

# **Ethiopian Urban Studies**

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## **Kolfe Area**

## **Addis Ababa**

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**One of a series of six studies edited and produced by the Ethiopia Wellbeing in Developing Countries Research Programme, based at the University of Bath, UK, and financed by the Economics and Social Research Council, UK. The rural Village Studies II are updates of four of the 15 Village Studies I published in 1996 (Dinki, Korodegaga, Turufe Kecheme and Yetmen). The two Urban Studies I cover new sites in Addis Ababa and Shashemene.**

## *Foreword*

The reports in this series are outputs from the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) research programme organised and coordinated by the University of Bath, UK and financed by the Economic and Social Research Council, UK, between 2002 and 2007. Ethiopia is one of the four countries selected for the research.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the programme is to develop a conceptual and methodological framework for studying the social and cultural construction of wellbeing in developing country contexts, and thereby investigate linkages between quality of life, power and poverty in order to contribute to improving policy and practice.

WeD Ethiopia selected twenty rural and two urban sites for its WIDE<sup>2</sup> research. Community profiles for fifteen of the rural sites had been produced in 1995 and 1996 (WIDE1)<sup>3</sup> and five new sites were added in 2003, when further community level research was undertaken in the twenty sites (WIDE2), involving exploratory protocol-guided research during one month in July and August 2003 by teams composed of one female and one male researcher in each site.

Six sites were selected for the DEEP<sup>4</sup> research, including four of the rural sites and both urban sites.<sup>5</sup> In-depth fieldwork was carried out between July 2004 and November 2005 by teams composed of one female and one male researcher spending about three weeks of each month in their respective sites. The four rural sites were chosen from the two largest regions: Oromia and Amhara. In each region one of the selected sites was more remote (Korodegaga in Oromia and Dinki in Amhara), and the other closer to market and state influences (Turufe Kecheme in Oromia and Yetmen in Amhara). The urban sites, Kolfe in the capital city, Addis Ababa, and Arada in Kebele 08/09 of Shashemene, a business city in the south, were selected on the basis of the research team's interests in market areas, community-based organisations and urban-rural linkages. One of the rural sites, Turufe Kecheme, is close to Shashemene town.

Profiles are available for the following six sites:

### *Rural sites:*

**Dinki**, Ankober *Wereda*, North Shewa Zone, Amhara Region

**Korodegaga**, Dodota-Sire *Wereda*, Arssi Zone, Oromia Region

**Turufe Kecheme**, Shashemene *Wereda*, East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region

**Yetmen**, Enemay *Wereda*, East Gojjam Zone, Amhara Region

### *Urban sites:*

**Arada**, Kebele 08/09, Shashemene, East Shewa Zone, Oromia Region.

**Kolfe**, Kebele 10/11, Kolfe-Keranyo Kifle *Ketema*, Addis Ababa City Administration.

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<sup>1</sup> The other three countries are Bangladesh, Peru and Thailand.

<sup>2</sup> Wellbeing and Illbeing Dynamics in Ethiopia.

<sup>3</sup> The 15 Village Studies were produced by the Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford, UK and the Department of Sociology, Addis Ababa University and financed by the UK Overseas Development Administration and can be obtained from the web-site ([www.csae.ox.ac.uk](http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk))

<sup>4</sup> In-Depth Exploration of Ethiopian Poverty.

<sup>5</sup> Likewise the other countries in the WeD project selected a similar number of urban and rural sites.

The (DEEP) research involved a Resource and Needs Survey with 250 households followed by in-depth process research involving monthly community and household diaries with households differentiated by gender, wealth and size, life histories of children, adults and old people, and modules exploring thematic research topics including community institutions, elites and destitution, poverty dynamics, migration, intergeneration relations, collective action, and a quality of life survey. A research database has been produced including data at individual, household and community levels which is being used to produce a book and research papers.

The rural village studies were produced starting with the 1996 community profiles, which were constructed from a background paper based on secondary sources, rapid assessment material collected by site managers and enumerators involved in the three rounds of a household economic survey (the ERHS<sup>6</sup>), a field visit during one month by an anthropology student, a questionnaire completed by the enumerators at the end of the household survey and a community economic survey administered by the site managers.

The 1996 profiles were updated, and revised with a focus on the major research interests and approaches of the WeD programme. The new versions are largely the product of insights from the researchers who carried out intensive fieldwork in the sites over 16 months from mid 2004 to late 2005.

Many people participated in the construction of the profiles, the most important being the people in the villages who answered questions, raised issues we had not thought of and provided hospitality to our fieldworkers. The site managers, enumerators, and anthropologists involved in 1995 played a vital role. First drafts of the 1996 profiles were constructed by Etalem Melaku-Tjirongo and Joanne Moores, and backup in terms of translating, editing, word processing and map-making and was provided by Tina Barnard, Ziggy Bevan, Girma Getahun, Haile Redai, Sarah Smith, and Ruth Tadesse. Economist colleagues at Oxford (Shukri Ahmed, Stefan Dercon and Pramila Krishnan) and Addis Ababa (particularly Bereket Kebede, Getinet Astatke, and Mekonnen Tadesse) were influential in shaping our ideas, and the administration in the Economics Department at Addis Ababa University was extremely supportive.

The 2004-2006 research design benefited from the inter-disciplinary discussions and debates of the WeD research group in Bath, including anthropologists, economists, psychologists, and sociologists, and the research teams from Bangladesh, Thailand and Peru. A number of the core Bath team provided intellectual stimulus, advice and support, and several members collaborated in various aspects of the research design and/or visited Ethiopia including Allister McGregor, the director of the project, Ian Gough, Sarah White, Suzy Skevington, Bereket Kebede, Laura Camfield, Susan Johnson, Julie Newton, Andy McKay, Catherine Dom, Virginia Williamson, and Anne Yates. Logistical support was provided by Becky Lockley, Jane French, Diana Duckling, Emer Brangan, Teresa King, Mark Ellison and Jun Zhang.

The project benefited from discussions and collaborations with John Hoddinott, from the International Food Policy Research Institute, Marleen Dekker from the Free University in Amsterdam, Luc Christiaensen and Caterina Ruggeri-Laderch from the World Bank, Pramila Krishnan from Cambridge University, Stefan Dercon from Oxford University, Charles Schaefer from Valparaiso University, Nuala O'Brien and Kevin Kelly from Development Cooperation

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<sup>6</sup> The Ethiopian Rural Household Survey involves a panel survey carried out by the Economics Department of Addis Ababa University in collaboration with the Oxford Centre for the Study of African Economies in 1994 and the International Food Policy Institute in 2004.

Ireland, Simon Winetraube from the British Council and Claudia Fumo and Laure Beaufiles from the UK Department for International Development. A local NGO, PADET, and the Learning Centre provided office space for the project.

In Ethiopia the main members involved in the research design and management were Feleke Tadele, Yisak Tafere, Bethlehem Tekola, Solomon Tesfay, Ashebir Desalegn, and Theodros Wolde Giorgis. Members of Addis Ababa University Department of Sociology who took part in the project at various stages included Ayalew Gebre, Melese Getu, Derese Getachew and Asrat Ayalew (the last two of whom went for graduate studies to Bath). The project benefited from support from the Economics Department of Addis Ababa University particularly in carrying out the Resource and Needs Survey. The project also benefited from advice from a network of advisors from various disciplines who are too numerous to mention.

The following researchers took part in the 2004-2006 research in the six sites, although most of the drafting of the rural profiles was carried out by one female and one male researcher, generally those who spent longest in the site or were the last researchers involved, whose names are on the front of the profiles and are italicised in the list below. The urban profiles involved more researchers, with greater input from the field coordinator and editors.

**Arada:** Abebech Belayneh, Abraham Asha, Bethlehem Tekola, Demissie Gudisa, Habtamu Demille, Mahder Tesfu and Rahwa Mussie

**Dinki:** *Damtew Yirgu, Kiros Berhanu and Tsega Melesse*

**Kolfe:** Bethlehem Tekola, Demiye Tefalet, Eyob Mhreteab Rahwa Mussie, Tigist Tefera and Yisak Tafere

**Korodegaga:** *Aster Shibeshi, Tsega Melesse and Workneh Abebe;*

**Turufe Kecheme:** *Bizuayehu Ayele, Demissie Gudisa, Tsega Melesse and Yohannes Gezahegn*

**Yetmen:** *Agazi Tiemelisan, Asham Asazenew, Hiwot Atfraw, Kiros Berhanu, Leleena Aklilu and Lewoyehu Ayele*

Most of the editing, standardisations, formatting, improvement of the maps, photographs, seasonal calendars etc was carried out by Tom Lavers.

Further information about the Wed-Ethiopia project can be obtained from the web-site: [www.wed-ethiopia.org](http://www.wed-ethiopia.org). The Bath University WeD website [www.welldev.org.uk](http://www.welldev.org.uk) provides overall information about the project worldwide.

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# 1. Locating the Site in Space and Time

## *Geography*

Addis Ababa comprises 3.5 million people, which is about 60 percent of the total urban population of Ethiopia (2004). It was founded during the reign of Emperor Menelik II in 1886. A centrally located palace, encircled by a camp of different military officials and the ruling elites, characterised the structure and layout of early Addis Ababa. Under the Italian occupation the first city plan was designed in 1936 with defined functional and ethnically segregated zones for most parts of the city. The plan involved relocating over ten thousand native inhabitants from the central and eastern parts of the city to the western part of the city that was designated as a native quarter. Although the Italian colonisers began some reorganisation of the city, the Imperial Government of Ethiopia did not continue implementation of the master plan, which proposed extensive expropriation, and demolition of buildings as well as segregation of the local people.

In the post-Italian occupation period, Emperor Haile Selassie introduced a new master plan in 1956 commissioning an architect from England. Without the proper implementation of this plan, another master plan was prepared in 1959 with a focus on satellite towns, urban renewal programmes and an increased municipal tax base. However, the Imperial Government preferred to allocate lands primarily to landlords as rewards for their struggles against Italian occupation. According to the urban land survey of 1961, 1,700 landlords owned almost 58 percent of the total urban land, while approximately 25,000 people possessed only eight percent of the total urban land. During the Socialist *Derg* regime (1974 – 1991), the Addis Ababa city administrative structure was organised into three levels of structure consisting of six *Ketena* (zones), 28 *Kefitegna* (Highers) and 305 *Kebele*. In 2003, the administrative divisions were changed again and restructured into 10 *Kifle Ketema* literally “Town Divisions” or sub-city administrations and the number of *Kebele* was reduced from 305 to 100.

Kolfe is located in the western edge of the Ethiopian Capital, Addis Ababa. It is considered as one of the semi-peripheral parts of the city recognised for its informal business activities. According to the former Administrative Structure of Addis Ababa; the Kolfe area encompasses *Kebele* 9, 10 and 11 from *Woreda* 24 and *Kebele* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 from *Woreda* 25. Kolfe is included in the Kolfe-Keranio Sub-City Administration. According to the records of the sub-city, the total population of the sub-city was estimated at 150,000 in 2003. Geographically, the Kolfe area covers locations stretching from the Dutch Embassy to the General Wingate High School area. The General Wingate area in the north, the Mesalemiya area in the east and the Torr-Hayloch area in the south border Kolfe.

Bulecha and Akaki Rivers are the two perennial rivers flowing through the Kolfe area. The Fetenderash camp (a police training centre) and the grand Muslims’ cemetery are among the landmarks. The presence of the grand open auction market for second hand clothes used to make Kolfe one of the important nerve centres of the informal economic sector of the city. However, the auction market was moved to another adjacent *Kebele* at the end of 2004.

The ring road that was constructed in 2004 dissects Kolfe on the west and the east side. While local residents reported that they are happy about the reduction of traffic congestion in the area, the ring road was believed to have detached the neighbourhoods from their market places, schools, churches and clinics. The absence of footbridges has also forced local people to cross the highway and jump over restricted areas. This, in turn, has caused a high risk of traffic accidents.

