that pattern of population movement?

People leaving and coming back

IV. Kebele Food Security

43. Are there any seasons or times of the year when food shortages are experienced by a large number of families? Yes

44. If yes, when do such times occur? Yes, April to October

45. List years or dates during the last 10 years when crop failure or threat of hunger was a widespread concern in this kebele? What was the cause (or causes)?

1. 1999 _____ Cause/s: drought
2. 1998 _____ Cause/s: excessive rain

46. *What type of food aid program operated in the community during the most recent time of widespread hunger or famine?*

1. food for work
2. grain toil provision

47. *What type and amount of outside assistance was received by individual households at that time?*

1. wheat and grain (?) - 12 kilo/

48. *Was it different from food aid received during the last famine different than during other famine years? Yes*

49. *If yes, in what ways did it differ? (Skip if not applicable)*

1. more people, 3,000-1,500
2. received grain

50. *What sorts of families are the first to be vulnerable to famine? Rank*

- 4 Poor female-headed households
- 1 The landless
- 2 The elderly
- 3 Families with many children
- 5 Land-poor families

no 51

52. *Are organized efforts are being done within the kebele to enhance the nutritional status of children? No*

53. *If yes, who are the sponsors and what are their activities? N/A*

54. *What are the biggest threats to food security in this kebele? (Rank them)*

- drought - 1
- excessive rain- 2
- frost- 3
- pests- 4
- [lack of] drinking water

55. *What do you think could be done to reduce the prevalence of hunger in the kebele?*

- Relief- 1
- employment-2
- road construction-3a
- prevent (?) - 3b
- flooding at road, peasant road, making market inaccessible.

APPENDIX 2: WEREDA DESSIE ZUREYA, KEBELE 32
DRAFT
BASIS/GREATER HORN OF AFRICA PROGRAM/IDR

**GUIDELINE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS**

Date: March 14, 1999

Enumerator: Yared Amare (women), Degafa and Peter Castro (men)

Agroecological Zone: W. Dega (middle/intermediate)

Name of Woreda: Dessie Zureya

Name of Kebele: Number 32

Other names for the community: Hara Wabelu (or Wabalu)

Longitude _____ *Latitude* _____

Interview Respondents:

Number and gender of respondents:

Males: 8 ages: 26, 27, 28, 29, 35, 37, 57, 60

Females: 9 ages: 35, 35, 35, 40, 45, 60, 60, 65, 70

Agriculture

What field crops are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood:

Women: #1: wheat; #2: maize; #3 teff; #4 sorghum; #5 beans; #6: peas; #7: barley; #8: horse beans; #9: lentils; #10: fenugreek

Men: #1: barley; #2 maize, #3 fetch; not ranked: horse beans, peas, teff, wheat.

They used to grow two crops per year till seven years ago.

What perennial field crops are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood:

Women: #1: eucalyptus; #2 Juniper.

Men: eucalyptus, euphorbia (as a living fence)

What garden vegetables are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood

Garden vegetables: grown by women

Women: #1: kale; 2: onions (w)

Men: In the past they tended to grow cabbage, potato, garlic, but no longer because of water problems and pests in the soil.

Are there crops exclusively grown by men?

Women: No.

Men: No crops; cannot say women are not involved because they do not plow; it does not excluded them from other agricultural labor.

Are there crops exclusively grown by women? If yes, please list:

Women: Yes. Kale and (?)

Men: Yes. Onion, cabbage, vegetables.

What crops are especially important as a source of cash income? Please rank.

Women: #1: bean, #2: teff; #3: wheat, #4: eucalyptus

Men: eucalyptus. They don't have surpluses, nothing to be sold.

Is there a time of year when bartering is especially important? What is bartered? For what purpose? What crops are especially bartered by women? Does bartering take place with people from other communities? If so, when and with whom?

Women: Wheat and teff exchange; beans and maize exchange. The purpose is for seeding. Both females and males jointly participate in exchanges. Takes place only within the community. Period is July and January for the long rain and short rain harvest.

Men: Barter is carried out for seeds. They exchange barley for maize; wheat for teff; horse bean for peas. They do it with other farmers within the kebele and also across other kebele. It takes place from one house to another. Women would exchange rape seeds for pumpkins. The time is around the time of planting, specifically January and March. This year the rains didn't come, so bartering is taking place this year.

Has the average household's farm output increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years?

Women: Declined ever since 1983.

Men: Considerable decrease during the last 7 years. In the past they harvested a lot, threshing in the field using oxen and horses; currently they go to the plot and collect by hand. In the past the area was known for double cropping; it was significant, But since 7 years they couldn't practice it properly. They harvested twice from a single plot but nowadays they cannot. They will prepare the land but no rain. They will use the land for the main season later on (m). [Also note: Double cropping—the minor season is the dominant one in terms of crop production (m)]

What are the three most important reasons for this pattern of household farm production over the past 10 years? (Ask them to prioritize their order)

Women: #1 Crop disease – wag; #2 drought.

Men: #1 No timely rains in some years; #2 flooding in other years; #3 pest and disease, also wag, when crop fruits but remains without giving good fruits.

LAND

How do people get access to crop land in this community?(After listing, ask them to rank their choices in order of importance in determining overall local access to land)

Women: #1: land redistribution; #2: sharecropping.

Men: inheritance; sharecropping, land redistribution didn't take place in kebele. There was a measure of land size but the number of people who were landless were large, and there was a fear the land was not adequate. Rental mentioned but later identified as "no".

How do people get access to pasture land in this community? (After listing, ask them to rank their choices in order of importance in determining overall local access to land)

Women: #1: land redistribution, #2: sale.

Men: communal pasture, sale, and past land redistribution. Pasture is scarce. There is no communal pasture but forest land, where people leave livestock to graze. Destitute people without livestock will sell land (m). [The forest land belongs to the government].

What kind of land transactions are taking place in this area? Type of transaction? Who gives land? Who gets land? Rates?

Women: sharecropping; oxen-less/seedless give land<those with oxen, seed get land; 50% share

Men: sharecropping; oxen-less, elderly, women give land<w/oxen, labor, seed get land; 50% share.

How have land transactions changed since the last land redistribution?

Probe: For example, are land transactions increasing, decreasing, or staying the same as in the past? Are there changes in the types of transactions? Rates? Types of farmers? Type of land?

Women: sharecropping increased but no changes in the share rate.

Men: at the change in government the cadre gave plots of land only for dwellings and garden plots to landless [resettlers].

What was the impact of the last land redistribution on farmers in your community?

Probe: What was its economic impact on different types of farmers? How did it affect land scarcity? What was its impact on landless households? What was its impact on female-headed households? How did it affect the inequality in landholding?

Women: landless received land, resettlers. They were able to produce grain enough for several months of food consumption. Some female-headed households received land.

Men: not asked because they said no land redistribution had taken place recently.

What are the major constraints concerning land that people face in raising crops and livestock? (After listing, ask them to rank their top three choices in order of priority)

Women: #1 poor yield/crop performance; #2: unequal land holding; #3 land scarcity.

Men: #1 rainfall ; #2: land scarcity; poor land quality, eroded/exhausted land, unequal landholding, land fragmentation, topography, water flow (flooding), fertilizers don't perform well, frost (especially for maize)

Water

What are the major constraints concerning water faced by local people in raising crops and livestock?

