



ESRC Research Group on  
Wellbeing in Developing Countries

# QoL Phase 1 Summary

Ethiopia: Shashemene

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## **Shashemene QoL Phase 1 Summary**

WeD carried out focus group discussions with members of Shashemene 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 life that members of their community aspire to. Good health, a peaceful environment, having all basic needs met and being able to educate one's children were mentioned most frequently, with the female groups commenting on their desire for a good source of income and good conditions of life for their children. Old people mentioned their wish to own a good house. They were then asked what they believe to be needed in order to attain the good life. Hard work was mentioned by half of the groups, and connections with important individuals and good educational level were also mentioned.

The groups were asked what they feel characterises living conditions in their community. Petty trading and unemployment were the most frequently mentioned characteristics, with all female groups also mentioning poverty and all male groups mentioning delinquency. When asked about the goals pursued by members of this community, the education of children was commented on by almost all of the groups. Good accommodation and having all basic needs met were also mentioned a number of times.

Focus groups were questioned about those living the good life in their community. Most groups commented that having a rich family or making an inheritance characterises such people. All male groups mentioned that they are involved in business and all female groups noted that they work hard. Having educated children and family members living abroad were commented on by half of the groups as characteristics of those living well. Obstacles to achieving the good life were then asked for. All female groups commented that a lack of capital is a hindrance, and the male groups mentioned HIV/AIDS, the increasing cost of living and delinquency.

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 kind of life that they aspire to have. Having a better job or business and being able to meet the needs of one's self and one's family were mentioned most frequently. Having more or sufficient money was commented on by a number of respondents, as was education and a good life for one's children. Money was mentioned by the majority of participants as a requirement for leading the good life. Good interpersonal relationships and political affiliation or good relationships with important people were also commented on frequently.

Participants were questioned about the aspects of their lives that they most wish to change. Lack of sufficient income was commented on most often, and

dependency was also mentioned by a number of respondents. Participants were then asked to compare their current living conditions with those that they aspire to have. The vast majority of respondents stated that their current conditions are bad or very bad when compared to those that they aspire to. Insufficient money, dependency, unemployment and the inability to meet the needs of one's children were mentioned as the aspects of life that cause most dissatisfaction. Health, loving relationships, peace and children were mentioned as things with which people are currently satisfied.

The respondents were then asked what makes their life worth living. Children were most frequently mentioned in answer to this question, followed by the hope for a better future and belief in God. When asked about the domain of life that they find it hardest to be happy with, most participants mentioned their inability to support themselves or their family, Unemployment or having a bad job, and low income or poverty were also commented on by a number of interviewees.

Participants were asked which aspects of their life they are most happy with. Children and marriage were mentioned by many respondents in answer to this question. A number of respondents also commented that there is nothing in their lives with which they are happy. Participants listed the unhappiest moments or events in their life as being the death of relatives.

The interviewees were questioned about the characteristics of individuals in their locality who are living the good life. Many commented that they have worked their way up to the quality of life that they are now leading. A number also mentioned that they are very hard working people. When asked how these individuals have managed to achieve the good life, many participants mentioned hard work. A number also stated that they did not know how such people have achieved this type of lifestyle.

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 respondents as an area of importance in their lives. Jobs were also commented on frequently, as were children and the education of one's self and one's family. Social activities and relationships were mentioned as areas of personal importance, as was family.