The Kolfe area is subdivided into a number of neighbourhoods called *Sefer* and the residents identify the small physical units by different names. The most famous ones are:

- ***Atena Tera***, literally “***Timber area***”. It was famous for serving as a market place for timber and other wood products used for construction purposes. During the *Derg* regime, space was allotted to merchants who were evicted from other business areas to sell second hand clothes and this part of the market place was renamed *Efoyta*.
- ***Lekuanda*** Literally “butcher”, an area where meat is sold at low prices.
- ***Taiwan*** A market place for selling new and cheap clothes that are mostly imported through unofficial trade routes from countries as far away as Taiwan.
- ***Chereta*** Literally “auction”, it is a particular location near the final terminal of Bus No.18. It was famous for selling wholesale second hand clothes on an open auction market. Every day thousands of people were reportedly engaged in this business process. The Addis Ababa Municipality moved the Chereta market to the northwest tip of the city in December 2004 and a large number of small informal sector businesspersons and daily labourers have lost their jobs.
- ***Mekonnen Habtewold Forest*** was named after one of the Ministers of the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, who reportedly took over the water mill and the tannery that was owned and managed by the Italians during the occupation period (1935-1941). The local people recall this particular location as the place covered by thick forest. The area gradually lost its forest coverage. With the exception of a few vegetable growers, there are no thick forests in the area. This neighbourhood was renamed *Abba Jalie Sefer* during the *Derg* regime.
- ***Soramba***. This is a relatively detached neighborhood located on the edge of Kolfe, initially inhabited by people from the Sor-Gurage ethnic groups. They are predominately engaged in vegetable growing.

Following the restructuring process by the city administration in 2003, the research site, *Kebele* 10/11, was formed merging three *Kebele*; 4, 6 and 7. That enlarged the size of the new *Kebele* administration and its population, which is estimated to be 45,000. The *Kebele* was subsequently further subdivided into eight *mender*. Former *Mender* 2 and 3 become *mender* 1; *Mender* 4 and 5 were renamed as *Mender* 6; *Mender* 6 and 7 became *Mender* 7; and *Mender* 5, 11 and 12 changed into *Mender* 8. On the other hand *Mender* 1 and 2 of former *Kebele* 7 became *Mender* 2; whereas *Mender* 3 and 4 were renamed as *Mender* 4 of the new *Kebele* 10/11. Former *Mender* 1 and 2, and 3 and 4 of *Kebele* 6 are now merged into the newly established *Mender* 4 and 5 respectively. The newly formed *Mender* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 are locally called *Chereta*, *Lukanda*, *Dorze Sefer*, *Birhan Chora*, *Kuteba* and *Soramba* respectively.

### *Social Structure*

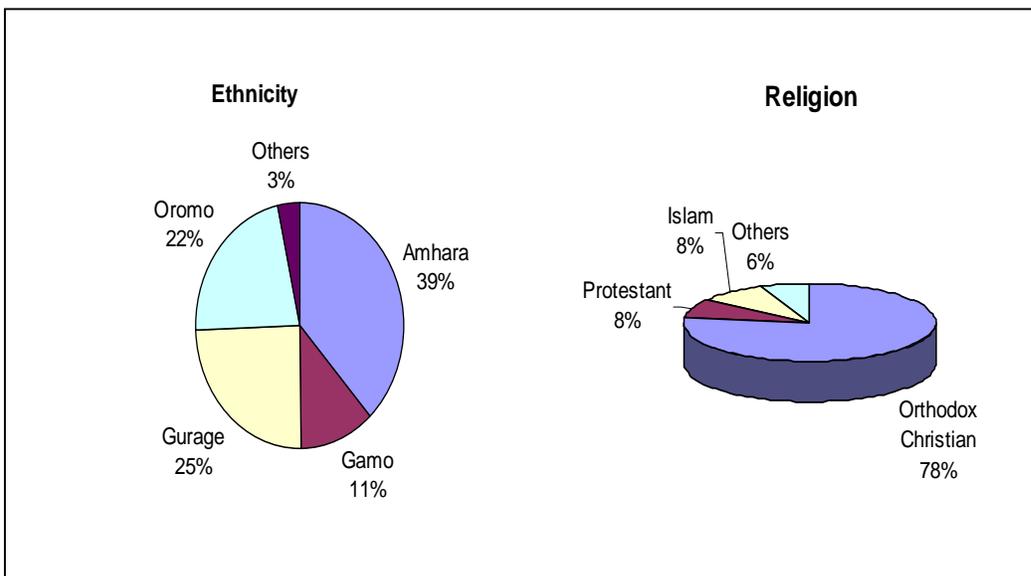
The social structure of the Kolfe area has been shaped by a combination of different factors including the history of settlement patterns, ethnicity and economic activity. There have been different waves of settlement in the Kolfe area. Until the Italian occupation in 1935 the area was reportedly covered by forest and there were few settlers. Records of a funeral association going back to 1917 provide the first written evidence. The Italians allegedly designated this area as a residential area for the local Ethiopian population and constructed a fence to separate them from the native population. The Italians destroyed local houses and moved local inhabitants from city centres of Arat Kilo, Kebena, Azage Badeg, Sengatera and Degach Wube neighbourhood. A few

of the *iddir* still bear the names of the areas from the centre of town from which they were relocated.

The next wave of settlement to the Kolfe area was reported around 1941 when the Imperial Government of Ethiopia began the construction of new settlements around the Arat Kilo and Siddist Kilo areas and re-located inhabitants from the Siddist Kilo and Kebena areas. Most of these local people were reportedly of Amhara and Gamo origin.

Following the establishment of the *Derg* regime in 1974 the Kolfe area began to serve as a business area and attracted a number of business people, mostly from the Gurage ethnic group. Kolfe is home to heterogeneous groups of people who migrated from almost all parts of the country. The four major ethnic groups who live in the area are Amhara, Gurage, Oromo and Gamo. The main religious groups are Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Protestants and Catholics (See figure 1).

Figure 1: Ethnicity and Religion in Kolfe community



Source: RANS, 2005

The complexity of the Kolfe social structure and the mixed settlement pattern is difficult to explain. However, it is possible to see some spatial-cultural structures of the settlement. The four neighbourhoods selected for this study may be characterised as follows:

- The relatively better-off people mostly live in an area locally known as *Birhan Chora Sefer*. They have private residences and are predominately traders or middle-level civil servants. Ethnically, the majority of the social groups living in this neighborhood are Gurage. They are either Muslims or Orthodox Christians by religion.
- The neighbourhood of *Soramba* reportedly began to be inhabited in 1930. Word of mouth has it that the *Soramba* (literally means the village of the *Sor*), was first founded by four people who came from Gurage, particularly from the *Sor* clan in search of jobs in Addis Ababa. The land in *Soramba* was mostly owned by a few individual landlords, namely Areda Beka and his friend Zemedkun Woldeyohannes, who granted them plots of land to

construct small huts and live on their land by paying 60 *birr* as an annual land use fee. Subsequently, the name of the neighbourhood became known as *Soramba*. The area has gradually attracted other clans of the Gurage ethnic group. Currently, there are more than eight different Gurage clans (Sor, Arwat, Sgima, Koter, Nejera, Boz, Sherar and Koncheche) settled in the area. The *Soramba* people are predominantly engaged in vegetable growing and supply their products to the vegetable market near Kolfe. Following the nationalisation of extra urban land and private houses in 1975, the vegetable growers were allowed to organise themselves into vegetable growers' cooperatives and they began to manage the land collectively. The cooperative is still famous for its involvement in vegetable production.

- Dorze Sefer, is mostly inhabited by the Gamo people (from different parts including Dorze, Doko, Bonke, Chench, etc) who are engaged in weaving. They are predominately Protestant by religion. Following the collapse of the *Derg* regime (1991), their cooperative was abandoned and many assets were lost. Today, the majority of the inhabitants live in rented sub-standard houses owned by either the *Kebele* or individuals.
- *Kuteba sefer* (houses for the middle-wealth people built with their own savings) is mostly inhabited by people who served in the Ethiopian army or police force. Most of the inhabitants of this area are Orthodox Christian by religion.

### *History of Kolfe*

There are different accounts of the origin of the naming of the area. Word of mouth suggests that the area got its name during the period of Menelik. There are many speculations as to who coined the name Kolfe. Some argue that the defence minister of Menelik, Fetawrari Habtegiorgis, was the founder of the area and others argue that it was Menelik himself. The name Kolfe was believed to be derived from the Oromiffa word *Kolfa*, which literally means 'laughing'. Kolfe has been a cross road to the western parts of the country since the early 1920s. There were checkpoints called *Kella* for taxing local people who carry out business. Some of the known tax collectors were *Balambara Eshete*, *Basha Wolde Mariam* and *Abba Semie*.

During the Italian period, Kolfe served as a prison location called Dipizito.<sup>7</sup> In 1956, this prison compound was converted into a police training camp called Fetnoderash camp. Kolfe had many rural settlement features until the mid-1940s; there was no asphalt road, and the area was covered with trees owned by a few landlords. Most people recall the existence of an Orthodox church with a school and the Fetnoderash police-training centre. The area was inaccessible to cars. The landmarks in Kolfe began to show drastic change during the 1970s following the establishment of the *Derg* regime. Its population increased considerably, the area became economically important and attracted large numbers of business people.

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<sup>7</sup> Probably from the Italian *deposito* meaning "depot".

Table 1: Summary of the history of the Kolfe area

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Imperial regime</b><br/>(End 19<sup>th</sup> century - 1935)</p> | <p>Early settlement of the area during the Menelik era at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<br/>Kolfe became a ‘gateway’ for people from the western part of the country, particularly to Menagesha</p>   |
| <p><b>Italian occupation</b><br/>(1935 – 41)</p>                       | <p>Forced movement of people from different parts of Addis Ababa into the Kolfe area.<br/>The Italians gave small houses to each household based on the number of members of the household.</p>   |
| <p><b>Imperial regime</b><br/>(1942 - 1974)</p>                        | <p>A <i>Wereda gizat</i> hall was built.<br/>Sewaso Birhan school was built by Germawit Etegie.<br/>The Pawlos church was constructed.<br/>Kolfe comprehensive school was built.<br/>Kolfe residents got access to electricity and piped water.<br/>Corrugated iron sheet houses started to be built.<br/>The Muslims’ burial place came to Kolfe from Gullele area<br/>Piped water was provided in the 1940s.<br/>Electricity was installed after 1950s.</p>   |
| <p><b>DERG regime</b><br/>(1974 – 91)</p>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High deforestation due to increased settlement</li> <li>- The provision of subsidies to consumer goods by government</li> </ul> <p>Shortage of goods/commodities and bread. Goods were bought from abroad and sold at very expensive prices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land to the Tiller Proclamation resulting in land redistribution.</li> </ul> <p>Government confiscated houses owned by local people. Grains were sold to the people through the <i>Kebele</i> shops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women and Youth organised under the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women’s Association (REWA) and Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth (REYA)</li> <li>- The establishment of Filipos Church, the only Orthodox church in the <i>Kebele</i></li> </ul> |
| <p><b>The EPRDF Period</b><br/>(1991 – to date)</p>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The collapse of the Weaving Cooperative, <i>Kebele</i> consumer shops and Women’s as well as Youth Associations</li> <li>- A ring road was constructed and other asphalt roads were improved.</li> <li>- Efoyeta market became structured.</li> <li>- Chereta market moved from the area to a nearby <i>Kebele</i></li> <li>- Affirmative action for women introduced in education and employment.</li> </ul>  |

## 2. Climate and the Effects of Seasonality

Like many parts of the country, Kolfe enjoys all the four seasons (*Kiremt, Tbi, Bega, Tseday*) of the year. With the exception of the *Kiremt* season, which is rainy and lasts from mid-June until mid-September, the other seasons do not have a direct negative impact on livelihoods. During *Kiremt*, the area is cold and there is much rainfall. This often causes flooding and destroys the shanty houses and some squatter settlements constructed along the edges of the small streets. In any given year, a number of houses are partially or fully destroyed by rainfall, forcing households to vacate their poorly constructed houses. The rainy season is particularly bad for destitute social groups such as the street children, beggars and elderly people as the rainfall impedes their mobility in the neighbourhoods and threatens their daily lives. Similarly, petty traders and local food peddlers are forced to interrupt their daily business under the open-air market. During the rest of the year, sales and exchange activities are considered safer and smooth.