(rank in order of priority)

Women: #1 drought, #2 lack of irrigation, #3 lack of water for livestock

Men: water not potable, conflict over water for domestic use, lack of access for livestock, no access to irrigation.

Communal Resources

What communal resources are used by kebele members? How is access to communal resources governed or determined? How is usage of communal resources managed?

Women: none

Men: River/streams- community decides; it's a distance away. Water—a number of government and NGOs persons came, asked about the problem; there were water points, hand dug, which pumped manually that served for a short time. No one every came back. Forests: get eucalyptus, the area was considered forest, there were areas with no trees, considered community forest land. Area protected during some months of the year from livestock, growing of grass is still so little for pasture. Sale of grasses from forest is administered by PA officials.

Labor

How do households obtain labor for farming or keeping livestock?

Women: #1 supplied by one's own household; #2 neighbors; #3 hire local people

Men: own labor, family members, neighbors. No hired labor.

How have the ways of obtaining labor for farming changed in the past 10 years?

Women: hiring of labor used to be common,

Men: before our problems, it was common to hire local labor, even migrants. Now no longer so.

What proportion of households engage in reciprocal labor?

Women: 0 since 1991

Men: there are two systems of labor exchange, one which no longer function. Today only reciprocal labor – work today, work tomorrow at other. Other one wasn't compulsory [work parties], doesn't b/c bad harvest. About 25%. In the past the great majority did so. There's exchange labor with eucalyptus. One will have it, the other carries it to Dessie, 3 hours one way, 6 hours total, they'll split half shares.

Why is reciprocal labor useful?

Women: timely completion of activities (harvesting, weeding), minimize loses.

Men: carry out operations timely, especially in certain cases, when anticipating rains, quick harvest.

What constraints, if any, exist in this kebele regarding labor for agricultural activities?

Women: #1 elderly households, #2 female headed household with children lack labor.

Men: We would like to be more busy.

Inputs

What are the major constraints concerning inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizer, and herbicides faced by people in raising crops and livestock? Rank

Women: #1 water shortages limit use; #2, lack of money to purchase

Men: lack of money, high prices, lack of knowledge since they are recently introduced, too risky, poor performance of inputs

How do households in this community obtain farm inputs such as seed and fertilizer? Rank choices according to frequency of use by local households:

Women: Min of Agriculture (MOA)

Men: MOA. They do have access to it but not everyone wants it because the area is not promising. Access to credit depends on the capacity of the person, they study the situation and see if a person is capable.

What government extension programs are operating in this kebele? How do farmers get involved in these programs? What proportion of farmers are involved? What kind of farmers are involved? What has been the impact of these programs on farmers?

Women: MOA programs, education (90% got), fertilizer- none. Impact: not much.

Men: None so far but they're trying to introduce next year.

Credit

How available is credit for agricultural production?

Women: not very available, only a few farmers have been able to get credit from govt.

Men: [Discussed above]. [*Question: are there well to do farmers who offer credit?*] No, people don't offer.

What is the preferred source for farm credit?

Women: No sources

Men: No sources of credit. Ider exists but it doesn't offer credit.

Where do households actually get credit? (Formal sources, community sources [e.g., Equib & Ider], and other). Why?

Women: No sources of credit.

Men: N/A

What are the major constraints on obtaining capital or credit for farming?

Women: Worsening conditions the past 10 years

Men: Don't know who offers credit besides MOAs. Very few get it from MOA b/c the source allocates only a small amount. And the MOA makes people repay [risk aversion?]

Non-Agricultural and Off-farm Income Earning

What types of non-agricultural/off-farming earnings activities do households do your in kebele?

Probe: Migrant labor? Urban/peri-urban labor? Handicrafts? Food-for-work? Brewing, etc.?

Rank in order of importance

Women: #1 migrant labor, #2 urban day work, #3 cloth work

Men: In the past some off-farm activities, such as brewing, selling foodstuff, but no longer other than selling eucalyptus.

What types of non-agricultural/off-farming earnings activities are important to women in this kebele? Rank

Women: #1 migrant labor, #2 urban day work, #3 cloth work

Men: Selling firewood.

What has been the significance of non-agricultural/off-farm income activities during periods of severe food shortage?

Women: Urban day work—only a few of the poorest households have engaged in it. Migrant labor—some households [have ?] people who bring back some money. But not this year because of poor coffee harvests.

Men: Very important, the only way to live. One important thing is the large number of people selling eucalyptus. With exchange labor the tree cutter and the marketer/laborer split half shares. They have to get the PA permission to cut trees.

What changes have occurred in the involvement (availability of & participation in) non-agricultural and off-farm activities?

Women: Increased involvement in cloth work, urban day work. Migrant labor.

Men: N/A

Marketing

Where do local households buy sugar, salt and other processed foods? Rank

Women: At Dessie, the nearest market center.

Men: At nearest market center; In nearby marketplaces; at the service cooperative shop. There is a weekly market in this area, a very small one that operates for about two hours. They don't consider it a formal market. Dessie is the nearest market center.

How frequently do agricultural traders visit this area?

Women: Never (only Dessie).

Men: No traders.

How frequently do livestock traders visit this area?

Women: Never (only Dessie)

Men: No traders.

How frequently do you exchange with communities from other areas?

Probe: What kind of exchanges? What areas? What seasons or times?

Women: Never.

Men: People from other kebele come to markets. They bring other commodities such as fruits like bananas, sugar cane, orange, chat. People from here traded barley, beans, etc. but currently not much.

What are the major transport constraints faced by local households in marketing their goods?

Rank

Women: #1 lack of pack animals; #2 bad roads during the wet season.

Men: Lack of vehicles; Poor roads year-round; bad roads during the wet season, lack of roads. No good roads. In the past they went to other wereda, but now the road is not opened. Difficulty to transport, especially ladies for health, for pregnancies. They carry the sick by portage to Dessie. To sell eucalyptus it would be advantageous to have vehicles. Instead of taking 6 hours, it could be done in a timely way.

Food Security

What coping practices have been important in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage or famine?

Probe: Practices such as livestock sales, off-farm employment, or reduction of consumption.

Women: #1 Wood sales; #2 urban work.

Men: Petty trading in the towns. Seasonal migration to other areas. In the early times they had a relatively better situation to engage in petty trade of grain, livestock, other items. Now these things have diminished.

How have these food shortage coping practices changed in your lifetime?

Women: Eucalyptus sales now possible because of planting during the previous government.

Men: N/A (see previous)

When was the most recent food shortage?

Women: Last year and this year.

Men: [leads to major discussion] Since the last seven years, the conditions get worse from year to year. This year is the worse. Can't rate years. This year is probably the worse yet.

What were its major impacts or effects on kebele members?

Women: Some weaker people and elderly died.

Men: Some people have out-migrated. A few people have died. Impoverishment.

During the most recent food shortage, how did the market react ?

Probe: Changes in supply of food, livestock sales, price fluctuation, etc.?

Women: Last year – traders brought maize down from Wollege (Western Ethiopia). That helped many farmers acquire grain. This year – higher grain prices, plate maize 1.5 birr>3.0 birr.

Declining livestock prices. Birr 500/cow>200 birr

Men: Decline of price for livestock, oxen. Before 1,000 birr, now 200 birr. Rising crop prices. Maize 116 birr per 100 kg, before it was 50 birr.

How did this compare to previous times of food shortage in your lifetime?

