



ESRC Research Group on
Wellbeing in Developing Countries

QoL Phase 1 Summary

Ethiopia: Kolfe

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Kolfe QoL Phase 1 Summary

WeD carried out focus group discussions with members of Kolfe as part of the Phase 1 QoL fieldwork. Six focus groups were held, divided by age and gender. Below are summaries of the answers given to a selection of questions.

The focus groups were asked about the kind of life that members of the community aspire to have. Half of the groups mentioned that they wish to have good accommodation, money, good health and either a job or access to good job opportunities. All the male groups commented that people wish to lead a religious life. They were then asked what is needed to attain the good life, and education, planned utilisation of money and work, parental wealth, close relationships with rich and important people and money were noted as important by half of the groups.

The groups were asked about living conditions in their community. All commented that poverty and hand-to-mouth living characterise their way of life, and most also mentioned youth problems as another characteristic. When asked about the goals pursued by members of this community, most mentioned the meeting of all basic needs. Good health and access to medical treatment were also commented on by the majority of groups, and education and making a profit were mentioned by half of the groups.

The focus groups were questioned about the characteristics of those living the good life in their community. Having a good material condition was mentioned by half of the groups, as was having an education, working hard and being good at managing resources. The main obstacle that was mentioned by the groups as hindering attainment of the good life was lack of capital, with every group mentioning this in their answer.

Semi-structured interviews were also carried out as part of the WeD QoL research. Twenty community members participated in this stage of data collection.

Participants were asked about the life that they aspire to lead. Most mentioned a wish to educate their children, and many also commented that they aspire to have more money. Self-sufficiency and family self-sufficiency were also mentioned by many respondents as something to which they aspire. Participants were then asked what it takes to attain the good life in their community. A house and good health, or access to health services, were the most frequently mentioned responses. Money and good social relations were also considered to be important. Male responses focussed on having a job or good access to job opportunities.

Another question asked participants about the features of their life that they wish to change. Poor income was the one most frequently mentioned. Poor accommodation and lack of education for one's children were also commented on by a number of participants. Respondents were asked how their current living conditions compare with those that they aspire to have.

Most stated that their present state is much worse than their aspired one, with limited access to education and the inability to meet one's basic needs being most frequently mentioned as aspects of current life causing most unhappiness. Good health and having basic needs met were commented on by some participants as aspects of their present condition with which they are happy.

Participants were asked to list the things that make their lives worth living. Hope for tomorrow or a desire to see the future was mentioned most frequently in answer to this question. Many participants also mentioned God, Allah or religion as things that give their life meaning, and a wish to see one's children grow was also commented on by a number of respondents. The interviewees were then questioned about the aspect of life with which they are most unhappy. Having basic needs unmet was mentioned most often in response to this question, followed by having a poor income and being unable to educate one's self and one's children.

When asked about the aspects of life that they are most happy with, health and parenthood were the most frequently mentioned responses. A number of participants also commented that there is nothing in their lives presently with which they are satisfied. Participants were asked to recall the unhappiest moments or events in their lives. The death of a friend or relation was commented on by many respondents in answer to this, and poverty and an inability to get a desired job were also mentioned.

Participants were asked about the characteristics of the person in their community that they admire for attaining the good life. The most commonly given response was that they educate their children, and this answer was given solely by female participants. Many respondents also commented that they meet the needs of their family, and some respondents stated that there is nobody in their community who is living the good life. They were then asked how this individual has achieved that standard of living. Many participants commented that such a person works hard to achieve the good life. A number of respondents also stated that they do not know how the good life is achieved. Money from abroad was also mentioned frequently in answer to this question.

The Person Generated Index (PGI), which asks participants to list the areas of most importance in their lives, was also administered as part of the semi-structured interviews. Health was mentioned by almost all of the respondents in answer to this question. Jobs were also commented on frequently, as was family. A number of participants mentioned religion, their children and their social life as further areas of their life that they rate as important.