Table 2: Summary of seasonal activities

| Activities   | Tibi: Sept-Nov   | Bega: Dec-Feb                          | Tseday: March-May   | Kiremt: June-August  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Vending of dry leaves  | Very good for collecting and selling leaves                                | Good for collecting and selling leaves | Good for collecting and selling leaves                    | Bad  |
| Selling used clothes   | Good for selling used clothes  | Good for selling used clothes          | Good for selling used clothes                             | Poor: rainy and unsafe place on open market                            |
| Selling vegetables: tomatoes, potatoes, onions etc   | Good for harvesting vegetable products and for selling products reasonably | Very good: good harvest                | Very Good: reasonable prices                              | Poor: shortage of harvest, high prices                                 |
| Selling cereals: sorghum, <i>tef</i> , maize, wheat  | Cheap: good harvest  | Excellent: good harvest; cheap         | Cheap: good harvest                                       | Expensive: poor harvest  |
| Selling local liquor and food: <i>tella</i> , <i>arake</i> , <i>tej</i> , <i>borde</i> and <i>injera</i> | Good: good weather for fermentation  | Cheap: cereals & good weather          | Cheap: good weather                                       | Very poor: low production, cold weather & poor fermentation            |
| Weaving and spinning   | Very good: high production and sales                                       | Very good: high production & sales     | Excellent: high production, good cotton harvest           | Very poor: low production & sales                                      |
| Masonry and carpentry: daily labourer  | Good   | Satisfactory                           | Very good: renovation of dilapidated houses before summer | Excellent: high renovation of houses due to too much rain and flooding |

During the rainy season the area of Soramba is badly affected by floods. Every year, flooding washes away the vegetable area destroying the harvest. Community members are obliged to make small dams but most of the time these fail to block floods.

### 3. The Local Economy

#### *Manufacturing*

There is a newly established industrial zone in the *Kebele* in which wood and metal work small-scale handicrafts activities are carried out. Besides, in the neighbouring area Kolfe Household Utensils producing enterprise helps some people from the *Kebele* to engage in and benefit from its products. Moreover, weaving is one of the main handicrafts practiced predominately by the migrant people from the Gamo area in southern Ethiopia. With the import of cheap textiles from China, weaving cooperatives have been weakened and weaving activities have drastically declined.

#### *Urban agriculture*

Urban agriculture is not much practiced except in Soramba where the inhabitants are mainly engaged in vegetable growing. The Soramba and Lideta Vegetable Producers' Cooperative is well

known for its vegetable production. The cooperative members grow vegetables through irrigation and supply to the city dwellers (see *cooperatives* for details).

### *Trade and marketing*

Trade activities in Kolfe areas reportedly began around 1955 when the late Prince Mekonnen permitted a small business group of 40 people, who were evicted from Nesanet Goh Bar around Merkato, to have a small market place around *Atena Tera* for the retail of clothes. Subsequently, the Efoyta market place was constructed by these business people to sell second-hand clothes. Prior to the naming of this place, the Efoyta market site used to be called Korkoro Sefer since there were many Korkoro (corrugated iron sheet) houses built by the Italians.

Trade in the area ranges from the smaller street vending to the sale of used clothes. For instance, in the area locally known as *Chereta*, auctions for used clothes were organised every day except for Sunday. There were four groups of people involved in the trade: those who bring the clothes from other areas mostly as contraband; those who owned the plots for auctions (mostly strong Kolfe youngsters); those who run the auctions (*Gurage*); and the buyers who came from different areas of the city. The whole process was considered illegal because nobody paid government tax and powerful people occupied the land illegally.

The local people are involved in the petty trade of vegetables (onions, tomatoes, green and red peppers, potatoes) and cereals like sorghum, barley, maize, wheat, *tef* etc), legumes (peas and beans), pulses (oil seeds) and coffee. Some prepare and sell food such as *injera*, *ambasha*, *shiro* and *berbere*. Others are engaged in selling local liquor such as *tella*, *tej*, *areke*, *borde* and *korefe*.

Kolfe was famous for its big open market notably for the wholesale of second-hand clothes at *Chereta* using the auction method. Different segments of the society (ranging from the poorest to richest) used to be involved in the transaction processes related to selling used clothes which include checking pockets, cleaning, ironing, sewing, brokering, selling and transportation. A considerable number of households are also involved in selling local drinks, tea and coffee to the business people. Inhabitants around the *Chereta* market also rent out their home to business people for living and/or storing of their goods.

The *Chereta* market place was reallocated to big investors and the market was relocated to Asko Sefer, to a neighbouring community, in 2004. This is negatively affecting the livelihoods of hundreds of families who used to depend on the presence of the market. The Government's banning of illegal trade has already reduced the second-hand clothes business transactions.

*Occupational structure and work activities*

*Table 3: Occupation by gender*

| Occupations for men   | Occupations for women  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in government offices</li> <li>• Renting houses</li> <li>• Merchant (in Merkato, Kolfe or elsewhere)</li> <li>• Broker: e.g. housing, domestic servants, cars</li> <li>• Selling used clothes</li> <li>• Private work as a carpenter, mason, loading on donkeys</li> <li>• Other manual labour, e.g. mud plastering, carrying things</li> <li>• Embroidery and spinning</li> <li>• Guarding</li> <li>• Selling vegetables</li> <li>• Farming</li> <li>• Selling cow milk</li> <li>• Begging</li> <li>• Washing clothes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in government offices</li> <li>• Renting houses</li> <li>• Merchant</li> <li>• Selling used clothes</li> <li>• Petty trading</li> <li>• Working as a housemaid</li> <li>• Spinning</li> <li>• Selling vegetables</li> <li>• Selling cow milk</li> <li>• Begging</li> <li>• Commercial sex</li> <li>• Washing clothes</li> <li>• Parquet selling</li> </ul> |

*Cooperative or group labour activities*

The *Soramba* Vegetable Growers' Cooperative is an active organisation that consists of men and women. The cooperative has been operational since the late 1970s. Criteria for membership and obligations include having a piece of land as a guarantee, a registration fee of 1,600 *birr* and a contribution of 400 *birr* to the share capital, willingness to work on the cooperative's common land at least three times a week, and regular participation in meetings called by the cooperatives. The cooperative owns over 81 hectares of vegetable plots. The cooperative consist of a total of 109 members. With the exception of three members, the vast majority belong to the Gurage ethnic group.

*Common Property Resources*

The common property resources in Kolfe area include spring water, a community play ground, a vegetable plot in Soramba area, the public water tap, and community shared pit-latrines and the road.

## 4. Reproductive Activity

### *Household Management*

Generally, adults and adolescent men are expected to spend the day outside the house in productive work. Mostly women perform domestic tasks, whether they are wives, housemaids, daughters or other relatives. Domestic work involves food preparation, which consists of cooking stew (*wot*) and the flat bread (*injera*), childcare, looking after HIV/AIDS patients as well as orphans and making loaves of bread and coffee. Women are also responsible for other household tasks such as house cleaning and washing clothes. In addition, women take grain to the mill monthly and make weekly or monthly trips to the market to purchase food items.

### *Fuel and lighting*

The main sources of lighting and cooking fuel include dry leaves, firewood, kerosene, dried dung, natural gas, electricity, charcoal and by-products of oil seeds. About 36% of the households use firewood as fuel while only 17% have access to electricity and 21% utilise kerosene (RANS, 2005). Almost all households use electric power for lighting.

### *Sanitation*

Sanitation is one of the prominent problems of the community. Out of the 163 households interviewed only 25 (about 15%) have a toilet within their dwelling. Others use toilets outside their housing and nearly 56% (91 households) of them share with other households (see table 3). A considerable number of community members usually dispose of their wastes in the open air which has been highly affecting the sanitation of the area. Some respondents indicated that they use plastic containers for storing their liquid wastes in the nights and drop them in the mornings in their surrounding open space or river because they have no toilets.

*Table 4: Access to Toilets in Kolfe community*

| No | Type of toilet       | Number of households | %    |
|----|----------------------|----------------------|------|
| 1  | Flush toilet         | 5                    | 3.1  |
| 2  | Improved pit latrine | 8                    | 4.9  |
| 3  | Other pit latrine    | 117                  | 71.8 |
| 4  | Bucket toilet        | 24                   | 14.7 |
| 5  | None (outdoors)      | 9                    | 5.5  |
|    | Total                | 163                  | 100  |

Source: RANS, 2005.

### *Environmental issues*

Until the 1940s, the inhabitants of Kolfe were using the Akaki and Bulecha Rivers as the main sources of water. After the construction of the Geferesa water dam in 1942, local people began to access piped water. However, the majority of households did not have reliable and easy access to

piped water until 1974. It was only after the change of regime in 1974 that the majority of the households installed pipe water or had access to a public tap.

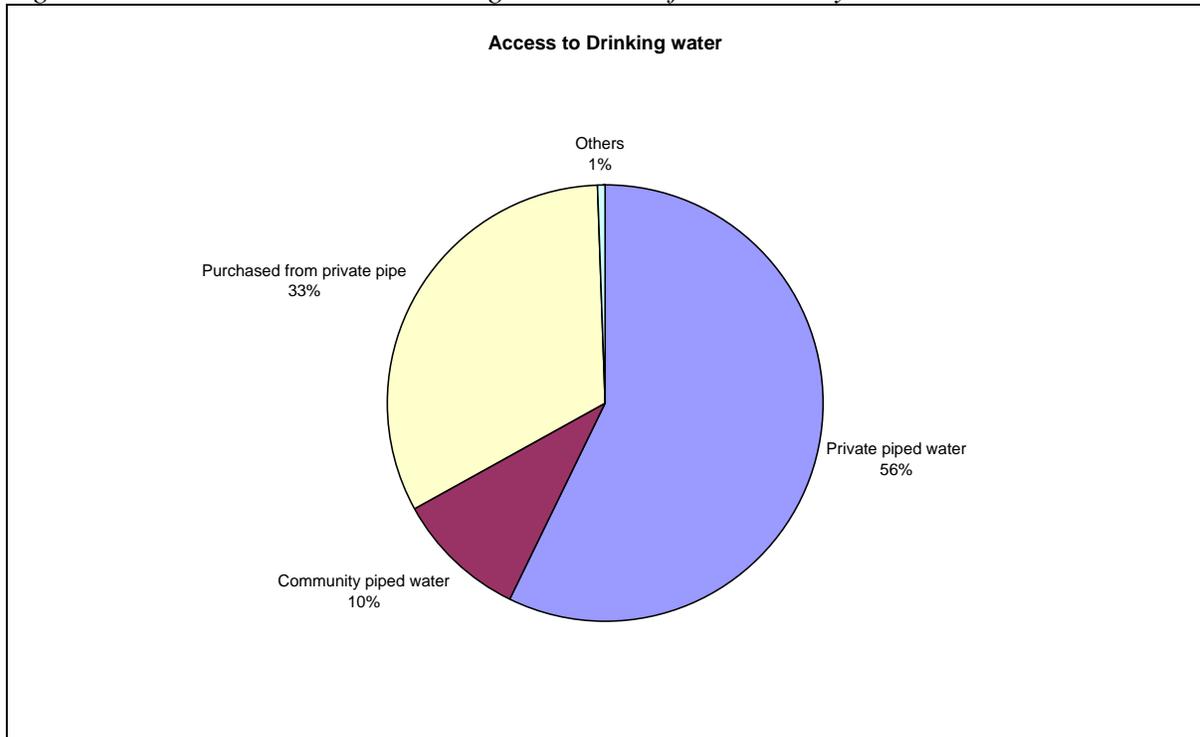
The majority of residents in *Kebele* 10/11 use the nearest container to dispose of their solid waste. Since there are irregular and inadequate dump trucks, the containers are often full, forcing local people to throw garbage or rubbish on the street. According to some respondents, those households who do not have toilet facilities prefer to use plastic bags to dispose liquid wastes and/or simply throw solid garbage into the open ditch. Very recently, some individuals formed associations to provide garbage collection services using wheel carts. Lack or shortage of drainage systems, scarcity of waste disposal tanks and their improper use, unplanned construction of houses and latrines are regarded as contributory factors for contagious diseases and their transmission. Incineration of solid wastes and removing of liquid wastes into septic tanks is also uncommon practice in the community.