Women: This year price conditions are worse than the previous time. Worse than 1984-85, when livestock prices were better, livestock conditions were better.

Men: 1984 was a famine of one year. The condition was not as serious as this, the government used to provide relief food and clothes. The condition that year was serious but only for a year. There was food for work schemes in which every member could participate and even get surplus. What now happens is there's a promise to provide relief food for highly vulnerable and weak households but so far this year nothing has been received.

Community Relations

What sorts of economic assistance and exchanges often occur between people are related? Who are neighbors? Who are community members?

Women: Kin relations – draft power/labor exchanges; taking-in resettlers.

With neighbors: funerals/marriages—assistance during, contributions; grain loans – purchase grain to be returned in the same week.

Men: Economic assistance was quite strong in the past. People had a mutual understanding about one another. That still exists but things now are not so strong.

How have kinship or community relations helped individual households survive recent periods of severe food shortage or famine?

Women: N/A

Men: N/A

How did such practices compare with kin- and community assistance and exchanges in the past? If different, how and why?

Women: #1 Greater amount of assistance and exchange during funerals and weddings; #2 greater love and concern previously.

Men: N/A

Community-Based Associations, NGOs, and Government Services

What types of community-based organizations (CBOs) operate in the community?

Women: Kire – funeral associations. Declining this year.

Men: no equb, even in the past. Eder is functional. Sadaka in the past. Moluuf (?), a religious association.

Is membership in such CBOs accessible to any farmer who wants to join? If not, why not?

Women: Yes, most farmers are members.

Men: anyone.

How were the activities, the participation, and other facets of CBOs affected by recent periods of severe food shortages?

Women: No contribution for Kire, no assistance from Kire during funeral. Contributions are 25 cents.

Men: these groups have been hurt by the current state of things. Everyone should struggle for their own existence, instead of being active in the organization. The ceremonies related to marriage have been hurt.

What role, if any, do these CBOs play in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage?

Women: None.

Men: Eder doesn't exist [for such purposes], it's only for funerals.

What kind of changes – for example, activities and participation -- are CBOs experiencing?

Women: No changes apart from what was brought about by food shortages.

Men: N/A

What types of NGOs operate in the community?

Women: none.

Men: none.

What role, if any, do these NGOs play in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage?

Women: none.

Men: N/A

What has been the role of government agencies in assisting the community during the last period of severe food shortages or famine?

Women: assistance for one year, last year, July to June. Receive one kilo of grain every three months, although only enough for a maximum of 15 days.

Men: The wereda council has given relief in 1998. The health clinic in the kebele gives first aid to people.

Anything else?

Women: not asked.

Men: 1. The current problem, because of the absence of the bilg rain, is that people are consuming their seeds. Time goes and households have to eat it. Some of the husbands are trying to leave the area looking for off-farm income. Wives and children are under serious problem without food. Some of them are trying to dissolve marriage because of desertion. But the husbands are gone looking for work.

2. There are really vulnerable households with nothing to eat. Unless imminent relief, these people will die in their villages.

3. This area in the past was fertile. The environment was exciting in every respect. Nowadays not only people but the environment is highly degraded. Because of overpopulation, even under normal conditions, they doubt it will suffice. We think we may need to shift to nonfarm activities, such as factory work.

4. The problem of pest and plant diseases. They have told the MOA a number of times. Our crop is under serious threat. The response is that there is no appropriate type of insecticide. If possible, if this study could make ways to look to appropriate help. A boring worm affects beans, starts at roots, cuts them. It is new for the area.

Additional notes by Peter Castro, accompanied by Degafa, the kebele chairman, and other community members, written while visiting:

Getting water is a serious problem. It can take about two hours for the women in this family to fetch water. The nearby water point keeps drying.

Visit to a nearby pond and a broken well. The well worked only for three months. It has been broken for four years now. The water from the nearby pond is not potable. They requested to the water development ministry to repair it. [Question: Why has it taken so long?]: The road is the problem. Their machine which digs deep well cannot make it because of the poor condition.

Visit to the local health clinic. It reportedly doesn't contain sufficient medicine or personnel.

APPENDIX 3: WEREDA DESSIE ZUREYA, KEBELE 21

Draft: March 13, 1999

BASIS/GREATER HORN OF AFRICA PROGRAM/IDR

**GUIDELINE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS**

Date: March 15, 1999

Enumerator: Degafa

Agroecological Zone: Dega

Name of Wereda: Dessie Zurie

Name of Kebele: Number 21

Other names for the community: Tabasit Tamusagola

Longitude _____ *Latitude* _____

Interview Respondents

Number of Respondents: 3

Position of Respondents

Kebele official: 3, chairman, security head, economy section head

Gender of Respondents:

Males: 3

I. Community Checklist

1. *Estimated population:* 7,000

2. *Number of households:* 1,500

3. *Number of female-headed household:* 50

4. *Ethnic Groups*

Amhara: As a proportion of population: 100%

5. *Distance from all-weather road:* along

6. *Distance from seasonal road:* along

7. *Distance from motorized transport:* along

8. *Distance from Woreda headquarters:* 31 km

9. *Distance from nearest bank:* 31 km

10. *Number of health clinics:* 1

11. *Number of retail shops:* 0

12. *Number of schools:* 1 (primary school)

13. *Number of churches and mosques:* 1 church, 1 major mosque with five branches

14. *Does this kebele have a daily or weekly market?* Yes, weekly.

15. *Distance from main daily market used by kebele residents:* 31

16. Distance from main weekly market? 0 km

17. What are the main means of transporting goods in this kebele? Rank

1. 1 Walking
2. 2 Donkey
3. 3 Motor vehicles
4. Other

18. What proportion of local households use vehicles for transporting goods? Very few

19. What financial institutions such as banks or organizations that provide credit exist in your area?

Amhara Rural Credit

19a. What is the average size of household landholding in this kebele? 4 timad

19b. What is the range in size of household landholding in this kebele?

1. Largest : 5 timad
2. Smallest : 2 timad

19c. What number of households are landless in this kebele? 250 heads

19d. What number of households use purchased inputs such as improved seeds and fertilizers?
Nil

19e. What number of households make use of farm credit? 73 households

20. What number of households are actively involved with agricultural extension? Nil

21. Do community associations exist in your area? Yes

22. If yes, what associations and what do they do?

1. Kire Activity: funeral association
2. Ider Activity: funeral association

23. What proportion of households belong to such groups? Almost all

24. Do NGOs exist in your area? No

25. If yes, what organizations and what do they do?

N/A

26. What proportion of households participate in NGOs? N/A

27. Have any of these community associations or NGOs assisted households in meeting food shortages in the past 10 years? N/A

28. *If so, list the associations or NGOs and rank them according to their local importance in helping to meet food shortages?* N/A

29. *What government agencies operate in your kebele?*

1. Min of Ag. _____ Activity: veterinary service, terracing, seed raising, small-scale irrigation, extension service, developing water points
2. Min of Health Activity: health services, vaccination, health education
3. Amhara Rural Credit Association Activity: offers credit

No number 30

II. Natural Resources Access and Use

31. *What are the most important natural resources to the local population?*

- Forests or wooded lands
- Communal pasture
- Rivers [“commonly used”]
- Clay
- Wildlife

no 32-36

III. Kebele Demographic Change

37. *Has the population increased, stayed the same or decreased during the past 10 years?*

Increased

38. *Why has the population changed [or not changed] during the past 10 years? Rank*

- 1 Natural increase
- 2 People moving into the community (Resettlers)

39. *Have the number of people moving into the community increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years?* Increased

40. *What are the reasons for that pattern of population movement?*

1. Resettlers during previous government have returned to their birth place

41. *Have the number of people moving out of the community increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years?* Increased

42. *What are the reasons for that pattern of population movement?*

Because of the problem of drought some people migrated out the area.