Environmental pollution in *Soramba* is becoming critical to the health of the inhabitants given the use of the polluted river for cooking and vegetable growing. The chemical wastes from the Asko Leather factory reportedly pollute the running water used by the neighbourhood for drinking, vegetable growing and cooking. Dwellers are engaged in agriculture and produce vegetables such as carrots, tomatoes, cabbage and potatoes using irrigation from the polluted water that are sold at the nearest market in Kolfe. Some informants mentioned that they acquired water-borne diseases from the polluted water. *Shola Minch* is a water spring found in *Soramba* and the local people often use it whenever they face water shortage for drinking and washing.

### *Water*

Most people in the community have access to communal or private potable water. Only some people have pipe water connected to their private houses. A large number of the population use the communal water to which dwellers can gain access to by paying some amount of money.

Fig.2: Households' Access to drinking water in Kolfe Community



Source: RANS, 2005

The condition in the Soramba neighbourhood is very different. Although the dwellers claim to have been living there for more than 70 years, they do not have any access to piped water. They rather use spring water for drinking and polluted water for cleaning and washing. Very few people could afford to buy clean water from the nearby communities. Nearly 1,000 households in the area registered to have pipe water and contributed some money for setting up communal water distribution sites. The cost was estimated to be about 150,000 *birr* but the people managed to contribute only about 10 percent of it. Following the May 2005 National Election that affected the security of the city, the project was halted.

### *Fertility*

A respondent at the health centre identified the following three groups of individuals with fertility problems:

1. Older women facing miscarriages
2. Couples where one partner is naturally infertile
3. Couples with sexually transmitted diseases who are vulnerable to infertility

Local people get free access to contraceptives such as pills, condoms, injections, and *Norplant* through the Kolfe Keranio Health Post and the Kolfe Keranio Health Centre, located in *Kebele* 11 and 13 respectively. Apart from counselling, infertile couples do not receive any special treatments.

The majority of contraceptive users (75%) are reportedly married women between the ages of 25-45, followed by separated (10 %) and divorced women (10 %). Young girls rarely use contraceptives from their nearby health centre because it is traditionally unacceptable to have sex before marriage. As a result, younger girls prefer to obtain contraceptives from outside their community since they are afraid that the health centre will report them, or they worry that people will watch them go into the health centre. In recent years, the use of contraceptives is gaining more acceptance in spite of the many challenges to practicing family planning. A key constraint is the presence of a strong sense of rural identity and cultures that value having a large number of children as a safety net during retirement or old age. There are also cases where women abstain from using family planning methods because of the husband's disapproval. Some husbands suspect that their wives may have sex with others if they use contraceptives. Other husbands feel that the ultimate value of having a marriage is to have a large number of children. There are also those who abstain from using family planning methods because of illness such as cancer, diabetics, goitre and heart problems. Some conservative Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and Muslims have abstained from family planning because of conflicts with their religious values.

### *Childbirth and childcare*

During the Haile Selassie and *Derg* Regimes there were limited formal health services in the area, and most mothers were reported to have relied on traditional birth attendants. Over the past ten years, the use of traditional birth attendants seems to have declined mainly because of fear of HIV/AIDS as the equipment is believed not to be safe from contamination. The Kolfe health centre also provides pre-natal education about the risks of HVI/AIDS to those mothers who come for medical treatment.

After child delivery, though rarely exercised these days, mothers are supposed to stay at home from one to three months as a maternity confinement. This is to recover and to be provided with care and support by close relatives such as her mother, sisters, girls, mother-in-law and other relatives, and in some cases by neighbours. The new mothers are often provided with gifts such as prepared food, clothes, money, sheep and other items. Food such as porridge and oats are among the foodstuffs that are commonly eaten during the maternity confinement. Of course, this depends on the wealth status of the household and her kin members.

Childcare arrangements mainly depend upon the income and educational level of the mothers. Most women who are involved in office work or are rich housewives hire a nanny or bring a relative from rural areas to look after their children. Mothers, who do not have enough income to hire nannies, and those engaged in petty trading, leave their babies in the care of their older children, relatives or neighbours. Some mothers carry their children with them as they go out for their daily business. The following case illustrates how different childcare mechanisms are adopted to cope with unfavourable conditions.

Tigist is 32 years old. Her husband does not have a job and is addicted to *chat* and alcohol. As a result, she is responsible for making a living for the family by baking and selling *injera*. They have a four-year-old son and a six-month-old daughter. The families she works for have warned her not to bring her children to the work place. This has forced Tigist to leave her children locked for eight hours in a room with food and drink.

## *Health*

According to respondents at the Kolfe Keranio Health Centre, the top ten diseases of the area are acute respiratory tract infection, pneumonia, bronchitis, gastritis, duodenal ulcers, kidney diseases, skin infections, inflammatory eye diseases, inflammatory skin diseases and worm infestations. They also report that the major illnesses attacking babies and children are pneumonia, diarrhoea, acute fever, ear infections, gastroenteritis, eye diseases, and other bacterial infections. They attribute most of these diseases to hygiene and sanitation problems. Informants from the Mother and Child Health Department of the Health Centre reported that the most common health problems that mothers experience are gastritis, duodenal ulcers, and bleeding and wrong foetus positions. Newborn babies are prone to eye infection and being under weight. The attendance rate for post-natal care is reported to be low and this can lead to various child health problems.

Some respondents reported that a number of diseases are treated at home using herbal or other medicines. These include the following healing mechanisms:

- When having a headache and when feeling cold they use herbal medicines such as *feto*, *dingetegna* and *damakesie*;
- For stomach problems they chew ginger and *tenaddam*;
- When children have stomach problems they are given a drink of crushed *grawa* leaves and water;
- When a child has throat problems they crush *gesho* leaves and incense gum together and spit the mixture on the throat; sometimes they mix ash and lemon and put it on the child's head;
- When an oesophagus is painful they will eat garlic;
- When a fungus appears on a child's face they burn a spider, including its nest, or chew lentils and spit it on the child's face;
- For simple wounds they heat a cloth and swab the wound with it;
- When a child has a nightmare - they will use what is called *yebuda* medicine and tie it on the child's neck;
- When a bone is broken people go to the *wegesha* or traditional bonesetter

## *HIV/AIDS*

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the sickness that spread at an alarming rate has been pneumonia, which is closely linked to HIV/AIDS. According to the Kolfe Keranio Health Centre, most of the people in the locality who are said to have died of pneumonia are believed to be victims of HIV/AIDS, which is attacking the generation aged 20-45. According to the Kolfe Kerano Health Centre, among a total of 1,423 individuals, (491 male and 932 female) who have tested for HIV/AIDS in 2004, 20.1% of the females and 9.3% of the males were found to be HIV positive, most of whom were young people.

The effects of HIV/AIDS pandemic in the community are complex for the following reasons.

- It has increased the number of orphaned children in the community. As a result much of the aid provided by NGOs that could have been invested in development activities is diverted to orphans. And those orphans, who failed to get the support, are facing problems such as low monthly income, food shortage, limited access to health care and

poor access to shelter. Access to education is also a problem due to the inability to pay for school fees and buy school materials and uniform and because the responsibility of food preparation devolves to the eldest female child. Orphans from poor families do not usually have relatives who could support them and many are discriminated against, abused or ostracised by the community.

- The responsibility of giving care to children has devolved to grandparents, extended family members and the eldest child. Grandparents have also lost their supporters and have become more vulnerable to economic problems.
- The community has lost productive citizens such as nurses, government employees and some of those who served local *iddir* with an impact on the development of the community.

There are some organisations that are working to minimise the problem of HIV/AIDS. These are:

1. The Kolfe Keranio Health Centre, which provides awareness creation sessions and an HIV/AIDS testing service.
2. Mary Joy Aid through Development, an NGO, which gives home-based care services for people living with HIV/AIDS and support such as educational materials and school uniforms for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The organisation also creates awareness about HIV/AIDS while giving the service.
3. The Kolfe Keranio Health Post creates awareness about HIV/AIDS at household level.
4. The Youth Association gives home-based care services for people living with HIV/AIDS and teaches about HIV/AIDS.
5. Kebele 10/11, the smallest government administrative unit, organises awareness creation programmes about HIV/AIDS in meetings and social gatherings.
6. The Tesfa Social Development Association arranges lessons about HIV/AIDS for *Iddir* members and given by health officials, and provides material aid for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and for other needy children.
7. Negat Project is an NGO which, in collaboration with Addis Ababa University (AAU), conducts HIV/AIDS prevention particularly focusing on mother to child transmission control and Voluntary Counselling and Training (VCT).

## 5. Consumption

### *Food and Other Daily Goods*

Seasonal changes have significant effects on the price and availability of vegetables and cereals such as *tef*, sorghum, barley and wheat. During *kiremt* food becomes more expensive. A number of women involved in selling *injera* and *ambasha* find it difficult to make a profit and often stop selling during *kiremt*. During this time, they tend to get credit to change their business to the sale of local liquor.

### *Housing*

Most of the houses in Kolfe are constructed from wood and mud and are built very close to each other. People do not have the financial capacity to own very big houses with large compounds. Houses with corrugated iron sheet roofs were scarce until the 1960s and fire accidents were reported as frequent causes for the destruction of houses with thatched-hay roofs. Only 43%

(RANS, 2005) of the households in the community own houses of any type. Others rent from the government or individuals while some share rooms with others.

### *Savings and Credit*

The majority of the community members are not able to save money. Most people engaged in small business activity join *equb*, which are rotational money lending, schemes which often function on a weekly or daily basis.

The main sources of credit facilities in the community include:

- Money lenders (*arata*) with a 10 percent interest rate;
- Credit associations;
- Close friends, neighbours or relatives;
- The work place, e.g. government offices;
- Banks;
- Individuals by *welled-agged*, which involves an informal collateral arrangement.

There are three saving and credit institutions in the Kolfe area. They are Wisdom Micro-finance Association, African Village Saving and Credit Association, and Addis Micro-Finance Association. The latter is situated within the site and unlike the other two is a governmental institution.

Some of the differences of services provided by the governmental and private credit associations are the following:

- The government credit association requires customers to bring their business proposals to be reviewed by pertinent *Kebele* officials and submit personal guarantee. Those who borrow between 2,000 and 60,000 *birr* should present their business licenses. Whereas in the private micro credits where the maximum loan is 10,000 *birr*, the guarantee should be either letter of guarantee from a governmental institution in which the guarantor works, car registration certificate or title deeds.
- Interest rates are higher (13%) in the private institutions than the governmental (10%).

Many people are benefiting from micro-credits, especially young people who organise themselves in groups are making use of the credits and changing their lives. The *Kebele* administration supplies space to engage in cooperatives of wood and metal works, car washing and similar activities.

### *Social security*

The social security of the community emanates from different directions. Those who served as soldiers or police officers get pensions from the government. Others get support from their children who live abroad.

But the most prominent form of social security appears to be the *iddir*. It is very difficult to find someone without any *iddir*. There are many types of *Iddir* including ethnic, clan, religious, wealth, location, gender, and occupation. Ethnic and clan *iddir* transcend the area and may accept membership even out of the community. Being a member of many *iddir* makes someone

financially more secure. If someone is a member of different *Iddir*, s/he can get payments from all the *Iddir*. Being a member of many *Iddir* also displays a sense of wealth, as it requires the ability to pay membership fees.

Besides the traditional function of organising funerals, *Iddir* are increasingly being engaged in subsidiary activities. They provide loans for sick members for medical treatment, help as guarantee for members who take loans from micro-credit institutions, distribute some money for members on holidays and *Iddir* leaders become involved in dispute settlement of their members.

## 6. Local Institutions, Organisations and Services

### *Households*

For many informants, it is difficult to distinguish between households and family. Generally, a household includes those members who share the same cooking pot and who live together under one roof. Some consider housemaids as members of households but others do not because they are temporarily living together and have their own households at home. Family is limited to persons having blood relationships.

For female-headed households, the responsibility of satisfying the daily needs of the family falls upon the mother. Single mothers are forced to undertake difficult jobs such as manual labour, fetching firewood and washing clothes. Older children from these households are often engaged in difficult tasks. They are often forced to leave school and undertake risky jobs. For young females this might be prostitution.

### *Marriage*

Marriage is an important institution among the Kolfe Community. Being married increases social respect and acceptance in the community. Civil marriage is the common form of marriage practiced by the younger generation. The formal approval of the civil marriage is often performed through the municipality. Mate selection is often performed by the choice of partners themselves although consent from parents is required to make the final decision.

Customary marriage is another form of marriage, which is commonly practiced. The formalisation of the marriage is often done through the presence of elders and *yeneger abbat* (literally “father of the case”) from both sides. The marriage is also formalised through a written agreement, which often underlines the fact that all the properties of the couple acquired or possessed after marriage are their common properties, hence, equally shared in case the partners experience divorce. Such customary marriage is prominent among the Gurage living in Soramba. They still maintain their rural marriage practices. This has been strengthened by the strong ties between the people living in rural and urban areas. Bringing of wives from the rural areas is the most common practice among the young males living in the Soramba neighbourhood.

Religious marriage is also performed through churches and mosques if the couple are strict followers and active members of their congregations. Though Muslims can have polygamous marriages, respondents claim that the poor economic situation has brought an end to it. But a large number of men who migrate from Gamo in the south have two wives one in their urban household and the other in their rural household. Their wives in rural households manage their

rural resources and take care of their children. The husbands who are engaged mostly in weaving take some money to their rural family when they visit them occasionally.

Single motherhood, due to divorce and widowhood, is common amongst women involved in the sale of local liquors (*tella, areke, borde, shameta*). In order to augment their income and satisfy the needs of their family members, poor single mothers often tend to have multiple sexual partners or more than one marriage during their life. This can result in having children from different fathers and, in turn, this may lead to absence of love and presence of quarrels amongst siblings.

### *Divorce*

Infidelity, sterility, desertion, abduction, preference for another partner, sickness, poor income, unemployment, large family size, marriage more than once and early marriage were mentioned as common causes for divorce in the community. In most divorce cases amongst the poor and destitute, it is rare for women to retain the right to own property because many are illiterate and unaware of their legal rights. Wealthier women are more aware of the legal processes necessary to defend their rights and are successful in retaining money, land, furniture and other property.

Desertion is a frequent problem for poor destitute women. Most destitute husbands desert their wives for a number of different reasons such as unemployment, large family size, job-hunting, and quarrels. These problems were not as frequent for the medium, rich and wealthier members of the community.

### *Widowhood*

Widowhood is common among the Kolfe community. War, HIV/AIDS and natural death are identified as the major causes for the death of most of the husbands, who used to be the breadwinners of their families. Among the majority of the people, the widow finds it difficult to have second marriage. Especially among the Gurage, she is expected to bring up her children at any cost. If she decides to have a second marriage she has to leave the house for her children, and if she does not have any, the family of her husband may take over. Informants claim that this has increased the number of female-headed households and poor orphaned children.

In case of the death of the major male breadwinner, surviving children, wives, mothers and grandmothers are the most vulnerable members. Poor and destitute widowed families face serious problems. Children from these families are forced to leave school because they lack school materials and uniforms and are unable to afford school fees. Lack of food and other basic material needs cause most family members to become ill. A number of children from these families are vulnerable to malnutrition, anaemia and scabies, and a considerable number of mothers suffer from anaemia and pneumonia and communicable disease as well. In poor families experiencing lack of food and shelter children are sent out to earn money from shoe shining, prostitution, fetching water, firewood, being *weyyala* (taxi attendant), selling *kollo* (roasted cereals) and looking after babies. Although some children of the poor continue education after divorce and widowhood, many drop out and begin a life on the streets, as their mothers cannot afford to cover the cost of their schooling.

## *Orphans*

The number of orphans has been increasing in the last ten years because their parents die due to HIV/AIDS, or tuberculosis. According to the *Tesfa Development Association* reports of 2004/5, about 676 orphans registered for help. These include 246 (139 female) full orphans, 318 (159) who lost their fathers and 112 (58) who lost their mothers. Generally, close relatives, often grandmothers, are shouldering responsibility for bringing up these children.

## *Inheritance*

Most of the inheritance of properties is determined and resolved through the legal civil code. A considerable number of people also involve elders in determining inheritance, especially among the Gurage and the Gamo ethnic groups, inheritance is determined basically through the involvement of elders. Though children have the right to inherit from parents, usually it is the boys who can claim the house. Girls may take their share in cash or other resources but find it difficult to bring their husbands into the house of their parents.

## *Kinship/Lineages/Clans*

The majority of households live within an extended family structure. As most have their roots in the rural areas they live together with other migrant family members. Some, notably elderly people from Gamo and Gurage, maintain connections with their rural kin. Very few households maintain a nuclear family structure. Those who live without kin members around are mostly traders of second-hand clothes who rent houses temporarily. Kinship members should fulfil economic and social obligations for their other member. A member should support his/her fellow members at times of crisis. This applies wherever the member lives and more obligations seem to be attached to father's kin. It is said that the father's kin maintain the family identity and stay behind at their ancestral land.

Among the Gamo and Gurage, the clan relationship can easily be maintained in spite of geographical distances. *Iddir* membership, resolving conflicts, avoiding marriage within the clan, and exchange of support are some of the obligations of the clan members. *Doko*<sup>8</sup> *Iddir* is one example of a clan-based *Iddir* in the site. The younger generation seem to have loosened contact with their rural areas.

## *Local Organisations<sup>9</sup> and Services*

Health: Within *Kebele* 10/11 there is only one health post, which sometimes provides family planning support and supply of birth control pills. In order to get access to medical services people must visit the neighbouring *Kebele* 13/14 where the health centre is located. The health centre provides services such as maternity, laboratories (including HIV/AIDS testing), pharmacy, reproductive health advices, TB treatment, etc. There are five private clinics in the site by the name: *Kendil*, *Noh*, *Kolfe*, *Kidist* and *Ethio* clinic. There are two pharmacies known as *Bete-*

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<sup>8</sup> *Doko* is the name for one of the areas of the Gamo highlands and a sub-group of the Gamo ethnic group.

<sup>9</sup> Other local organisations include *mehber* and *equb*, which are described elsewhere in this profile.

*Emanuel* and *Amsale* Pharmacy. The *Ethio-Tebib* private hospital situated within the Kolfe area serves people in the site as well.

Education and Training: Kolfe Comprehensive High School was constructed during the Haile Selassie period. Princess Mennen built Sewaso Birhan elementary school. The site on which Kolfe primary school is located used to have many huts in which the *Kentiba* soldiers used to live. After the *Kentiba* soldiers left, the houses were given to the old and disabled senior citizens (the *turetegnoch*) during the Haile Selassie regime.

Currently there are four kindergarten schools (called Kalehiwot, Mekaneyesus, Al-Efya and Ikram), three elementary schools (Ewket Wegene, Kolfe and Abeboch Firie), two juniors and a comprehensive high school within *Kebele* 10/11. In the neighbouring *Kebele* 12, there is a private college called Kunuz College. In the neighbouring *Kebele* there is a Federal Police Training College and an Orthodox Church spiritual college known as *Sewasew Birhan Saint Paulos College*.

There are some informal schools in the site where a few high school leavers conduct pre-school education for children whose parents could not afford to send them to kindergarten. They charge three *birr* per month for every child. There is also one Muslim school teaching the Holy Quran. Training for kindergarten teachers is provided at the sub-city administration (*Kifle Ketema*) level at a centre outside the *Kebele* 10/11.

Recreation: Kolfe Park is located 100m from the ring road and is situated at the former *Kebele* 10 office. Since 1999, it has been giving services to the community. Every visitor to the park has to pay an entrance fee of one *birr*. Tearooms and cafeterias are available. The green park has colourful flowerbeds and garden spaces for individual and group visitors. Its calm atmosphere and tranquillity provide a suitable environment for students to study, relax and have fun. The park hosts wedding ceremonies, birthday parties and other social feasts as well. Young people enjoy watching live football matches on a satellite dish.

The other recreation centre, *Kolfe Abro Adeg Yetena Sport Iddir*, was established in 1995 by youths living in the area. It comprises 29 people and assists youth, children and the elderly. To prevent juvenile delinquency and child abuse, the *Iddir* has facilitated numerous recreation facilities such as creating access to live football matches transmitted through satellite dishes, video films, bingo games, coffee and teashops. Monthly, more than 200 children and youngsters reportedly spend their leisure time there. Seniors, pensioners, ex-soldiers and young people often enjoy such facilities. This *Iddir* has also helped the community with its environmental sanitation campaign programme and donated 2,000 *birr* in 2004 to *Kebele* Administration sponsored community development. They also assisted the destitute who were very sick and too poor to get medical treatment. The *iddir* has also created job opportunities for four individuals.

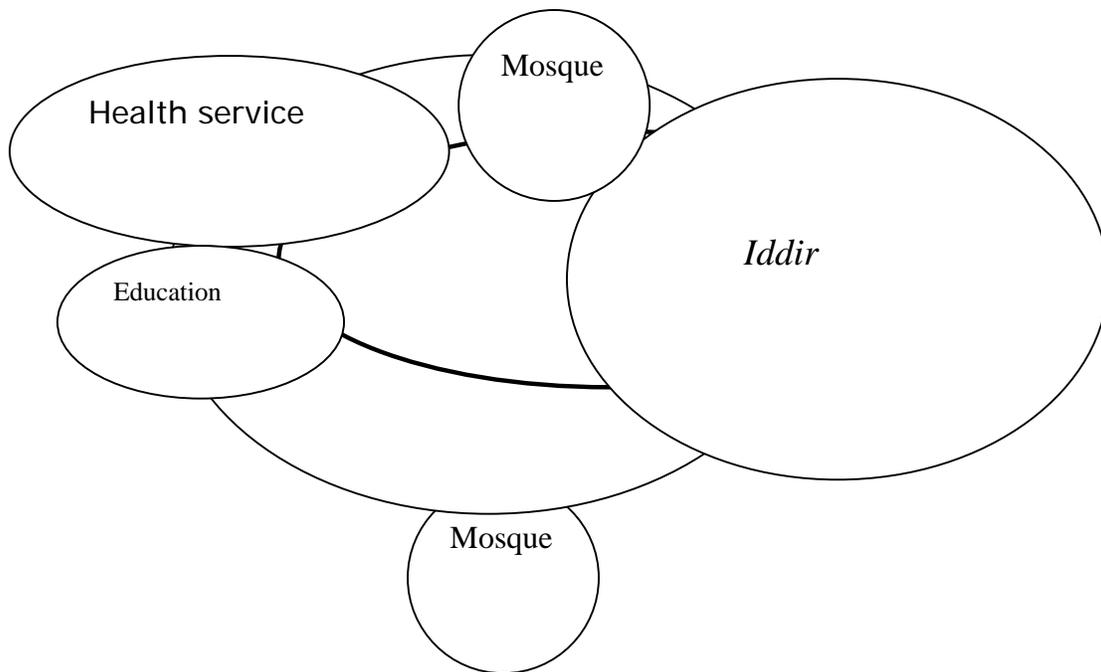
Churches: Germawit Etegie Menen, the Wife of Haile Selassie, constructed St. Peter church. St. Filipos church was built very recently when the inhabitants of the area complained about a lack of a Christian burial place to the city administration. In the area of *Kebele* 10/11, there are three protestant churches of Kale-hiywot, Mekane-yesus, and Mulu-wengel. These churches have a number of smaller chapels in the neighbourhood.