IV. Kebele Food Security

43. *Are there any seasons or times of the year when food shortages are experienced by a large number of families?*

Yes. Food shortage has been a serious problem during the last five years in this area.

44. *If yes, when do such times occur?*

Yekatit (February) to Sene (July). This year the food shortage is all year round.

45. *List years or dates during the last 10 years when crop failure or threat of hunger was a widespread concern in this kebele? What was the cause (or causes)?*

1987 through 1991 (Ethiopian calendar). Causes for all: drought, frost, pest, and disease.

46. *What type of food aid program operated in the community during the most recent time of widespread hunger or famine?*

Government food relief (DPPC) for 1989 E.C. to 1991 E.C., No other NGOs or organizations.

47. *What type and amount of outside assistance was received by individual households at that time?*

Households were selected depending on the extent of food shortage they encountered. Grains (wheat, maize) and cooking oil were distributed. Rate of offer was 12.5 kg per member. Household selection was done by community officials and members.

48. *Was it different from food aid received during the last famine different than during other famine years? Yes*

49. *If yes, in what ways did it differ? (Skip if not applicable)*

No relief aid was given to this area during Derg regime. No relief aid even during the 1984/85 famine.

50. *What sorts of families are the first to be vulnerable to famine? Rank*

1. 3 Poor female-headed households
2. 5 Female-headed households
3. 1 The poor
4. 2 The landless
5. 4 The elderly
6. x Families with many children
7. x Families without oxen
8. x Families without livestock
- x All families

no 51

52. *Are organized efforts are being done within the kebele to enhance the nutritional status of children? No. The only assistance in the area is only in terms of health.*

53. *If yes, who are the sponsors and what are their activities? N/A*

54. *What are the biggest threats to food security in this kebele? (Rank them)*

1989 E.C. (3), 1990 E.C. (2) 1991 E.C. (1) (?)

55. *What do you think could be done to reduce the prevalence of hunger in the kebele?*

#1 Give relief food minimize the number of deaths (priority).

#2 Rural development activities should be introduced into the area, so as to minimize the environmental and socioeconomic problems.

Additional remarks:

Introduction of off-farm employment to people.

Strengthening rural credit program and introducing agricultural extension to the area.

APPENDIX 4: WEREDA DESSIE ZUREYA, KEBELE 21
DRAFT
BASIS/GREATER HORN OF AFRICA PROGRAM/IDR

GUIDELINE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS

Date: March 15, 1999

Enumerator: Yared and P. Castro (men) Degafa (women)

Agroecological Zone: dega

Name of Woreda: Dessie Zurie

Name of Kebele: Number 21

Other names for the community: Tebaset (note by Degafa: "There was a 'kosso' tree burnt by thunder and the name tabasit originates from that.")

Longitude _____ Latitude _____

Interview Respondents:

Number and gender of respondents:

Males: 8__ages: 27, 30, 34, 35, 35, 38, 53, 67

Females: 9__ages: 20, 21, 21, 22, 23, 23, 35, 45, 50

Agriculture

What field crops are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood:

Women: #1: barley (identified "white" and "black" barley); #2: horse beans (women);

Men: #1: barley; #2 beans; #3 lentils. Also listed peas and "anga"

What perennial field crops are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood:

Women: eucalyptus.

Men: eucalyptus; juniper ("only one or two of the group grows it")

What garden vegetables are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood

Women: #1: cabbage; #2 garlic. Also listed potato.

Men: #1: kale; Also listed potato, onion, garlic.

Are there crops exclusively grown by men?

Women: No.

Men: Not asked

Are there crops exclusively grown by women?

Women: Yes, cabbage.

Men: Yes, kale.

What crops are especially important as a source of cash income? Please rank.

Women: #1 eucalyptus; cabbage ("sometimes")

Men: #1 barley (“main staple because of altitude”), #2 beans; #3 lentils; eucalyptus. Noted: “Frost and hailstones sometimes hurt the crop.”

Is there a time of year when bartering is especially important? What is bartered? For what purpose? What crops are especially bartered by women? Does bartering take place with people from other communities? If so, when and with whom?

Women: Yes. Exchange of barley crops: white with black barley. They exchange the crops for different growing times. There are three times for planting: belg (major), meher (second), ginbote(?) (third).

Men: They barter barley for beans from the lowlands at the ratio of 4 kilo to 1 kilo (because barley has so much shaft). They also barter to get seeds for planting. Households will exchange barley and beans. No special crops exchanged by women.

Has the average household’s farm output increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years?

Women: Decreased.

Men: Decreasing since 1984-85. One farmer said plots that used to yield 40-50 sacks now yield 3-4, especially in the last three to four years the yields have gone down.

What are the three most important reasons for this pattern of household farm production over the past 10 years? (Ask them to prioritize their order)

Women: drought, pest, land scarcity.

Men: frost (“It’s the frost the past two years that has destroyed”), hailstones, pests (worms), population increase so that the land is over-utilized and exhausted.

LAND

How do people get access to crop land in this community?(After listing, ask them to rank their choices in order of importance in determining overall local access to land)

Women: #1 sharecropping; #2 inheritance. No (recent?) land redistribution has occurred.

Men: #1 land redistribution (It took place 11 years ago. People got “200m² to grow barley;” through repeated cultivation the land gets exhausted, that’s why yields are low); #2 sharecropping (“minimal”); inheritance (“stay on own household’s land”).

How do people get access to pasture land in this community? (After listing, ask them to rank their choices in order of importance in determining overall local access to land)

Women: #1: inheritance, #2: sale

Men: land redistribution; communal pasture but land scarcity.

What kind of land transactions are taking place in this area? Type of transaction? Who gives land? Who gets land? Rates?

Women: sharecropping; those with no seeds, no oxen, aged and ill persons give land. Those owning seeds, oxen and with adequate labour get land. Half share rate.

Men: sharecropping; elderly, orphans, oxen-less, seedless people give up land; those with oxen and seed get land. Half shares.

How have land transactions changed since the last land redistribution?

Probe: For example, are land transactions increasing, decreasing, or staying the same as in the past? Are there changes in the types of transactions? Rates? Types of farmers? Type of land?

Women: No change in most cases.

Men: The last land redistribution was in 1981 [Ethiopian year], about 10 years ago.

Sharecropping has increased since then because of problems with poor crop performance and lack of seed. Especially in the last few years, much land has been left fallow because people lacked seed and no one was able to rent it. [*Question: Did everyone get 200 meters of farmland?*]: Everyone. It was the same for everyone.

What was the impact of the last land redistribution on farmers in your community?

Probe: What was its economic impact on different types of farmers? How did it affect land scarcity? What was its impact on landless households? What was its impact on female-headed households? How did it affect the inequality in landholding?

Women: No redistribution.

Men: [*One farmer's case*]: He was allocated land eight to ten years ago on the basis of a two-person family but now he has eight family members, yet he has not received more land.