Mosques: There are eight mosques in the site. Seven of them were constructed in post-EPRDF period.

Administration and Justice: The *Kebele* administration represents the government in the community. It ensures security, runs and mobilises community development, assists tax collection, provides identification cards for dwellers, oversees the social court, implements government directives, etc. The *Kebele* administration is run by a committee comprising six people with the following positions: chief executive; deputy chief executive; and heads of cultural and information affairs, organisations and community development. The day-to-day execution of the *Kebele* office is run by an appointed *Kebele* manager who has some staff.

Within the *Kebele* administration, the social court handles the legal issues being raised within the community. The social court comprises three judges of whom one is female. Only the chairman is a full-time paid employee, while the others serve as part-time with a payment of 20 *birr* per day. The court reviews cases every Tuesdays and Thursdays. It has the power to investigate disputes involving no more than 500 *birr*, clashes that may affect community peace, and protections of some directives as provided by the City Administration. Criminal cases and disputes involving large amount of money are referred to the Sub-City level first instant court situated in the nearby *Kebele* 12.

Figure 3: Institutional/organizational Venn diagram for Kolfe



Note: -The size corresponds to the importance  
 -The overlaps are linkages

Iddir: This is primarily a funeral association that makes resources and labour available to members who are bereaved. *Iddir* types range from women’s *iddir* that help assemble food items at the house of the bereaved member for several nights, to neighbourhood-wide associations, called *dinkwan iddir* that organise funerals and make financial contributions to the bereaved.

People who live in the same neighbourhood can join the *dinkwan iddir* irrespective of religious and ethnic differences. The first *iddir* in Kolfe is known as *Kolfe Nebar Iddir*. It was organised by Oromo inhabitants who came from Wollega. Subsequently other *iddir* such as *Gullele*, *Arat Kilo* and *Kebena Iddir* were established and they were named after the places where they came from. *Iddir* named after saints (like Gabriel and Michael) came very recently.

In *Birhan Chora sefer*, there is an *Iddir* accessible exclusively for the rich. The registration fees are as high as 10,000 *birr* which makes it difficult for the poor to join. Women's *Iddir* are called *yerat Iddir* (dinner *Iddir*). Though not exclusively for cooperative members, *Soramba Wozadero* (workers) *Iddir* appears to be an occupational *Iddir*. The *Kebele* record shows that among the 37 registered *Iddir* in the *Kebele*, 20 of them are neighbourhood-based and 10 belong to certain clan or ethnicity. Others include youth groups, cooperative members or take the name of place of origin of the members. While neighbourhood *Iddir* seem to be open for everybody, others directly or indirectly prohibit certain groups of people from joining.

Vegetable Producers' Cooperative: The Soramba and Lideta Vegetable Producers' Cooperative is well known for its vegetable production. The cooperative has been operational since the late 1970s. The cooperative owns over 81 hectares of vegetable plots with a total of 109 members. With the exception of three members, the rest belong to the Gurage ethnic group.

A Women's Association with membership of about 4000 exists within the *Kebele*. It provides training on women's rights, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS etc for its members. It gets support from the NGOs working in the area and the *Kifle-Ketema* administration.

NGOs and their Services: The following five NGOs are active in the community:

**The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus** (a religious organisation) provides relief assistance to the most vulnerable children whose parents cannot afford to buy food, clothes and school uniforms.

**Kale Hiwot** (a Protestant evangelical religious organisation) provides financial support to destitute children whose parents cannot afford to pay for basic food, school fees, medical expenses, school uniforms, shoes and clothes.

The **Weaving Association** extends financial aid (from 300-400 *birr*) on a yearly basis to families who find it difficult to raise their children.

**Tesfa Social and Development Association**, a group of *Iddirs*, provides multi-purpose support to destitute children, youth and elderly people. It runs educational and skill training programmes, provides credit services, and HIV/AIDS prevention activities. It was founded in 2000 and was legally registered after a year by six *Iddir* leaders. The leaders say that the growing poverty and old age of *Iddir* members led them to consider establishing this association that can help the needy members. There are 26 *Iddir* registered as members within the Tesfa.

**Mary Joy Aid Through Development** is another local NGO that provides home-based care, service and material support to people living with HIV/AIDS and to children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. It was founded in 1994 with the aim of addressing the health needs of the community by opening a small office around the Asko area. Gradually it discovered that the problem of the community was not only a health issue but also extensive socio-economic difficulties. As a result, it extended its services as integrated community development since 1995 involving programmes on livelihood enhancement, prevention of HIV/AIDS and care as well as capacity building.

**St Mary Children Aid was founded in 1995.** It provides different services for orphans and children of the poor and destitute parents. In its compound, situated at the former Kolfe Weaving Cooperative headquarters, it has established a Children's Village where shelter, feeding, clothing and education are provided for the children. It also gives some money for children from the poor

families who live with their parents. The money is ear-marked to cover food and educational expenses. There are some arrangements of adoption programs in which some people from Italy take some orphaned children to their country through adoption. NGOs and individuals in Italy generally support the organisation.

**Save the Children (USA)** began operation in the site in 2004. It supplies relief assistance to the most vulnerable children whose parents cannot afford to provide food. The children included in the relief get 45 kg of *tef* and 3 litres of cooking oil every month.

*Table 4. Summary of institutions/organisations in Kolfe Community*

| S N | Type of institution/ organisation | Description   | Total Number |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|
| 1   | <i>Iddir</i> (registered)         | Ethnic, occupational, neighbourhood, ...  | 37           |
| 2   | Credit Associations               | -governmental (1)<br>- private (2)  |              |
| 3   | Schools                           | - secondary (1)<br>- elementary (3)<br>- kindergarten (4)<br>- Koranic (1)  | 9            |
| 4   | Health services                   | - health post (1)<br>- Private clinics (5)<br>- Pharmacies (2)  | 8            |
| 5   | Cooperatives                      | - Vegetable Growing<br>- Weaving  | 2            |
| 6   | Associations                      | - women (1)<br>- youth (1)<br>- <i>delela</i> (brokers) (1)<br>- waste disposing (1)  | 4            |
| 7   | Churches and Cemetery             | - Orthodox church (1)<br>- Orthodox cemetery (1)<br>- Orthodox Senbete (4)<br>- Protestant church (1)<br>- Jehovah's Witness Assemblies (2)       | 9            |
| 8   | Mosques and Quranic school        | - Mosques (8)<br>- Koran School (1)   | 9            |
| 9   | NGOs                              | - Tesfa Social and Development Association<br>- Mary Joy<br>- Mekane Yesus<br>- Kale Hiwot<br>- St Mary Children Aid<br>- Save the Children (USA) | 6            |
| 10  | Governmental institutions         | - <i>Kebele</i> administration (1)<br>- social court (1)  | 2            |

#### *Redistributive mechanisms*

There are various socio-religious feasts that serve as redistributive mechanisms throughout the year. These events consist of meals prepared by households during particular religious holidays,

or by members of religious/social groups called *Mahber* or *Senbete*. The holidays in which feasts are prepared are Ethiopian New Year's day, *Meskel* (the day of the finding of the true cross), Epiphany, *Ganna* (Ethiopian Christmas), Easter and annual celebrations of saint days such as Trinity, St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Mary.

Members of a particular *Mahber* or *Senbete* often come together on a monthly saint's day, in commemoration of their allegiance to that saint. Individuals often choose their favourite saint if their wishes are met on that particular saint day or if their promises are met through a favour of that saint. Members of *Mahber* consider themselves to be spiritual brothers or sisters. Feasts are prepared in turn and most households take turns hosting the members about every other year. Other feasts are prepared for events such as christenings, marriages, or commemorations for the dead.

## 7. Beliefs and values

### *Land and burial place*

There are five burial places in Kolfe. The burial places allocated for Christians are the churches of St. Peter, *Keranio Medehanialem*, St Philip and St. Emanuel. There is one grand cemetery for Muslims, which is the largest Muslim burial place in Addis Ababa.

### *Religious rituals*

There are different religious celebrations commonly practiced by the community of Kolfe. *Meskel* and Epiphany are the main Orthodox Christian religious celebrations that attract the youth, adults and elderly people to come together to celebrate these occasions in common. Muslim children often join these celebrations. The other holidays are celebrated individually at home or among neighbourhoods. People invite their friends and neighbours regardless of their religion.

*Tsiwa* is an important Orthodox Church members' institution, which has significant religious values. Often members of a congregation form *Tsiwa* under the name of their favoured saint and organise rotational parties that move from one member's house to another on that specific saint day. During the party, the members pray together, give thanks to their saint, enjoy home made drinks/food and offer alms to the destitute.

Holy water has also significant healing power for Orthodox religion followers. Depending upon their favourite saint, individual members often keep or hang holy water with containers outside their rooms. They drink the holy water to heal their sickness, pour a drop of the holy water on their walls to take away the devil's spirit or put holy water into their cooking to get God's blessings.

*Adbar*, though rarely exercised in the community, is another ritual practiced by traditional believers to pay tribute to their God. Neighbours often come together for the ritual of *Adbar* ceremony that mostly takes place on the first day of the month of *Genbot* (May) in the Ethiopian Calendar. There is no major Orthodox or Muslim feast during the month of *Genbot* and most followers avoid even having wedding ceremonies during this month. Some claim that *Genbot* is the 'devil's month' when the evil spirit becomes predominant. Most of the rituals of *Adbar* during this month are for the followers of traditional beliefs. However, there are some Orthodox

followers who also celebrate *Adbar*. The celebration of *Adbar* involves invitations of friends and neighbours to open areas or courtyards of the host for a coffee ceremony accompanied by local drinks (*Tella* and *Areke*) and food (pop-corn, cooked wheat, local bread, lamb). Before the invited guests start to eat or drink, the host person makes a prayer to his God and sacrifices food and drinks around the compound. The master ceremony of *Adbar* ritual is often performed by women.

Some Orthodox pilgrims have reported that they go as far as Debre Libanos Monastery to the north of the capital city in December and August to celebrate the days dedicated to the Apostle Teklehaymanot. Others also travel to St. Yohannes, Shenkora district and Zikuala, in East Shewa. A few even reported that they go as far as the famous pilgrimage centres of Gishen Maryam in Wello and Kulubi Gebrel near Harar once in a year. Middle-income households and rich community members mostly perform the long distance pilgrimages. The pilgrimages are often done to give thanks, plan wishes or just for recreation purposes.

The two major holidays for the Muslim community are *Arafa* and *Id Al-fetir*. Prior to the *Id Al-Fetir* there is the thirty-days Ramadan fast when food is not consumed until 7pm in the evening and there is intensive praying at mosques. During the fasting days everybody who can afford to do so should provide to the poor a third of his income called *Zekat*. The assistance could be in cash, clothing or food. In the holiday of *Id Al-fetir* they feed the poor around them. A very few Muslims reportedly go on pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia, particularly to Mecca and Medina, to become *Hajji*.