Resettlers and farmer-soldiers came back, but haven't received land. They are sitting in their parents' household. [Another says]: Some redistribution of land happened seven years ago, when soldiers and resettlers received a minimal amount of land, 10x10 plots.

The impact – the landless received land, a benefit. Those landless are able to get some production, some yield. But the land has not been enough. The crop performance has been declining since 1977 [Ethiopian year?].

The land redistribution made everyone more equal. Everyone reduced.

People have been allocated small pieces of land, not enough for the family. The [older] children are forced into migration.

Regarding female headed households. Wives, married women, got their own land. But the last land reform took away their allocation, which was given to other households. Female headed household got just the same [as everyone else] but often lacked labor, but now much poorer than before.

What are the major constraints concerning land that people face in raising crops and livestock?

(After listing, ask them to rank their top three choices in order of priority)

Women: land scarcity for farmland and pasture, poor land quality, eroded or exhausted land, unequal land holding, land fragmentation, topography, rainfall problems.

Men: land scarcity for farmland and pasture; eroded/exhausted land, topography (high slopes), water flow (runoff), lack of irrigable land, frost, hail storms during the long rains.

Water

What are the major constraints concerning water faced by local people in raising crops and livestock? (rank in order of priority)

Women: #1 water supply is too distant, #2 lack of irrigation, #3 lack of water for livestock

Men: lack of water for irrigation, lack of water for domestic use, supplies are too distant and drying up. "Keep digging for water and it keeps drying up."

Communal Resources

What communal resources are used by kebele members? How is access to communal resources governed or determined? How is usage of communal resources managed?

Women: Communal grassland. Protected by PA (MOA). Distribution of the grass in the fall. They sell it; mainly used for roof thatching.

Men: “Not much.” There are government trees that they are restricted from using. [*Q: Can you graze there?*]: No. [*Q: What happens if you do?*]: You get fined.

Labor

How do households obtain labor for farming or keeping livestock?

Women: #1 use own household; #2 family members help each other. Before [current difficulties], five years ago there were occasions when labor was hired during peak periods by a few households.

Men: own labor.

How have the ways of obtaining labor for farming changed in the past 10 years?

Women: Labor hiring was there five years ago but nowadays people of the area out-migrate to other areas.

Men: Reciprocal labor was practiced years ago but they no longer do so. Because of land scarcity, there is no need for it, their own labor is adequate. There is a kind of hiring for the whole year. One will work for another family, eat with them, and get paid 115 birr for clothes and so on.

What proportion of households engage in reciprocal labor?

Women: There was *wenfel* before five years. But currently no such kinds of cooperation exist. The reason is that no labour shortage prevails.

Men: None.

Why is reciprocal labor useful?

Women: To plant and to harvest crops in a timely manner

Men: N/A.

What constraints, if any, exist in this kebele regarding labor for agricultural activities?

Women: No shortage in the proper sense. Few people cannot perform their work since they are weak which is attributed to the shortage of food.

Men: Under- and unemployment are the problems. The only option is to migrate.

Inputs

What are the major constraints concerning inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizer, and herbicides faced by people in raising crops and livestock? Rank

Women: Lack of knowledge about modern inputs. As a result, nobody used them before. The MOA tried to supply this year for the *belg* but because of delay of *belg* rain they were not utilize.

Men: Lack of money to purchase inputs. Lack of rainfall, or too much rainfall. Their use is too risky. [*Question: Did the inputs perform adequately?*]: They performed poorly, the same yield or lower [with their use]. [*Q: Adequate information about their use?*]: They received training.

How do households in this community obtain farm inputs such as seed and fertilizer? Rank choices according to frequency of use by local households:

Women: N/A

Men: You can buy them through the MOA.

What government extension programs are operating in this kebele? How do farmers get involved in these programs? What proportion of farmers are involved? What kind of farmers are involved? What has been the impact of these programs on farmers?

Women: No extension program implemented in the area.

Men: MOA programs: fertilizer, terracing, credit, chicken (poultry), afforestation (tree planting), herbicides, farmer training/education. [*Q: How do they get involved in them?*]: There is a permanent employee in the locality who is in charge. She calls them here [to the place where the interview is taking place]. [*Q: Benefits?*]: Terracing saves much of the soil. Tree planting: we are able to plant but it too early to tell. Mobilize people to dig water points and to construct roads.

Credit

How available is credit for agricultural production?

Women: Credit through government institution/Amhara credit organization. There was Iqub when the area was better in terms of agricultural production. The credit organization gives credit when it makes sure that an individual has the capacity to repay.

Men: About 30 farmers receive credit. There is a great demand for it, but they haven't received it. They want it to breed sheep.

What is the preferred source for farm credit? Where do households actually get credit? (Formal sources, community sources [e.g., Equb & Eder], and other). Why?

Women: Government – bank.

Men: Formerly they had equb before 84-85, but no longer. Besides the MOA there is another credit association, mainly from the government, that also gave loans to 60 households this year. They were selected, then given 300-500 birr, depending on their capability of use. The credit was for six months, seasonal credit, at 18% interest. This is their first experience with it.

What are the major constraints on obtaining capital or credit for farming?

Women: The organizations do not want to offer credit to the destitute. The community's economic situation is not promising to receive credit. [They could] work in some activities if credit is available.

Men: Small budget [for credit], only a few households can get it. Two issues: given only for six months, too short to get anything out of it. Crop performance is low, can't even breed enough sheep. Might be given money now, but not enough time, and the productive capacity is not enough. Purpose of credit... told to use productively. The only avenues in this area are sheep and crop production, but not yielding.

Non-Agricultural and Off-farm Income Earning

What types of non-agricultural/off-farming earnings activities do households do your in kebele?

Probe: Migrant labor? Urban/peri-urban labor? Handicrafts? Food-for-work? Brewing, etc.?

Rank in order of importance

Women: Brewing, petty trading, selling of food, food shops, migrant labor.

Men: Migrant labor, grain trading but costs are high but not making enough.

What types of non-agricultural/off-farming earnings activities are important to women in this kebele? Rank

Women: Brewing, selling of food stuffs.

Men: N/A

What has been the significance of non-agricultural/off-farm income activities during periods of severe food shortage?

Women: Here activities are not very productive in the area during food shortage because the people of the community have low purchasing power. Labour migration is in fact very important in terms of sustaining some households.

Men: Migrant labor has had no contribution. People go, come back with nothing except disease.

What changes have occurred in the involvement (availability of & participation in) non-agricultural and off-farm activities?

Women: N/A

Men: Formerly people didn't want to leave, but because of population [pressures] people going. [*Man gives himself as an example*]: Seven of us went to Jima coffee growing area but only two of us returned. The other five died of malaria.

Marketing

Where do local households buy sugar, salt and other processed foods? Rank

Women: #1 In nearby Tabasit market, Tuesday weekly; #2 shops within the kebele; at nearest market center.

Men: Dessie market, local markets, small ones. [*Question: what purpose does each serve?*]: If you are running out of grain, you will go to Dessie to buy some. But for small commodities, you'll go to local markets.

How frequently do agricultural traders visit this area?

Women: Every week on Tuesdays.

Men: Traders come to their local market to sell grain, not to buy. They come from Dessie.

How frequently do livestock traders visit this area?

Women: Yes, every week, traders of small animals (sheep, goats, chickens).

Men: Livestock traders come [for about six hours on market day?]

How frequently do you exchange with communities from other areas?

Probe: What kind of exchanges? What areas? What seasons or times?

Women: Exchange takes place on market days. Exchanges are for barley, maize, teff, sorghum, cabbage, carrot, sugar cane. Sources: surrounding areas, Dessie, Chaffa (a village), Tema (?) area.

Men: Only barter mentioned previously. Times – July when harvest from short rains.

What are the major transport constraints faced by local households in marketing their goods?

Rank

Women: #1 bad roads during the wet season; #2 There is no public or private transport that is particularly assigned to the community. So one has to pay the [high] price for distant place, e.g., 15 birr per trip.

Men: Lack of vehicles, lack of roads to markets, high cost of hired transport – 10 birr, very expensive, to Dessie; lack of pack animals. Before each family had at least one donkey each, now many have been sold off.

Food Security

What coping practices have been important in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage or famine?

Probe: Practices such as livestock sales, off-farm employment, or reduction of consumption.

Women: Sale of livestock, reduction of consumption, petty trading, off-farm employment, migration to other areas, receive food relief from government (DPPC).

Men: Livestock sales, off-farm employment, especially migration.

How have these food shortage coping practices changed in your lifetime?

Women: It seems that the coping mechanisms have been exhausted.

Men: In the past four years the prices of livestock have declined. Before they used to get a decent price. The main reason is the declining conditions of livestock. Everyone wants to sell now because production is down.

When was the most recent food shortage?

Women: This year (1999), with in the last five years [the past five years have been bad?]

Men: The last four years have been bad, [comparable or worse than] 1984-85.

What were its major impacts or effects on kebele members?

Women: Death of people, migration out of the area, poverty.

Men: Losing livestock capital; nutritional impact – food consumption is much reduced. We don't eat three times a day, now only once, sometimes less.

During the most recent food shortage, how did the market react ?

Probe: Changes in supply of food, livestock sales, price fluctuation, etc.?

Women: The price of crops – before five years, under normal conditions got 50 birr/quintal, nowadays it is 180 birr/quintal. The price of livestock – ox used to cost 800 birr, nowadays they are not in good condition, only 200 birr.

Men: Food shortage leads to livestock sales, causing prices to fall. Mainly there has been an escalation in grain market prices (for purchases). 100 kg of maize used to cost 60 birr, now it is 170 birr in Dessie. [Man states]: There is a problem with livestock feed which has to do with the high altitude. In some places it takes only 15 days for grass to grow, but here it takes three to four months.

How did this compare to previous times of food shortage in your lifetime?

Women: In the 1984/85 drought and famine – that time the intervention from the government and NGOs was better. Of nowadays—the intervention is not so much and the problem is of the cumulative [impact] of about five years.

Men: #1: Before 1984-85, merchants came to buy grain, now they don't bother; #2 some commodities are no longer available in local markets e.g., gas, used clothes, because of low demand; #3 clothes – because of [low incomes, supply problems], becoming harder to get access to clothes, so people are even wearing clothes made from old sacks.

Community Relations

What sorts of economic assistance and exchanges often occur between people are related? Who are neighbors? Who are community members?

Women: Economic assistance and exchange between people, neighbors as community members is there.

Men: N/A

How have kinship or community relations helped individual households survive recent periods of severe food shortage or famine?

Women: Relations are loose nowadays as a period of problems than the past.

Men: #1 they lend donkeys to kin for transporting grain; #2 grain loans; #3 loan clothes because of the shortage of clothes; #4 food security – children cannot go to school, they can finish elementary school here but cannot go on to secondary school because they lack food [and other resources?], so many children forced to stop going.

How did such practices compare with kin- and community assistance and exchanges in the past? If different, how and why?

Women: N/A

Men: N/A

Community-Based Associations, NGOs, and Government Services

What types of community-based organizations (CBOs) operate in the community?

Women: Ider, mehabar (religious), senbate (religious)

Men: Kire (funeral association)

Is membership in such CBOs accessible to any farmer who wants to join? If not, why not?

Women: Both of them are open to everybody in the community according to his wish, capacity and religious affiliation.

Men: Everyone.

How were the activities, the participation, and other facets of CBOs affected by recent periods of severe food shortages?

Women: It influenced to some extent but giving up the membership has not been so much.

Men: Some not able to contribute because of the food situation but the association still paid out.

What role, if any, do these CBOs play in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage?

Women: Ider offers assistance to few households.

Men: None.

What kind of changes – for example, activities and participation -- are CBOs experiencing?

Women: N/A

Men: N/A

What types of NGOs operate in the community?

Women: none.

Men: none.

What role, if any, do these NGOs play in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage?

Women: N/A

Men: N/A

What has been the role of government agencies in assisting the community during the last period of severe food shortages or famine?

Women: Relief food distribution by DPPC (wereda council) for a small proportion of households; credit for very few households.

Men: Last year assistance was given to 1,500 individuals, three times assisted by food for work. It took place every three to four months. First time: 30 kg; 2nd time 40 kg., 3rd time 50 kg. Kinds of household: elderly, large family, female headed, orphans. More specifically, elderly females who lived by themselves. [They did the work of] tree seedling planting, terracing. [Question: what if they couldn't work?]: They were still assisted.

Anything else?

Women: Resettler information – came back from Gambella. Reason for coming back We were taken there forcefully and with the change of government we got an opportunity to come back. [Now] A problem of assimilation.

Men: #1 Many people able to work but no employment. Constrained because they can't work. No intervention. They desire work from government and NGOs.

#2 Community relations aspects – in former times people helped, now people are not willing to lend pack animals or lend grain except when somebody purchases grain from the market, might loan on condition that its repaid within a week.

#3 Emphasized first point about relief, only helps one to two years. If we could only get employment, that's what will save this country, with its increasing population.

#4 [There is] no longer a sustainable livelihood system through agriculture.

#5 [A man asks]: This area has not received attention from government, investors, and he does not understand why? For example, for road construction or business creation. Why? He does not understand. Why isn't this the case?

#6 Housing – for thatch roofing – use shaft from barley [but in short supply]. Another major problem, hopes they could be provided with cheap tin roofs instead of thatch.

#7 Employment creation – say it will be difficult, but if it is created in urban areas, and they are invited somehow by an organization to participate. He worked in Addis for a while but the money he brought was not enough.

Appendix 5: "Final" Key Informant Schedule of Questions⁹

**BASIS/GREATER HORN OF AFRICA PROGRAM/IDR
GUIDELINE FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS**

Date: _____
Enumerator: _____
Agroecological Zone: _____
Name of Woreda: _____
Kebele number: _____
Other names for the community _____
Longitude _____ Latitude _____

Interview Respondents:
Record the number and official positions of Respondents

Gender of Respondents (record number):

Males: _____

Females: _____

I. Community Checklist

1. Area of kebele 1. _____ km
2. Estimated population 2. _____
3. Number of households 3. _____
4. Number of female-headed households 4. _____

5. Religious Groups as a percentage of the population:
 1. Muslim _____
 2. Christian _____
 3. Other (specify) _____

6. Ethnic Groups as a percentage of the population:
 1. Amhare _____
 2. Oromo _____
 3. Tigrie _____
 4. Other (specify) _____

7. Distance from all-weather road 7. _____ km
8. Distance from seasonal road 8. _____ km
9. Distance from motorized transport 9. _____ km
10. Distance from Woreda headquarters 10. _____ km
11. Distance from nearest bank 11. _____ km
12. Number of health clinics 12. _____
13. Number of retail shops 13. _____

⁹ The spacing has been condensed in this version.