### *Traditional beliefs and values in relation to modernizing changes*

In the past, people had different beliefs, which they inherited from their families. These beliefs are now being abandoned as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has become stronger in condemning the practices. But there are still some people who practice traditional beliefs like *Atete* (women celebrate their God by sacrificing food and drinks, as well as by wearing special dresses along with special necklaces often kept in small basket box during the celebration of the new year and the finding of the true cross) at their home secretly. The majority of these people are officially followers of the Orthodox Christian religion or Islam. Recently traditional beliefs and practices have been largely replaced by formal religious practices.

### *Explanations of misfortune and illness*

Some people in the community believe in sorcerers, witchcraft and spirit possession. In most cases the belief is associated with distant or immediate ancestors. Hence, during the process, some ceremonial activities must be accomplished. In order to maintain good health, long life, and wealth, one has to give offerings to the spirit. Items such as perfume, liquor, gold, money and cows, cocks, goat and sheep, which should be black in colour, have to be sacrificed.

In times of illness, dispute and theft, believers would always visit a sorcerer to get relief from their pain, identify thieves and get justice. When someone has money stolen from home, s/he goes directly to the sorcerer as soon as possible to identify the thief by presenting the case. However believing all information from the sorcerer can cause quarrels with innocent suspects. There are people who believe that they face bad luck, become cursed or become crazy if they enter a room or eat food in a room where there is a dead body.

### *Political Belief and Attitudes*

Most people perceive the role of the national government as safeguarding the peace and security of the nation, maintaining the unity of the different ethnic groups and protecting the rights of the minorities. Local government is mostly believed to serve as machinery for the fast delivery of development, justice, protection of minorities' rights, security, and housing facilities. The respondents welcome the recent decentralisation of the city administration because it enhances local decision making. However, the merger of the two *Kebele* was felt to have created a huge geographic area in which administrative responsibility can be difficult to deal with.

## 8. Social Structure and dynamics

### *Control of Space*

There is no distinct area of control under specific groups of the community. Some powerful individuals from the neighbourhoods used to control the *Chereta* (auction area) land illegally as tearooms and rent them out for auction purposes. It is almost impossible for other people to control the area. On the other hand, gangsters who are engaged in theft of clothes and sheep control the neighborhood called *Atena tera* (wood selling area). Until recently, it was difficult to move freely around. But nowadays the police have improved the security situation around this neighbourhood.

### *Inter-Generational Relations*

Generally inter-generational relations seem to be influenced by family occupations and living conditions. For instance, inter-generational relations among the vegetable growers in *Soramba* and the Gamo weavers are strong and children are supposed to work with their parents from an early age.

There is more poverty transmission among the Gamo weavers in the area. As children of the Gamo are obliged to help their parents by engaging themselves in weaving from an early age, either they do not go to school or drop out early. Hence, children usually grow up to become poor weavers or even resort to daily labour when weaving fails to earn enough.

There is also a positive co-relation between having educated parents and having small number of children. Educated civil servant parents have relatively fewer children and try to invest on their children education.

Those parents who sent their daughters to the Middle East for work get remittances and have improved their lives. On the contrary, many older people are obliged to look after their grandchildren who are born out of wedlock or whose parent/s died of HIV/AIDS.

## *Gender Relations*

Gender relations and gender equality have come to the forefront of the political agenda during the last two successive governments of the Socialist regime and the EPRDF. During the Imperial government era women were considered to be subordinate to men. They had limited participation and decision-making power in community affairs. The formation of the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association (REWA) during the Socialist regime created a forum for women to organise themselves into political associations and protect their collective rights. In the post-socialist regime the EPRDF launched the National Women's Policy that promotes the protection of women's collective rights to education, employment and decision-making. Nevertheless women in the community remain disadvantaged with poor income, employment, education opportunities and socio-religious barriers. Especially, girls from the Soramba community are obliged to carry water from 3-5 km away and this has affected their school attendance.

### *Decision-making at Household Level*

Most respondents said that the main decision-maker in their family is the man. The husbands are often the main breadwinners for their families. The women are supposed to manage the family income for domestic purposes. For married people, the husband is always considered as the head of the family. It is up to the man to decide about the engagement of his wife in employment. If a wife works, it should be because the income of the family is very small for survival or because the husband is ill or incapable of work. It is remarkable, however, that all the earnings, savings, and properties belonging to families are considered as the common property of the couple by law.

### *Poverty, Wealth and Inequality*

In a wealth ranking exercise done with sixty households drawn from each of the neighbourhoods, 50% of those ranked were estimated to be poor with a daily income for the average family size of four people estimated at 3.45 *birr*. Ten percent of those ranked fell into the category of destitute and their daily income for the family size of four people was estimated as 1.35 *birr*. The middle-level households, estimated to include 30% of the households ranked, had an estimated daily income of 26 *birr* for an average family size of four people. The rich consists of the top 10% of the population and their average daily income was estimated to be 99 *birr*.

In the *Kebele*, it is very easy to identify the rich and the poor. Though sometimes mixed, the four sites have different economic status. It is very difficult to find rich people in any *sefer* apart from *Birhan Chora Sefer*. The wealthy are those who have villa houses, good cars, big businesses (import and export) and can afford to supply what their family needs. Those who can manage to own their small house, have a good monthly income, are self-sufficient, i.e. do not borrow money, are predominately considered as the middle level income group. This often includes medium-level traders and civil servants. Poor people live in rented houses (owned by the *Kebele* or private individuals), their income is mainly used for food consumption, and they cannot afford to send their children to school as well as to cover the cost for medical treatment. This group mainly includes pensioners, ex-soldiers and small businesspersons. Destitute people are likely to be disabled, physically weak, elderly without help, and/or with no skill.

The poor work for the rich for small amounts of money or for food. In some areas, the rich systematically exclude the poor from *iddir*. For instance, the very high membership fee of 6,000

*birr* to join *Addis Fana Meredaja Iddir* in *Birhan Chora sefer*, excludes all but rich people. The community calls it 'Iddir of the wealthy.' Some poor informants say that the rich look down at them.

People in all the sites except *Birhan Chora sefer* consider themselves economically inferior to the other neighbouring communities of *Kebeles* 13, 12, 09, 04 and 03. More than 55% of the households asserted that their monthly income is not adequate for living and more than 32% considers themselves among the poorest people in the community. Moreover, 55% of the respondents stated that their economic status has worsened in the last five years (RANS, 2005).

### *Crimes, punishment, disputes and resolutions*

Stealing car parts, like headlights, sidelights, windscreen wipers, hubcaps and tyres, burglary of buildings, snatching of wallets and jewellery, and rape are among the common crimes reported in Kolfe. Street gang criminals armed with guns, rifles or knives occasionally commit crimes. Depending on the degree of the complexity of the crime, the *Kebele's* Social court or the First Instance Court would deal with the punishment of criminals. The *Kebele* Social Court is formed through community election. It consists of four members; two judges, a registrar and a general secretary. This court has the power to impose the following penalties on guilty culprits: up to three-month imprisonment; and fines of up to 5,000 *birr*. The judiciary works closely with community elders and religious leaders. Most cases of this court end up with arbitration by using the local elders and religious leaders. If the case is beyond their power they write a subpoena to higher formal courts attaching all the evidence assessed.

Disputes between people are resolved or settled using institutions such as the *Kebele*, the police, the school administration, youth clubs, elders, *iddir* and professionals. Recently, the community in Kolfe formed an assembly called *Temer* (Joint) Committee from each of the social groups, to resolve disputes and make reconciliation among community members. During the settlement of disputes individuals respected for their high educational status, old age and/or exemplary contributions are requested to serve as mediators. The main ethnic groups from Gamo, Gurage, Wolayita, Oromo and Amhara are often represented by their respective elders in times of dispute settlement and negotiation.

There are no reported cases of major social conflicts in Kolfe. There have been some minor religious disputes between Muslim and Christian members of Kolfe over the allocation of land for the construction of a church and a mosque. These disputes were resolved through the involvement of *Kebele* members, local police and religious leaders. Minor ethnic conflicts are occasionally manifested during holiday feasts such as Epiphany, Christmas and *Buhe* (the latter often involves youngsters and children who celebrate the day with singing and dancing). Yet, they are often resolved in front of elders of the respective ethnic groups at local taverns; *tej bet*, *tella bet* and *areke bet*.

Religious leaders, elders, *Kebele* officials, police and members of *iddir*, youth associations, teachers, and committees from different ethnic groups are responsible for dealing with community level affairs. They are important bodies in the process of reconciliation (arbitration), political mobilisation, combating crimes, settlement of peace and ensuring of community security. Religious leaders and elders are immediate, more significant and influential bodies for conflict resolution among neighbourhoods. Elite members have regular meetings with the police force as well as with *iddir* members to deal with the safety and security of the community.

In order to effectively maintain safety and security for Kolfe residents, the police force, together with 275 elected elders, work on the prevention and control of crime. Currently the police are actively working on the prevention of crimes and peacekeeping process. This structure has become more effective for identifying criminals.

### *Politics*

All informants in July 2004 said they did not know any political party other than the EPRDF. They remember the last election of 2000, in which the EPRDF candidates won overwhelmingly. The 2005 general election witnessed large involvement of Opposition Parties. In the history of Ethiopian politics, this has been an election process in which huge turnout was evident and in which the young people were massively involved. One of the opposition parties, Coalition for Unity and Democracy (CUD) overwhelmingly won the seats for local and federal parliament in the area.

### *Decision-making and implementation*

Members of the *Kebele*, the Revenue Agency, the social court, religious leaders, *iddir* leaders and cooperative leaders make different decisions in the community. *Kebele* leaders make wide-ranging decisions. The social court handles civil cases up to 5,000 *birr*. Religious leaders instruct their followers to pray, fast and give alms to the poor.

In Soramba, cooperative leaders decide the working days of their members on the land. Muslim cooperative leaders force the Orthodox Christians to work on their religious holidays. This is creating some conflict within the cooperative.

Informal taxes in the community include *iddir* fees, development contributions, school fees, cooperative membership fees, etc. With the exception of school fees and development contributions, people welcome such contributions for they are made voluntarily. Formal taxes are collected by the Revenue Agency of the *Kebele* and include sales tax, house rent, land tax, charge on issuance of identification cards and supportive letters, and fines as decided by the social court. People complain highly about the formal taxes claiming they are too high for the poor community.

## 9. Relationships with other communities and the wider society

### *Migration and relation with rural areas*

More than 90% of respondents claimed that they were born out of the community, largely in the rural areas of Gurage and Gamo in the South (RANS, 2005). The recent qualitative interviews carried out by the WeD Ethiopia team through focus group discussions in the four Kolfe urban neighbourhoods have revealed fairly strong economic reasons for the migration of male urban migrants, notably from the SNNPR, *Amhara*, *Oromia* and, to some extent, Tigray regions. The male focus group respondents mentioned that non-conducive rural environments induced their migration. The main push factors include diminishing farmland sizes in all their rural localities

and fragmentation of small land holdings, lack of rain, recurrent drought, absence of an effective extension system, limited investment in irrigation-based agriculture, high population pressure on 'starvation' plots of land, lack of off-farm employment opportunities and imposition of heavy taxes. In addition to this, pull factors mentioned by the urban male migrants included increasing construction activities, demand for urban domestic workers, better pay for service work and social support from the long-term migrants.

As far as the female migrants are concerned, our exploratory survey indicates that female migrants from the south, notably from the Gamo area in the SNNPR, moved to Addis Ababa to join their spouses who had already migrated on a permanent basis to work in the capital. However, female migrants from the Gurage area, moved to carry out small trading and find employment in the service sector such as in small restaurants, and tea and pastry shops.