14. Number of schools 14. _____
15. Number of churches and mosques 15. _____
16. Does this kebele have a daily or weekly market?
1. Daily
 2. Weekly
 3. No
 4. Other _____
17. Distance from main daily market used by kebele residents 17. _____ km
18. Distance from main weekly market? 18. _____ km
19. What are the main means of transporting goods in this kebele?
(Rank choices in order of priority)
1. _____ Walking rank _____
 2. _____ Pack animals rank _____
 3. _____ Motor vehicles rank _____
 4. _____ Other _____ rank _____
20. What proportion of local households use vehicles for transporting goods? 20. _____
21. What financial institutions such as banks or organizations that provide credit exist in your area? Rank their importance:
1. _____ rank _____
 2. _____ rank _____
 3. _____ rank _____
 4. _____ rank _____
22. What is the average size of household landholding in this kebele?
23. What is the range in size of household landholdings in this kebele?
1. Largest _____
 2. Smallest _____
24. How many households are landless in this kebele?
25. How many households use purchased inputs such as improved seeds and fertilizers?
26. How many households make use of farm credit?
27. How many households are actively involved with agricultural extension?
28. Do community associations exist in your area?
1. Yes
 2. No

29. If yes, what associations and what do they do?

1. _____ Activity: _____
2. _____ Activity: _____
3. _____ Activity: _____
4. _____ Activity: _____
5. _____ Activity: _____
6. _____ Activity: _____
7. _____ Activity: _____

30. How many households belong to such groups?

31. Do NGOs exist in your area?

1. Yes
2. No

32. If yes, what organizations and what do they do?

1. _____ Activity: _____
2. _____ Activity: _____
3. _____ Activity: _____
4. _____ Activity: _____
5. _____ Activity: _____

33. How many households are assisted by NGOs?

34. Have any of these associations or NGOs assist households in meeting food shortages in the past 10 years?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Do not know

35. If so, list the associations or NGOS and rank them according to their local importance in helping to meet food shortages?

1. _____ rank _____
2. _____ rank _____
3. _____ rank _____
4. _____ rank _____

36. What government agencies operate in your kebele?

1. _____ Activity: _____
2. _____ Activity: _____
3. _____ Activity: _____
4. _____ Activity: _____
5. _____ Activity: _____
6. _____ Activity: _____
7. _____ Activity: _____

37. What are the most important communal resources to the local population?

1. ___ Forests or wooded land
2. ___ Wetlands
3. ___ Communal pasture
4. ___ Rivers and lakes
5. ___ Clay, iron, or other minerals
6. ___ Wildlife
7. ___ Wild foods from forest, wetlands, etc.
8. ___ Other: _____

38. Has there been land redistribution in this kebele?

1. Yes
2. No

39. Who received land?

1. ___ Landless People
2. ___ Returnees from resettlement
3. ___ Ex-Soldiers
4. ___ Land-poor households
5. ___ Female-headed households
6. ___ Others (specify) _____

II. Kibele Demographic Change

40. Has the population increased, stayed the same or decreased during the past 10 years?

1. Increased
2. Stayed the same
3. Decreased

41. Why has the population changed [or not changed] during the past 10 years?

1. ___ Natural increase
2. ___ Return of resettled people
3. ___ Other people moving into the community (specify) _____
4. ___ Increased mortality
5. ___ People moved out due to resettlement
6. ___ People moved out seeking employment elsewhere
7. ___ People moved out for other reasons (specify) _____
8. ___ Other: _____

42. Have the number of people moving into the community increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years?

1. Increased
2. Stayed the same
3. Decreased

43. What are the reasons for that pattern of population movement?

44. Have the number of people moving out of the community increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years?

1. Increased
2. Stayed the same
3. Decreased

45. What are the reasons for that pattern of population movement?

III. Kebele Food Security

46. Are there any seasons or times of the year when food shortages are experienced by a large number of families?

1. Yes
2. No

47. If yes, when do such times of hunger occur?

48. List years or dates during the last 10 years when crop failure or threat of hunger was a widespread concern in this kebele? What was the cause (or causes)?

1. _____ Cause/s _____
2. _____ Cause/s _____
3. _____ Cause/s _____
4. _____ Cause/s _____
5. _____ Cause/s _____
6. _____ Cause/s _____

49. What type of food aid program operated in the community during the most recent time of widespread hunger or famine?

50. What type and amount of outside assistance was received by individual households at that time?

51. Was the food aid received during the last famine different than during other famine years?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Do not know

52. If yes, in what ways did it differ?

53. What sorts of families are first to be vulnerable to famine?

1. ___ Poor female-headed households
2. ___ Female-headed households
3. ___ The poor
4. ___ The landless
5. ___ The elderly
6. ___ Families with many children
7. ___ Families without oxen
8. ___ Families without livestock
9. ___ Land-poor families
10. ___ Families without irrigation
11. ___ Families living in remote areas
12. ___ Families with difficult access to markets
13. ___ All families
14. ___ Other (specify) _____

54. Are organized efforts are being done within the kebele to enhance the nutritional status of children?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Do not know.

55. If yes, who are the sponsors and what are their activities?

1. Agency _____ Activity _____
2. Agency _____ Activity _____
3. Agency _____ Activity _____

56. What are the biggest threats to food security in this kebele?

57. What do you think could be done to reduce the prevalence of hunger in the kebele?

58. Do you have anything else to tell us about the problems of this kebele? (Continuing writing on back of page if necessary)

Appendix 6: “Final” Focus Group Interview Schedule¹⁰

BASIS/GREATER HORN OF AFRICA PROGRAM/IDR

**GUIDELINE FOR FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS**

Date: _____
Enumerator: _____
Agroecological Zone: _____
Name of Wereda: _____
Kebele Number: _____
Other names for the community _____
Longitude _____ Latitude _____

Interview Respondents:

Number and gender of respondents:

Males: _____

Females: _____

List Ages of Respondents:

I. Agriculture

1. What field crops are grown in this Kebele? Rank the top three in terms of importance to local livelihood:

2. What perennial field crops are grown in this Kebele?

¹⁰ As mentioned earlier, this version of the focus group schedule differs slightly from the one contained in my April 1999 draft. The spacing in this schedule has been condensed.

3. What garden vegetables are grown in this Kebele? Rank their importance to local livelihood:

4. Are there crops exclusively grown by women? 4. _____

5. If yes, please list:

6. Do people practice double cropping? If so, which crop season is most important in terms of total output?

7. Do people practice irrigation? How much do people benefit from it?

8. What crops are especially important as a source of cash income? Please rank.

9. Do you barter? What is bartered? Why? Is there a time of year when bartering is especially important? Does bartering take place with people from other communities? If so, when and with whom? What crops do women especially barter?

10. Has the average household's farm output increased, stayed the same, or decreased during the past 10 years? Why?

II. Land

11. How do people get access to cropland in this community?

- 1. _____ Inheritance
- 2. _____ Sale
- 3. _____ Land Redistribution
- 4. _____ Rental
- 5. _____ Sharecropping
- 6. _____ Borrowing from family member
- 7. _____ Communal lands
- 8. _____ Other _____

12. How do people get access to pasture land in this community?

- 1. _____ Inheritance
- 2. _____ Sale
- 3. _____ Land Redistribution
- 4. _____ Rental
- 5. _____ Sharecropping
- 6. _____ Borrowing from family member
- 7. _____ Government forests
- 8. _____ Communal lands
- 9. _____ Other _____

13. What kinds of land transactions take place in this area?

Type of transaction	Who gives land	Who gets land	Rates
---------------------	----------------	---------------	-------

14. How have land transactions changed since the last land redistribution?

Probe: For example, are land transactions increasing, decreasing, or staying the same as in the past? Are there changes in the types of transactions? Rates?

15. What was the impact of the last land redistribution on farmers in your community?

Probe: What was its economic impact on different types of farmers? How did it affect land scarcity? What was its impact on landless households? What was its impact on female-headed households?

16. What are the major constraints concerning land that people face? (Rank top three)?

III. Water

17. What are the major constraints concerning water faced by local people?

1. _____Lack of potable water
2. _____Lack of water for irrigation
3. _____Lack of access to water for livestock
4. _____Conflicts over access to water for irrigation
5. _____Conflicts over use of water among herders and others
6. _____Watering points or streams are drying up
7. _____Water supply is too distant
8. _____Lack of potable water
9. _____Other_____

IV. Communal Resources

18. What communal resources do kebele members use?

19. How is access to, and use of, each communal resource determined?

Resource Mode of Access/Usage_____

V. Labor

20. What problems, if any, exist in this kebele regarding labor for agricultural activities?

21. Does any hiring of labor for agriculture takes place? Who hires? Who seeks employment?

22. How have the ways of obtaining labor for farming changed in the past 10 years?

23. What proportion of households engage in reciprocal labor arrangements with other households?

24. Why is reciprocal labor useful?

VI. Inputs

25. Do people use inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, and herbicides?

- Probe: If not, why not?
If yes, what are the constraints?

26. How do households in this community obtain farm inputs such as seed and fertilizer?

27. What government extension programs are operating in this kebele? What kinds of farmers are involved? What has been the impact?

VII. Savings/Credit

28. For what purposes do households in your area save resources?

29. What sort of mechanisms do households use to save resources (e.g. Multi-years storage of grain, gudguad, fattening sheep, bank, hoarding of cash, community based associations and kin associations)?

30. What sorts of savings arrangements/contributions do CBOs or kin relations engage in your community?

31. What are the different sources of credit for agricultural activities?

32. What are the major constraints on obtaining credit from each of those sources?

33. What is farm credit specifically used for?

VIII. Non-Agricultural and Off-farm Income Earning

34. What types of non-agricultural/off-farming earnings activities do households do your in kebele?

Probe: Migrant labor? Urban work? Handicrafts? Food-for-work? Brewing, etc.?

35. What types of non-agricultural/off-farming earnings activities are important to women in this kebele?

36. How have non-agricultural/off-farm income activities help families during periods of severe food shortage?

37. What problems exist obtaining non-agricultural, off-farm income?

IX. Marketing

38. Where do local households buy food, kerosene and other items for their everyday needs?

1. ____ Shops within the kebele
2. ____ Kiosks within the kebele
3. ____ At nearest market centers
4. ____ In the kebele marketplace
5. ____ In nearby marketplaces
6. ____ Service cooperative shops
7. ____ Other _____

39. How frequently do agricultural traders visit this area?

40. How frequently do livestock traders visit this area?

41. What agricultural commodities do you get from other areas? From other agro-ecological zones?

[No question 42]

X. Food Security

43. When was the most recent severe food shortage?

44. What coping practices were helpful in surviving that and other periods of severe food shortage or famine?

Probe: Practices such as livestock sales, off-farm employment, or reduction of consumption.

45. How have these coping practices changed in your lifetime?

46. What have been the major impacts of severe food shortages on the community and its members?

47. During the most recent food shortage, how did the market react?

Probe: Changes in supply of food, livestock sales, price fluctuation, etc.?

48. How did this market reaction compare to previous times of food shortage in your lifetime?

XI. Community Relations

49. What sorts of economic assistance and exchanges often occur between people are related? Between neighbors? Between community members?

50. How have kinship or community relations helped individual households survive recent periods of severe food shortage or famine?

51. What changes have occurred in kin- and community assistance and exchanges in the past? If different, how and why?

XII. Community-Based Associations, NGOs, and Government Services

52. What types of community-based organizations (CBOs) operate in the community?

53. Is membership in such CBOs accessible to any farmer who wants to join? If not, why not?

54. How were the activities, the participation and other facets of CBOs affected by recent periods of severe food shortages?

55. What role, if any, do these CBOs play in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage?

56. What kind of changes – for example, activities and participation -- are CBOs experiencing?

57. What types of NGOs operate in the community?

58. What role, if any, do these NGOs play in helping households survive periods of severe food shortage?

59. How have government agencies assisted the community during the last period of severe food shortages or famine?

60. Do you have anything else to tell us about your community and its needs? (Continue writing on back of page if necessary).

Appendix 7
Alfonso Peter Castro
Itinerary and People Met in Ethiopia, March 5 to March 21, 1999

March 5-7, 1999

Traveled from Syracuse, New York, USA to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, via Washington, D.C. and Frankfurt, Germany.

March 8-11, 1999

Worked on research design with colleagues at the Institute for Development Research (IDR), Addis Ababa University:

Dr. Tegegne Gebre-Egziabher, Director
Dr. Yared Amare
Dr. Yigremew
Mr. Degafa

March 11-17, 1999

Field trip to Dessie, South Wollo Zone, via Debrasina, research team members:

Dr. Yared
Dr. Castro
Mr. Degafa
Mr. Tekala, Driver

March 12, 1999

Met and left letters of introduction with Zone official in Kemise.

Met with South Wollo Zone officials:

Mr. Selasie, Zone Vice-Chairman
Mr. Yosef Tsegaye, Food Security Officer

Met with Dessie Zureya Wereda officials:

Mr. Adem Hussein, Chairman

March 13, 1999

Final drafting of research instruments for pilot testing.

Met with Mr. Adem.

March 14, 1999

Visit to Kebele 32, focus group interviews with community members; key informant interview with local officials. Accompanied by:

Ms. Birtukan Sebsibie, Wereda Council Member

March 15, 1999

Visit to Kebele 21, focus group interviews with community members; key informant interview with local officials. Accompanied by:

Mr. Ayalew Akililu, Wereda Security Officer

March 16, 1999

Met with South Wollo Zone officials:

Mr. Selasie, Zone Vice-Chairman

Mr. Yosef Tsegaye, Food Security Officer

Met with Ministry of Planning Officials:

Mr. Bezalegne Mehammed, Economist, Physical Planning Section Head

Mr. Meleku Ambaw, Librarian

Met with Dessie Zureya Wereda officials:

Mr. Adem Hussein, Chairman

Mr. Ayalew Akililu, Wereda Security Officer

March 17, 1999

Travel day.

March 18, 1999

Final revision of research instrument by the research team at IDR, Addis Ababa University

March 19, 1999

Wrap-up meeting at IDR with Dr. Tegege, Dr. Yared, Dr. Yigremew, Dr. Castro, and Mr. Degafa.

March 20-21, 1999

Travel from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Syracuse, New York, USA via Frankfurt, Germany and Washington, D.C.

Late March-Early April 1999

Preparation of final report.