There are also female migrants from Amhara and Oromia regions who are engaged notably in domestic work as house-maids, cleaners and nannies, in the services sector (as waitresses in small bars, restaurants, and local taverns), in the small business sector (injera baking, road-side food sale), in the construction sector (loading/ unloading of construction materials) and in commercial sex work. Among the latter, step-wise movement to the capital is common. Many had moved to small towns and provincial capitals before heading to their final destination in Addis Ababa.

Except for the small proportion of women who migrated to Kolfe on a long-term basis with spouses or families since the Socialist Period in 1974, most female migrants, notably from the north, are divorced and widowed women who are in their active reproductive age. These categories of female migrants consider migration outside of their place of origin as an alternative livelihood strategy in part since until recently, women were not directly entitled to have access to farmland (Askale, 2005). Even if they manage to get land, the crop production in the highlands of Ethiopia requires male labour, and share-cropping often involves losing a large proportion of the harvest.

In addition, divorced women are socially stigmatised, being suspected of having multiple sexual partners and are blamed for increasing prostitution. This seems true for the female migration trend in Addis Ababa (Bethlehem 2004). According to Eshetu (2005), among the major reasons for female migration, notably from North and South Wello and North Shewa of the Amhara Region, as well as from Tigray, the following aspects are important: early marriage (9.1 percent); subsequent marriage breakdown (9.1 percent); drought and famine situation (10.1 percent); and severe female poverty (12.7 percent).

Long-term male Orthodox Christian migrants from Gurage in Soramba *Sefer*, often return back to their birthplaces during the Meskel holiday in September. While the single male and landless migrants return in October, those long-term migrants who own land often stay until January to celebrate the holiday with their kin and work on their farms. The *Meskel* holiday is a good holiday season for unmarried men to find wives, get married and bring them from their birthplace. Others also bring their female relatives to seek better job opportunities in their respective *Sefer*. A few spouses or single female migrants who have moved to Soramba go out of their neighbourhood to their rural villages to buy goods during the agricultural harvesting season. New female and single migrants who moved along with their relatives initially tend to get involved in domestic work and gradually get married to other migrants from their place of origin.

Similarly, long-term and seasonal/short-term migrants from Dorze *Sefer*, travel to their place of origin mainly in the Gamo highlands of SNNPR including Chench, Doko, Ezo, Birbera, Ze'ada, Dita, Woyza, Andiro, Elo, Dera, Jila, Atolo, Bele, Shema and Dokomasha. They often go back to

their original places when there is a holiday, family problem or /and the need to follow-up farm activities. However, the frequency and level of out-migration to areas of origin seem to have reduced over the past five years because of higher costs of transport, limited savings from urban employment and shortage of rural farmland. This became more common among married and long-term migrants who found it difficult to save enough money for their transportation and other expenses in rural areas.

In April 2005, an interesting migration experience happened when about 100 migrants from Ezo travelled in big trucks to their home areas following the local government's move to reallocate their farmland for urban development purposes. They presented their cases collectively to the local government and requested the administration to preserve their landholdings. The government later agreed not to redistribute their land, and encouraged their continuous contact and investment in their home communities.

The types of linkages migrants have with the rural areas are especially manifested during social events such as *Meskel*, *Arafa*, and *Timket* (Epiphany) and in economic linkages involving transfers in both directions. Most migrants return to their place of origin (e.g. Gurage, Silte, Gamo, Walita) to celebrate important festivals with their families. Before the holiday approaches, the migrant men and women make the necessary preparations and arrangements by purchasing and collecting materials such as kerosene, oil, sugar, coffee, clothes, salt, agricultural tools, ornaments, radios, household utensils such as bowls, serving dishes, and glasses, exercise books, pencils, pens and other materials. They also save money for transportation costs and to purchase the bulls that will be slaughtered during the holiday. Upon their return from their homes in Gurage, Silite, Gamo and Wolayita areas, they bring food such as *kocho* and *bulla* and cultural articles like kettles and *taba* from their families and relatives. The migrant men usually have two wives, one at the place of origin and the other at the place of destination. However, this practice is declining as Gurage elderly men in rural areas are discouraging polygamous marriage and are recognising a girl's choice in marriage. They are also pronouncing that polygamous marriage is one factor for transmitting HIV/AIDS.

Remittances in terms of money transferred from urban to rural areas is one of the key linkages. A male migrant informant explained that remittances to the homeland are used for household expenses such as purchasing coffee, salt, and kerosene and for the payment of hired labourers for farm activities and for fencing the compound. Remittance money is also used to purchase food items, for school expenses like books, pencils, pens, school fees and for extra expenses like mourning and wedding ceremonies. It may be used for constructing a large hut, to spend a lot for holidays, and to purchase cows, oxen and horses. Some use the remittances to rent additional land in order to expand their agricultural productivity.

### *Relationships with other urban areas in Ethiopia*

Most migrants in the communities have better relationships with people living in their rural place of origin than with urban areas. Some Gurage relate or link themselves with family members who live in different urban areas. There is also short-term migration out of the *Sefer* by both female and male Gamo migrants to other urban areas such as Shashemene, Awassa, Wolkite and Holeta to seek better job opportunities and look for cheaper costs of living. The migrants are mostly single and young people who have been engaged in craftwork and daily labour jobs.

### *Relations with Neighbouring Communities*

There is cooperation and a sharing of health and education as well as market facilities among the neighbouring communities. They get services from the health centre, schools, markets and courts situated in the nearby areas. There have not been major disagreements or conflicts with neighbouring communities.

### *Relationship with Addis Ababa beyond the Kebele*

Most of the Kolfe people have strong relationships with people beyond their Kebele. The *Iddir* is the basic organisation through which people relate to each other. The first settlers of the community are now living in different *Kebele* of Addis Ababa. Yet they relate to each other in the grand *iddir* called *Feteno Derash Iddir*, the name of which is derived from the then *Feteno Derash* Police Force. The local people also relate to each other in churches, mosques, market, schools and clinics. A respondent said that people from Kolfe have positive attitudes towards their capital city. They would like to see good governance, more development work, and better justice and peace implemented by the city administration. They would also like to take more responsibility and contribute to the achievement of social development in the city.

### *Relationships beyond Ethiopia*

A number of households in Kolfe have maintained relationships with relatives and friends outside Ethiopia. A number of young people fled Kolfe during the Socialist regime (1974-1991) in fear of military service, the Red Terror, war and civil unrest to live in the Middle East, Europe, North America, Australia and South Africa. Since the fall of the Socialist regime a considerable number of young people have left for the United States using the Diversity Visa Lottery. Those who left for the Arab countries, notably to Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, are mostly young women either from poor or medium income families, in search of domestic work available in these countries. Most families communicate with their families or relatives in Diasporas by telephone or postal communication. A few Muslims also travel to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage.

### *The Future*

Employment and income generation opportunities, skill training facilities, low-cost housing and sanitation schemes are among the government and NGO services that were mentioned to have importance in the future provision of services to the men, women, children and babies in the community.

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## Glossary

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>Adbar:</i>       | guardian spirit  |
| <i>Arefa:</i>       | Muslim holiday   |
| <i>arake:</i>       | distilled alcoholic drink  |
| <i>arata:</i>       | local money borrowing at relatively high interest rates  |
| <i>asrat:</i>       | a tenth of the agricultural product which used to be paid in cash or kind  |
| <i>berbere:</i>     | capsicum (red pepper)  |
| <i>beteseb:</i>     | the household; lit "house of people"   |
| <i>birr:</i>        | the currency of Ethiopia (15 birr approximately = £1)  |
| <i>borde:</i>       | non alcoholic tella (beer)   |
| <i>bull:</i>        | porridge made from <i>enset flour</i>  |
| <i>chat:</i>        | ( <i>catha edulis</i> ) - a bushy plant whose leaves are a mild narcotic.  |
| <i>Chereta:</i>     | auction  |
| <i>Debo:</i>        | working party using communal labour; food and drink are provided   |
| <i>derg:</i>        | the name for socialist military group that ruled Ethiopia from 1974-91   |
| <i>Dinkwan:</i>     | tent used as shelter in time of mourning or other ceremonies   |
| <i>Enset:</i>       | ("false banana") -the root and inside the trunk and branches are eaten, often after being stored in the ground to allow for fermentation |
| <i>Equb:</i>        | a rotating savings and credit association  |
| <i>Id Al-fatir:</i> | Moslem holiday at the end of Ramadan   |
| <i>Iddir:</i>       | a funeral association formed by individuals to help each other during the death of their members or the relative of their members.       |
| <i>Injera:</i>      | fermented flat bread made from the cereal <i>tef</i>   |
| <i>Kebele:</i>      | The lowest urban administration unit   |
| <i>Kiremt:</i>      | the main rainy season, the crop of which is referred to as <i>meher</i>  |
| <i>Kita:</i>        | a pancake  |
| <i>Kocho:</i>       | food from <i>enset</i>   |
| <i>Kollo:</i>       | roasted grain ready for consumption  |
| <i>Kuteba:</i>      | saving   |
| <i>Maryam:</i>      | St Mary's Day  |

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <i>Mewlid:</i>            | the birthday of the prophet Mohammed  |
| <i>mahber:</i>            | a religious society which meets monthly on a Saint's day: each member takes a turn to host the group providing food and drink |
| <i>Mekane Yesus:</i>      | an Evangelical Protestant church  |
| <i>Meskel:</i>            | An Amharic word used to describe the celebration of the Finding of the True Cross on September 27.                            |
| <i>Meskerem:</i>          | September   |
| <i>Mulu Wengel:</i>       | an Evangelical Protestant church  |
| <i>Ramadan:</i>           | the Moslem fasting season   |
| <i>Sebat Bete Gurage:</i> | Gurage of the “seven Houses”, a grouping among the Gurage.  |
| <i>Sefer:</i>             | An Amharic word used to describe a small community neighbourhood  |
| <i>Senbete:</i>           | a Sunday Association that meets at the grounds of the church; members take it in turns to provide refreshments                |
| <i>Shiro:</i>             | Staple stew made from ground horse beans or chick peas  |
| <i>Shola minch:</i>       | spring water  |
| <i>tef:</i>               | a millet-like cereal used to make the staple bread <i>injera</i>  |
| <i>tej:</i>               | alcoholic mead which has been fermented   |
| <i>tella:</i>             | home-made beer  |
| <i>temket:</i>            | baptism, the festival of epiphany held in January.  |
| <i>Tsebel:</i>            | holy water  |
| <i>Wereda:</i>            | a district, made up of <i>kebeles</i> , and an administrative unit.   |
| <i>Yerat Iddir:</i>       | literally “dinner <i>Iddir</i> ” (women’s <i>Iddir</i> which sponsors dinner of mourners)                                     |
| <i>Wegesha:</i>           | traditional bone-setter   |

### *Acronyms*

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AAU:   | Addis Ababa University                              |
| CUD:   | Coalition for Unity and Democracy                   |
| EPRDF: | Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front   |
| HIV:   | Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus                       |
| RANS:  | Resource and Needs Survey                           |
| SNNPR: | Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region |
| VCT:   | Voluntary Counselling and Training                  |
| WeD:   | Wellbeing in Developing Countries                   |

## Appendix A: Ethiopian Calendar

| <b>Ethiopian Month</b> | <b>Gregorian calendar starting date in 2005</b> |
|------------------------|---|
| Meskerem               | 11 September                                    |
| Tikimt                 | 11 October                                      |
| Hidar                  | 10 November                                     |
| Tahsas                 | 10 December                                     |
| Tir                    | 9 January                                       |
| Yekatit                | 8 February                                      |
| Megabit                | 10 March  |
| Miyazia                | 9 April   |
| Ginbot                 | 9 May   |
| Sane                   | 8 June  |
| Hamle                  | 8 July  |
| Nehase                 | 7 August  |
| Pagume                 | 6 September                                     |

There are 13 months in the Ethiopian calendar, 12 of 30 days and the last one, Pagume, of 5 or 6 days depending on whether it is a leap year. The above table provides the starting date for the Ethiopian month in the Gregorian calendar for 2005.